Protesting Against Gender-Based Violence: Narratives on The Silent Protest and #RUReferenceList

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____Date:__

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Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been a problem in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) for many years. International research suggests that sexual violence is more prevalent in university campuses than in public. As a response to the prevalence of GBV in HEIs, students held several protests between 2015 and 2016 bringing the discussion of GBV prevalence in South African HEIs back into the spotlight. However, there is a gap in literature that studies the experiences of student activists in protests against GBV with little to no literature on the identities of those who took part in these protests, and how their participation was shaped by their identities and experiences. Therefore, informed by a feminist intersectional perspective this project seeks to study the narratives of participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protests that took place at the University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR). The project aims to contribute to an intersectional understanding of the experiences of students who participate in protests against gender-based violence and the motivations for their participation in the protests. The co-researchers in the project are persons who participated in either the Silent Protest, the *#RUReferenceList protest,* or both. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with five participants of the two protests, as well as a review of archival material related to the protests. All the data were analysed using the Decolonial Intersectional Narrative Analysis tool. Through studying the participants' experiences, we can begin to understand the motivations behind protests against gender-based violence and the effects of protests against gender-based violence on those who participate in them.

Keywords: *Gender-based violence, protest, sexual assault, sexual violence, rape, South Africa, university students, student activists, University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR)*

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Chapter 1: Defining gender-based violence, sexual harassment and, sexual violence

1. 1 Introduction

My research is based at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The thesis seeks to study the experiences of those who participated in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* as responses to the prevalence of gender-based violence at the University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR)[1]. This research is motivated by the concern over the prevalence of gender-based violence in Higher Education institutions and specifically at UCKAR and the lack of acknowledgment of the importance of the experiences of those who took part in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RURerefenceList*. The thesis thus seeks to address the following research questions: (1) What were the experiences of the participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList?* (2) How was their participation in these protest movements shaped by the participants' intersectional identities and experiences? (3) What shared narratives emerged amongst participants from the two case studies?

(4) How do participants construct the events that inspired the movements? (4.1) What prompted the start and the end of the movements?

In this introductory chapter, I provide an overview of the definitions of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape. I also examine the importance of a comprehensive definition of gender-based violence in ensuring that there is a clear understanding as these definitions inform how cases of GBV are addressed.

1. 2 Defining Gender-based violence.

In studying the experiences of students who participate in protests against gender-based violence in higher education institutions (HEIs), it is imperative to understand the discussions in literature of definitions of terms such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence and rape as these definitions influence the activism in the protests against the above-

[1] The name the University Currently Known as Rhodes is widely used by students and former students of the institution. The use of the name is indicative of support for a name change and a call for the decolonisation of universities in South Africa include Rhodes University

mentioned forms of violence's. The chapter will focus on the definition of violence perpetrated against women.

The declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women declared that the term "violence against women refers to any act that constitutes gender-based violence" (Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993). In defining violence against women, Article 1 of the United Nations General Assembly (1993) accounted for acts such as physical, psychological harm, sexual violence, threats of any of the mentioned acts, coercion, and deprivation of women's freedoms with this abuse occurring in private or in public as being gender-based violence.

In addition to the above-mentioned acts, Article 2 of the declaration suggests that it is important for the definition of GBV to also include acts of psychological, and physical violence within families and communities with these acts being perpetrated or condoned by the spaces in which they take place (Sigsworth, 2008; United Nations General Assembly, 1993). GBV also includes the perpetration of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and rape (Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018; United Nations General Assembly, 1993). The declaration specifically makes mention of the physical abuse of a spouse, sexual abuse of a child or a female person, rape including rape within marriages, lobola-related violence, female genital mutilation including other harmful traditional practices affecting women, exploitative sexual violence, sexual harassment, violence among persons who are not spouses and intimidation at school, work, and other spaces, as well as forced prostitution and human trafficking (Sigsworth, 2008).

The term gender-based violence is defined by Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2021) as violence that results from "unequal power relationships between genders" (p. 31). Scholars have defined GBV as one of the most widespread forms of human rights abuses (Muche et al., 2017) and arguably the most socially tolerated and widespread form of violation (Sigsworth, 2008). GBV can be perpetrated in different ways, it can be physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, economic, psychological, and/or cultural (Sonke Gender Justice and Health- E News, 2017; *Violence Against Women*, 2020). GBV manifests in different forms, including sexual assault and sexual harassment (Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018) and, according to feminist theories, is fuelled by unequal power relations in society and is cultivated through sexism and patriarchy. GBV is driven by political, cultural, economic, and social structures in society (Department of Higher

Education and Training (DHET), 2020.) Others have defined it as being a "manifestation of gender inequity" that places women and girls in vulnerable positions in society (Zain, 2012 in Oparinde & Matsha, 2021).

Although the perpetration of violence is widespread and affects many individuals, groups, and communities, studies argue that those most disproportionately affected by gender- based violence are children and women (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2021). The United Nations Women reported that 35% of women in the world have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2021). Some studies indicate that the number is indeed higher than is reported by UN Women, showing that 70% of women have experienced sexual and/or physical abuse from an intimate partner (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2021). Furthermore, South Africa is recorded as having extremely high cases of GBV (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2016; Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018; Vetten, 2014; Wilkinson, 2017), with statistics indicating that one in three women are likely to be sexually victimised (Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2015). According to South African statistics presented by the South African Police Services, nearly 50 000 rape cases were reported to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in South Africa between 2013 and 2014 (Nicholson, 2015) reflecting the magnitude of the issue. The South African Police Services reported that in 2022 between April and June 2022 9 516 cases of rape were reported at different police stations in the country. This number increased by 10,8% between July 2022 and September 2022 to 10 590 reported cases (Services | SAPS (South African Police Service), n.d.).

The definitions provided below, therefore, inform understandings of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2021) as those that mostly relate to women and children as the victims of GBV.

In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action included the violation of women's rights to the above definition and highlighted acts such as armed conflict; sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, forced abortions, forced sterilisation, systemic rape, and being coerced to use contraceptives. In addition, the Beijing Platform for Action acknowledged the vulnerabilities faced by women from minority groups and members of the elderly community, indigenous persons, refugees, displaced persons, migrants, women living in rural and remote areas, and women in incarceration (Sigsworth, 2008). Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2021) suggested that children are

among those who are most vulnerable to GBV and some of the forms of violence that they experience include child marriage, trafficking, honour killings, and female genital mutilation.

Reports on GBV have indicated several negative effects of GBV on survivors. The next section deals with some of the negative impacts that survivors of GBV deal with post their experiences of GBV.

1. 3 The Negative Impacts of GBV on survivors

GBV takes on many forms and women are often subjected to economic, physical, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse leading to the subordination of women in society (Wilson, 2013). The subordination that women face also takes place in different settings within society including the cultural groups to which they belong (Fakunmoju & Bammeke, 2017). Survivors of GBV face several lifelong effects from experiencing GBV (Bani-Fatemi et al., 2020). These vary from emotional distress (Muche et al., 2017), threats to the physical well-being of its survivor, hindrance to their reproductive health, and mental health issues. Women who have experienced violence are said to be susceptible to health problems such as physical disability, depression, chronic pain, drug and alcohol abuse (Kramer et al., 2004). GBV has been noted as a threat to efforts being done to promote gender equity, efforts to empower women in society, and women's health as a whole (Muche et al., 2017). The abuse women and children have been exposed to also extends to the family. Gender-based violence is said to have negative effects on children who witness abuse at home or were victims of abuse themselves. Children affected by GBV can also suffer long-term psychological damage (Sigsworth, 2008).

GBV is a reality for many South Africans and South African higher education institutions (HEIs) are not exempt from these experiences (Magudulela, 2017). To lead into the conversation on gender-based violence in HEIs and specifically at the university currently known as Rhodes I define sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape as forms of gender-based violence as a way of giving clarity on what these entail and how different scholars define sexual harassment, sexual violence and rape. These definitions are important as they aid in understanding and guiding the discussion that will follow in Chapter 2 on the prevalence of GBV in HEIs and how these are understood by students and staff members in higher education institutions.

The next section defines sexual harassment as a form of GBV. An outline of definitions by different scholars is shared in the section below.

1. 4 Defining sexual harassment

Across the literature, there is a range of different definitions of sexual harassment (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). These varying definitions cause confusion when comparisons across studies are to be made. Below I outline a few ways in which sexual harassment has been defined.

A definition offered by the South African Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011 defines sexual harassment as (a) "Unwanted sexual attention from a person who" is aware or should be aware that the attention given is unwelcome and (b) unwelcome obvious or implied behaviour which proposes remarks or messages "of a sexual nature" that offend, humiliate or intimidate the person laying the complaint "or a related person in conditions which a reasonable person having regard to all the conditions would have anticipated that the complainant or related person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated" (c) expressed or implied sexual request with the promise of a reward (d) expressed or implied threat due to refusal of a requested sexual favour (p. 3).

In attempting to articulate and define sexual harassment Schneider (2010) and colleagues and Buchanan and colleagues (2013) have listed three types of harassment offenses: (1) unwanted sexual attention, 2) sexual coercion, and 3) gender harassment. In terms of unwanted sexual attention, the individual persistently invites and/or proposes unwanted sexual behaviour which is considered offensive to the other. Sexual coercion then is any behaviour that implies pressure to engage in unwanted sexual cooperation influenced by threats or the potential to benefit in any way. Lastly, gender harassment involves non-verbal and verbal derogatory communication, often described as hostile, degrading, and insulting (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018).

Till (1980 in Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004) additionally classifies four "categories of sexual harassment" with three having been discussed above. The four categories are seductive behaviour, sexual coercion, sexual assault (which will be discussed as one of the most prevalent forms of sexual harassment), and sexual bribery (p. 4).

Ekore (2012) argues that the way in which sexual harassment is defined and experienced is subjective, and therefore we should largely consider the subjective experiences of those who fall victim to it (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). According to Ekore (2012), the definition should suit the context of the experience and the interpretations of those involved.

Akinbode and Ayodeji (2018) offer a definition which encompasses the feminist perspective of sexual harassment. They define sexual harassment as usually involving the abuse of power. Sexual harassment can also be understood as a form of gender inequality and power imbalance where one in power, sanctions their victims when there is a refusal of unwanted "persistent sexual advances" (Adams et al, 2013, p. 1153). The perpetrator uses their position of power to victimise subordinates or those who do not hold the same power positions as them. These individuals use their social power and economic power to dominate their victims (Dastile, 2004). Therefore, the victim might be further intimidated and influenced by the perpetrator in their definition or interpretation of the incident.

Vohlídalová (2011 in Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018) concurs with the above definition and adds that sexual harassment encompasses "the abuse of unequal power" (p. 2752). According to Finchilescu and Dugard (2018) behaviours that count as sexual harassment include physical actions such as unwelcome touching, stalking, hitting, and pulling of clothes. Some verbal actions are also constituted as sexual harassment which include insults, jeering, emailing, starting rumours about the survivor, pressing one to go out on a date, and displaying sexual content without consent.

Sexual harassment has also been defined as any unwanted sexual advances. Literature shows that this is mostly by men directed at women. These advances include unwanted touching, offensive jokes, kissing, and condescending comments (Akinbode and Ayodeji, 2018; Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). Sexual harassment involves any unwelcome and unsolicited sexual advances that could appear in physical and or verbal forms. These behaviours are often persistent (Akinbode and Ayodeji, 2018). Bradenburg (1988) and Powell (1992 in Dastile, 2004) define sexual harassment as an effort to subordinate and force individuals into a sexual relationship or unwanted sexual requests, sexual attention, and unwanted physical and/or verbal behaviour. The South African Code of Good Practice on the Handling of Sexual Harassment

Cases (No. 1367 of 1998) simply defined sexual harassment as unwelcome behaviour of any sexual nature (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020).

Literature suggests that many of the behaviours which are defined and recognised as sexual harassment or rape in policy or legal terms are often not perceived as such by faculty and students (Bursik & Gefter, 2011; Finchilescu and Dugard; Magley & Shupe, 2005; Marsil & McNamara, 2016; Vohlídalová, 2011). Differences in perceptions have also been seen across cultural, ethnic and gender lines. Men often perceive fewer behaviours as sexual harassment compared to women (Ekore, 2012; Finchilescu and Dugard; Reason & Rankin, 2006; Yee, Alagappar, & Ngeow, 2015).

For purposes of this study, given that it is an all - encompassing definition that acknowledges power differentials, I will use the definition provided by the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011 which defines sexual harassment as (a) "Unwanted sexual attention from a person who" is aware or should be aware that the attention given is unwelcome and (b) unwelcome obvious or implied behaviour which proposes remarks or messages "of a sexual nature" that offend, humiliate or intimidate the person laying the complaint "or a related person in conditions which a reasonable person having regard to all the conditions would have anticipated that the complainant or related person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated" (c) expressed or implied sexual request with the promise of a reward (d) expressed or implied threat due to refusal of a requested sexual favour (p. 3).

The next section delves into definitions of sexual violences offered by various scholars. The section also defines rape as a form of sexual violence and presents statistics of rape in South Africa as presented by the South African Police Services between the months April 2022 and September 2022.

1. 5 Defining Sexual Violence

Dastile (2004) argues that including sexual violence in the definition of sexual harassment often leads to confusion. Therefore, this section will study the definitions of sexual violence independently of sexual harassment.

The third form of GBV that will be discussed in this section is rape. Rape has been categorised as being a form of sexual violence (Krug et al., 2002). There have been conflicting ideas about what legitimises a violation as rape. Various definitions of rape and sexual violence have additionally been provided by scholars, especially those located in critical men and masculinity studies as well as feminist, women and gender studies. Feminist movements in the 1960s defined rape as a mechanism set to maintain male domination and control over women (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992).

Feminist movements defined rape as a violent means and powerful language used to 'keep women in check', meaning that rape is used to instil fear in women and threatens their freedom of living freely (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992; Gqola, 2015). Garcia and Vemuri (2017), masculinity scholars, and feminist theorists agree with Gqolas' argument that sexual violence has been for a long time used as a tool by men to enforce their dominance over women's bodies. Sexual violence has therefore been used as a way of maintaining hegemonic types of masculinities.

According to South African law, rape is when person A intentionally and unlawfully sexually penetrates person B without their consent. When this takes place person A is seen to have committed a rape offense (Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) amendment act 32 of 2007). Common law definition has been amended to include sexual penetration by a penis and other objects into an anus, the survivors' vagina, and/or mouth. This was an initiative to reform and organise "South Africa's laws on sexual offenses" (p. 5). This definition broadens the possibility of actions that count as being defined as rape and the definition is gender neutral. In this definition, other forms of violations are considered, and it moves away from how sexual violence has been thought of as a heteronormative concept. In the past, laws have failed to protect individuals against rape and to protect survivors by asking about their previous sexual relationships. As a means of protecting survivors from further harm, the amendment of 2007 included the exclusion of survivors being questioned about their previous sexual relationships and these being used as evidence (Smythe, 2015). Smythe (2015) argued that even with the amendment, it is very likely that evidence gathered from this type of questioning will still be considered admissible.

In protecting South Africans against GBV, the Constitutional court and other lower courts have emphasised the need to observe international standards of what constitutes violence

against women as means to ensure that South Africans are protected from gender-based harm and to ensure accountability by the police. These courts seek to ensure that the state is held accountable for the actions of the police. These acts include the infliction of 1) direct harm, one of them being a women being raped by a police officer in uniform and 2) indirect harm which includes being physically harmed by a perpetrator whom the police failed to keep in their custody while they wait for their trial date 3) and/or the police failing to take away a weapon from a perpetrator who has threatened to use it against a spouse. International law prohibits all forms of gender-based discrimination against women as these negatively affect how women live their lives and hinders their freedoms and rights. South African law has the duty of ensuring that there are measures put in place to prevent women's rights and freedoms from being violated. The primary protectors of these are members of the South African Police Services (SAPS). These members are meant to ensure that South African law which is influenced by international law is upheld (Smythe, 2015). Even with these interventions from the courts and the South African law, GBV is still very prevalent within the South African context.

The prevalence of GBV has been and continues to be a serious problem in the country and as a result, South Africa has been labelled as the rape capital of world (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Institute for Security Studies, 2012; Mhlangulana, 2021). Statistics by the South African police service for the year 2022 have indicated that sexual offences and rape are prevalent as forms of gender-based violence in South Africa. Statistics on reported cases of rape between April 2022 and June 2022 indicate that 9 516 cases of rape were reported in the country (*Services | SAPS (South African Police Service)*, n.d.). Between July and September, the number of reported cases increased by 10,8% to 10 590 (*Services | SAPS (South African Police Service)*, n.d.). This is an indication of the prevalence of GBV in the country which directly influences the prevalence of this kind of violence in HEIs.

The next section outlines definitions of intimate partner violence which is another prevalent form of GBV in HEIs.

1. 6 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Intimate partner violence (IPV) has been recorded at a growing rate with women being the main survivors of the abuse (Sigsworth, 2008) and higher education institutions are not exempted from this reality. In fact, Ross and colleagues (2021) suggested that intimate partner violence is a common form of violence at university spaces, where students in these institutions experience high rates of violence such as GBV. This section discusses the various definitions of intimate partner violence suggested by different scholars.

In defining intimate partner violence, Flynn and Graham (2010) argued that there is no universal definition of intimate partner violence (IPV). For purposes of this thesis the definition offered by Arias and Corso (2005 in Flynn & Graham, 2010) will be used. In defining an intimate partner this could be a former or current non-marital partner (dating partner, girlfriend, or boyfriend) or a spouse (Spencer et al., 2016).

IPV is defined as the threat or use of sexual, physical, psychological violence and controlling tactics against a current or a former intimate partner (Flynn & Graham, 2010). Literature indicates that perpetrators of this kind of violence are both men and women (Flynn & Graham, 2010; Ozaki & Otis, 2016). A study by the World Report on Health and Violence reported that between 10% and 70% of women in 48 populations had experienced lifetime physical violence at the hands of their male partner (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002; Ozaki & Otis, 2016). Similarly, a study by the World Health Organisation that aimed to investigate women's experiences of IPV reported that between 15% and 71% of the participants had experienced sexual and physical abuse at the hands of a partner. The sample was from rural and urban regions (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise & Watts, 2006; Ozaki & Otis, 2016). A study conducted nationally in South Africa found that 19% of the women participants had experienced intimate partner violence. A South

African study on the rate of female homicide indicated that women are killed every 6 hours by their intimate partners. Universities are assumed to be elite spaces where their students are not perpetrators of violence, and they are less likely to experience intimate partner violence than they would be in general society. Literature on intimate partner violence in HEIs is limited, therefore this contributes negatively to the understanding of GBV in HEIs (Spencer et al.,

2016). The experiences of GBV have a great impact on survivors' lives. The next section delves into the impact of GBV on survivors of GBV.

Gender-based violence is one of the worst human rights violations in the country with one in three women statistically guaranteed to fall victim to GBV. It is therefore imperative to have clear definitions of what constitutes as being gender-based violence as this informs our understanding of not only gender-based violence but also the different forms of gender-based violence acts. This chapter outlined definitions of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape which constitute violations under gender-based violence. Clear and decisive definitions of these are very important as they inform how issues around gender-based violence are dealt with, and how policies and laws are formulated. These definitions inform our understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and rape in South Africa and abroad, these definitions also inform how law enforcement deals with cases of gender-based violence. In the case of HEIs, clear definitions ensure that institutions of higher learning have a clear understanding of what constitutes gender-based violence and these inform how policies are formulated and implemented across different institutions.

Banyard et al (2009) argued that university campuses have become conducive spaces for gender-based violence. The next chapter (chapter 2) will study the prevalence of GBV in HEIs in South African universities and international universities. Studies on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence will be employed as a discussion. The chapter will move on to discuss the enablers of GBV in HEIs, namely rape-culture and under-reporting. I will discuss the gaps in literature regarding GBV in HEIs. Chapter 3 will outline the thesis methodology, where intersectionality has been employed as the theoretical framework and Decolonial Intersectional Narrative Analysis is employed as the analysis tool of the thesis. Followed by a discussion of the ethical considerations of the study and lastly a discussion on reflexivity. Chapter four outlines the narratives shared by participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protest, namely (1) the illusion of safety: Silencing GBV at the university, (2) Experiences of Rape Culture, Predatory

Culture and inequality at the intersection of one's identity (3) Narratives of Community and Allyship, (4) Reclaiming Blackness the naked body: narratives of political resistance, pride, and rage and (5) Speaking against dominant narratives on the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Chapter five outlines the summary of findings, methodological contributions of this study,

theoretical and social implications of the research, challenges and limitations of the study and lastly the recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: A Critical Review of gender-based violence in Higher Education Institutions

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the prevalence of GBV and specifically sexual harassment and sexual violence in higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa and internationally. To outline the prevalence of GBV in South African HEIs and international HEIs, this chapter will critically outline previous research studies on the prevalence of GBV in South African and international HEIs. A qualitative review of enablers of GBV in HEIs will follow, with underreporting of GBV, rape culture, stigma and judgment and lack of resources discussed as enablers of GBV in HEIs. The chapter will move on to review interventions aimed at addressing GBV at HEIs and specifically the use of policies as responses to GBV. Policies have been criticised as intervention to GBV in HEIs and therefore, I will discuss the gaps in policy interventions in this chapter. The study is centred around student activism at UCKAR and these are being studied through an intersectional lens. A review of student movements in Higher education through an intersectional lens will be conducted. Lastly, gaps in literature on student movements and the experiences of those who take part in these protests will be discussed.

2.2 The prevalence of GBV in higher education institutions

Between the years 2011 and 2014, 15 universities in South Africa reported 247 cases of partner violence, rape, and sexual violence (Serrao, 2014 in Boonzaier et al., 2019). As a microcosm of the broader socio-cultural norms that make similarly high rates of violence possible across South Africa, the violence perpetrated in HEIs not only reflects the broader experiences of South African women but, in fact, international literature suggests that sexual violence is more prevalent in HEIs than in public (Boonzaier et al., 2019). There has been a growing concern over the increase in sexual harassment and sexual violence in higher education institutions all over the world (Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018). These concerns are fuelled by the idea that these institutions have shifted from being known as ivory towers where their students can gain knowledge and skills to an understanding that these institutions are not

exempt from the crimes and problems that affect society, and at times, these problems may in fact be exacerbated in university spaces (Fisher et al., 2000). The section below maps out studies on the prevalence of sexual harassment in HEIs in South Africa and in international institutions.

2.2.1 Sexual harassment in South African HEIs

The safety of university spaces for its students has been of great concern, with university residences being sites of GBV perpetration. This section delves into the issue of sexual harassment in HEIs.

Literature suggests that university residences have become unsafe and havens for sexual victimisation (Dastile, 2004; Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018). For example, Dastile (2004) conducted a study that aimed to investigate the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence at the University of Venda in South Africa. Through the findings, the study concluded that most sexual violence and sexual harassment at the institution took place on campus and the perpetrators were people known to the victims. The researcher noted that these were prevalent enough to be seen as a problem at the university. They suggested that the institution needed to ensure that they have stricter measures to protect the students on their campus.

There are several forms of sexual harassment practices that take place in higher education institutions (HEIs). For this review, the focus will be on quid pro quo harassment and the use of power to advance sexual harassment. Quid pro quo harassment occurs when an individual abuses their position of power to gain sexual favours, and if the victim resists, they are sanctioned as a result (Dastile, 2004; Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018). The perpetrator uses this form of sexual harassment to create a hostile environment for the victim (Dastile, 2004).

At the University of the Witwatersrand, Finchilescu and Dugard (2018) aimed to study students, research staff, academic staff, and administrative staff's experiences of GBV both inside and outside the university (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018). The results of the study showed that 26,9% of those who completed the questionnaire stated that they had experienced some form of gender-based violence. Of those who took part in the study, 13,2% reported having experienced GBV were students and 17% being members of the administration staff. The majority of those who indicated that they had experienced some form of GBV were women.

Of the student population who had an experience of GBV, a majority of the survivors were women from all the groups (students, administration staff, and academic staff). Several academic staff reported being sexually harassed. The staff members reported that the perpetrators used work as an excuse to harass them into attending inappropriate meetings. In studying rape cases, the results showed that 206 cases were reported by the participants. 22 Of these cases were reported by members of the academic staff, half of these being cases of domestic violence and the other half being cases of rape. Students reported the greatest number of rape cases. This study indicated that students are at a higher risk of falling victim to perpetrators of GBV (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018).

Cantisano, Domínguez and Depolo's (2008) conducted a statistical analysis on multiple scientific studies on sexual harassment at work and to produce explanatory models of the consistency of the results of all the studies. The results show how men students in HEIs - who through their power, privilege and status afforded through hetero-patriarchal structures - force unwanted sexual attention onto women students (Cantisano, Domínguez & Depolo, 2008). This abuse is also exercised by those who hold more power within universities, such as lecturers and administrators, and can be argued that the organisational structure at HEI enforces unequal power relations, largely impacting students (Dhlomo et al, 2012; Dziech & Weiner, 1990). Because of this unequal power relation, students are often reluctant to report violations because of potential and perceived negative effects related to their inferior power status at the institution. In addition, they might fear that their cases will not receive appropriate attention because the perpetrator is in a position of power (Dhlomo et al, 2012). As feminist theories have argued, male dominance, superiority, sexism, power and control sit at the core of various forms of violence perpetrated by men against women – including sexual harassment – and are used to keep women subjugated, silenced and oppressed (Begany & Milburn, 2002; Tracy, 2007). Should women resist these systems, sexual harassment is then used to maintain order. According to this theory, perpetrators believe that their behaviour is justified (Adams et al., 2013). This section begins with a review of literature that provides insight into sexual harassment in local HEIs and following this, traces international scholarship on sexual harassment and HEIs.

Scholarship has, however, shown that some HEIs lack the resources to offer appropriate assistance to victims of violence (Dhlomo, 2012; Singh et al., 2015). Dhlomo (2012) reported that residence wardens, sub-wardens, and residence matrons lacked training in dealing with sexual harassment. In a study by Singh et al. (2015) at the University of Kwazulu Natal, the

participants indicated that when they reported incidents of sexual violation to their managers and leaders these were not taken seriously. Several participants indicated that they opted to seek informal assistance rather than approaching leaders in their residences. There is consensus amongst scholars that given the prevalence of sexual harassment victimisation in university campuses and residences, consideration should urgently be granted to providing awareness and support to victims.

Literature has shown that sexual harassment and sexual violence transcend the borders of South Africa. International universities have also recorded high numbers of sexual harassment and sexual violence cases. The next section will review studies on these issues in different universities.

2.2.2 Sexual harassment in International HEIs

Similar to South African findings, some international literature has shown high rates of sexual harassment against women students at HEIs (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018; Biden, 2010; FemiOyewo & Oduwole, 2021; Omonijo et al., 2013; Taiwo, Omole & Omole, 2014; Sigal, 2006).

A study by Biden (2010) with women students in the United Kingdom reported that one in four women students had experienced being sexually harassed or violated on their campus (Biden, 2010; Femi-Oyewo & Oduwole, 2021). Akinbode and Ayodeji (2018) acknowledged that the findings from the study by Biden are consistent with the results of studies that were done in Nigeria, affirming that sexual harassment and sexual violence are global problems (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018; Omonijo et al., 2013; Taiwo, Omole & Omole, 2014). These studies concur with the suggestion that sexual harassment is prevalent in international institutions as it is prevalent in South African HEIs. In relation to the prevalence of sexual harassment in HEIs, some studies have spoken to the ways in which students in these institutions have resisted factors such as patriarchy which enable the continuation of sexual harassment in these institutions.

Some studies have spoken to the various ways in which students have resisted patriarchal systems of power that protect perpetrators (Femi-Oyewo & Oduwole, 2021). In 2016 in Nigeria, the Nigerian Female Students Association called for serious attention to the issue of

sexual violence and sexual harassment when they stormed the National Assembly to call for an amendment to the sentencing of perpetrators. They suggested a five-year jail period for lecturers who committed sexual offenses against students. This was a response to the high number of reports of lecturers violating women students in universities in Nigeria (Femi-Oyewo & Oduwole, 2021). Furthermore, in the United States, a series of high-profile sexual assault and harassment cases from universities considered as elite universities drew attention to how these two are prevalent in HEIs in the country. In these cases, survivors of GBV spoke out about their experiences of violence and their experiences of the criminal justice system and being students in these institutions (Bagley, Natarajan, Vayzman, Wexler, & McCarthy, 2012; Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018; Hill & Silva, 2005). Students in international HEIs have employed a number of ways to address the issue of sexual harassment in their respective institutions. Similar to the experiences of students in HEIs, staff members in these institutions also fall victim to the violence and sexual harassment within their institutions.

While global literature highlights the overwhelming experiences of students' sexual harassment, international literature has additionally honed into the ways that academic staff are victims of sexual harassment at the hands of students. This is termed contra power sexual harassment (DeSouza, 2011; Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018; Mohipp & Senn, 2008; Norman, Aikins, & Binka, 2012). Contra power sexual harassment can be defined as the targeting of a person of higher status or power in an institution by a perpetrator who happens to have less power and/or is a subordinate. Literature has suggested that contra power was and is mostly used against women to maintain the inequalities in the organisation (Rospenda, Richman, & Nwyn, 1998, cited in; Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018; Mohipp & Senn, 2008). Women students and women staff members in HEIs are mostly affected by the inequalities in their institutions and are mostly affected by sexual harassment in these institutions. Scholars of GBV in HEIs have argued that sexual harassment possess huge negative effects on the survivors of the violence and on the institutions in which this violence takes place. The section below outlines the negative effects that sexual harassment has on survivors of GBV and on the institutions the violence takes place.

2.2.3 Effects of Sexual Harassment

The existence of sexual harassment in HEIs has dire repercussions for both the victims and the institutions. Sexual harassment has been documented as a threat to survivors' academic performance (Adams et al., 2013). Literature shows that experiencing sexual harassment may draw the victim back from attaining their academic goals and their goals of personal development. The survivors are stripped of their right of receiving an equal education. Survivors lose out on opportunities to further their studies and to benefit from the resources at the institution (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018). Gouws and Kritzinger (2007) added that survivors of sexual harassment often struggle to concentrate in class and are withdrawn. These struggles come about due to the hostile environment created by the perpetrator. The survivors do not feel safe at the institutions and therefore are unable to perform at their best. It is documented as a critical stressor that has the potential to not only hinder the survivors' performance but also that of the institution as well. This issue mainly affects the institutions' reputations. When there is an increase in the number of sexual harassment reports at the institution it becomes known as an unsafe space mostly for women students and thus becomes unpopular with potential students (Adams et al., 2013). When survivors of sexual harassment do not perform academically this also impacts the institutions negatively as well (Adams et al., 2013; Ladebo, 2003). Management at these institutions is often criticized for not taking the issue seriously. They are accused of being complicit, ineffective, and not being supportive of the development of the students at their institutions (Bennett 2002; Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007).

Literature has drawn a close link between "sexual harassment and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" (Le Roux, Orleyn, and Rycroft 2005 in Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007, p. 70). Survivors often experience psychological and physical symptoms such as flashbacks, loss of self-esteem, depression, and damage to their reproductive health (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). Experiencing sexual harassment also results in physical harm to the victims. A study conducted with Swedish medical students by Larsson, Hensing and Allebeck's (2003) reported that women often internalise problems. This internalisation leads to anxiety, depression, abdominal issues, psychosomatic consequences, and results in feelings of powerlessness (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). These then affect several areas in their lives including their academic careers (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007).

The literature above notes the negative impacts that the prevalence of GBV and sexual harassment pose on survivors of GBV and the HEIs. Studies on the effects of GBV on both the survivors and the HEIs are imperative as these lead to responses (such as protests) to these effects. The next section deals with the prevalence of sexual violence in HEIs and studies outlining this issue in HEIs.

2.2.4 The prevalence of sexual violence in HEI

Krebs et al., (2009) suggested that students in HEIs institutions are at an elevated risk of falling victim to sexual assault in their institutions. Therefore, this section studies the prevalence of sexual violence in HEIs around the world. The section will begin with a discussion on the prevalence of sexual violence in international universities and move on to discuss the prevalence of sexual violence in South African HEIs.

The prevalence of sexual violence in HEI is mostly experienced by women students and has also been consistent with other forms of violence such as sexual harassment. The prevalence of sexual violence in the USA since the 1980s has been at a rate between 20% and 25%. A majority of the participants of these surveys reported having been violated by men they know (Benson, Gohm, & Gross, 2007; Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Chi Cantalupo, 2014; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Krebs, Lindquist, Warner, Fisher, & Martin, 2007). Aiming to investigate the prevalence of sexual violence in HEIs, Fisher, et al., (2000) conducted a study over 6 months with randomly selected women students in universities or colleges in the USA in 1996. The findings indicated that 27.7% of women students in the institution had indicated that they had experienced sexual violence; some indicated that they were victimised more than once, therefore the incidence rate was higher than the number of reported victims. When looking at the incidence rate, the study recorded that 22.8% of the participants were victimised multiple times. This study indicates the ongoing issue of sexual violence in HEIs and that investigations should also explore the number of incidences when attempting to understand the severity of the issue, given that multiple victimisations appear to be a significant issue.

During the study with the university students, Fisher et al., (2000) noted that some of the participants who participated in the study were hesitant to attach themselves to the label of sexual violence survivor. This was influenced by the stigma associated with being a survivor

of sexual violence. Recent research has been done to study the impacts of experiencing GBV as well as the stigma associated with these experiences (Barnett et al., 2016). This research has shown that the stigma that survivors experience exacerbates the negative effects of experiencing GBV and impacts greatly on reporting of cases of GBV. Additionally, stigmatisation is associated with the possibility of re-victimisation of survivors (Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2003; Miller et a l. 2011; Street and Arias 2001; Barnett et al., 2016). As a result, survivors opt to not report as a way of avoiding social exclusion and being ridiculed by members of the community and family members. Literature relating to the stigma attached to being a survivor of GBV indicates that survivors are often subjected to a social cost. Survivors of GBV face a number of negative effects such as stigma and judgment based on having experienced GBV (Sonke Gender Justice and Health-E News, 2017).

The next section delves into the problem of under-reporting of cases of GBV in HEIs. Rape culture, stigma and judgment will be outlined as drivers of under-reporting of cases. Survivors opt not to report cases of GBV as they fear judgment and stigma relating to their experiences of violence.

2. 3 Enablers of GBV in HEIs: A Qualitative Review

2.3.1 Under-reporting of GBV

There is a shortage of literature on the under-reporting of GBV cases in HEIs. The knowledge and understanding of the prevalence of sexual harassment in HEIs worldwide has remained limited because of under-reporting (Cortina & Wasti, 2005). Literature shows that the main reason for the lack of research being done on the issue is that 90% of student victims choose not to report the incidences (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Chi Cantalupo, 2014; Fisher et al., 2000). Some research has shown that sexual harassment incidences are prevalent in HEIs in the USA as well. According to research, incidences of sexual harassment happen more frequently than they are reported (Dastile, 2004l; Fitzgerald et al., 1988).

Due to under-reporting and low numbers of incidences being officially reported, institutions may perceive that GBV is not a matter of concern in their institutions (Saferspaces, 2014) as many survivors of GBV on HEIs campuses do not report their cases to the institution's authorities (Dhlomo et al., 2012; Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018; Mabusela, & Dlamini, 2013). This then has a negative impact on how the institutions respond to the prevalence of GBV on

their campuses. The under-reporting of cases hinders a fuller understanding of the problem of GBV in HEIs as many cases go unreported. Stigma and judgment on survivors of GBV have been labelled as one of the enablers of GBV in society.

2.3.2 Rape Culture as an enabler of GBV

Scholars have argued that the global high prevalence of sexual violence in HEIs is evidence that it has been embedded and accepted within HEIs cultures (Boonzaier et al, 2019; Canli & Kaya, 2016; Gardner, 2009).

The term rape culture was coined by feminist writer Susan Brownmiller in 1975 in her book Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape (Garcia and Vemuri, 2017). According to Brownmiller the term rape culture referred to the acceptance and normalisation of sexual assault (Brownmiller, 1975). Additionally, Garcia and Vemuri (2017) defined rape culture as cultural beliefs and practices and/or social practices which allow sexual violence and rape to continue being normalised, expected, and accepted in society and HEIs. Rape culture is driven by patriarchal ideologies that associate "violence with sexuality" (p. 246); force is positioned as being normal and seen as a part of sex. Rape culture is also enabled by the normalisation and condoning of violence and sexism in different spaces such as popular and mass culture, the legal spaces, in the news and media, and in educational institutions (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017). When individuals and institutions fail to speak out against the normalisation of violence and sexism, rape culture flourishes and continues to influence the perpetration of GBV.

Additionally, rape culture is often enabled through discourses of victim blaming that dominate public, media and HEI spaces (Sonke Gender Justice and Health-E News, 2017). Survivors of GBV have often been blamed for their experiences instead of the perpetrator. Rape myths which argue that survivors have the responsibility of protecting themselves from any harm including GBV are used to justify the harsh responses and questioning that is placed on the survivors (Finchilescu and Dugard, 2018). Similarly, GBV directed towards survivors is experienced by students in HEIs as it is experienced by survivors in the public.

Boonzaier et al (2019) argued that the use of language about GBV within statements and other communication by HEIs also contributes to identifying the position of the institutions towards GBV.

The statements and communications show the stance of the institution in dealing with GBV and these need to be interrogated. Language is sometimes used to further advance rape culture in HEIs and therefore institutions should respond in ways that suggest that they strongly oppose GBV on their campuses. Boonzaier et al (2019) suggested that HEIs need to give more attention to the practices and policies on GBV but also to the language that is used by institutions in communicating about GBV. Tsikata (2007) argued that toxic university cultures which enable gender inequalities to thrive must be interrogated as these continue to negatively impact women's access to education and participation in HEIs. Reasoning about the low levels of women's participation in higher education institutions has been attributed to the gender inequalities that exist in the larger society, showing that HEIs are not exempted from gender inequalities (Tsikata, 2007). University spaces have been designed as men's clubs with the space infested by ideas of the man-as-thinker, man-as-athlete, and a space where boys are initiated into manhood (Barnes, 2007). Barnes (2007) argues that women students in HEIs are often seen as fulfilling a quarter of the number of women required to attend university. This then affects the ways in which they are treated within these institutions. The prevalence of rape culture in HEIs is seen as an issue of great concern. Rape culture influences how women students are viewed and treated in HEIs. It is important to study rape culture in HEIs as it enables the prevalence of GBV in these institutions and it influences how women students experience the institutions.

2.3.3 Stigma and Judgment

Factors such as the stigma against survivors of GBV affect the reporting of cases of GBV. In general, South Africa faces the challenge of under-reporting of cases of GBV. Studies on the stigma against survivors of GBV have reported that stigma against survivors of GBV exacerbates negative mental health and problems with physical wellbeing. Stigma against survivors of GBV further influences the chances of survivors experiencing further violence (Barnett et al., 2016; Buchbinder and Eisikovits 2003; Miller et al. 2011; Street and Arias 2001). Studies show that when survivors experience stigma based on their experiences of GBV, this leads to a reduced likelihood of them reporting cases of GBV (Abrahams & Jewkes 2010; Ahrens 2006; Barnett et al., 2016; Fugate et al. 2005; Miller et al. 2011; Williams and Mickelson 2008). Research has shown that women survivors of GBV often internalise stigma. The internalised stigma is said to be influenced by discrimination, judgment and the fear of

status loss (Abrahams & Jewkes 2010; Barnett et al., 2016; Bos et al. 2013; Kisanga et al. 2011; Overstreet & Quinn 2013).

A study by Ahrens (2006) suggested that survivors of rape often suffer silencing in the form of negative reactions from those who are supposed to be their support providers leading them to not speak out about their experiences to anyone else. The judgment/negative reactions from support providers also contributes to the problem of under-reporting as it influences the silencing of survivors of GBV.

According to Sabina et al., 2017 in Hendricks and Kanjiri (2020). judgment is the main reason why some victims do not report, because of the fear of judgment when they report their experiences of GBV. Victims fear being judged by those in their close networks and their communities. Some of those who fall victim to these incidents do not have the means to access formal support like counselling centres and most rely on close relatives and friends for support. Those they run to for support are often not equipped with the skills and knowledge to assist them (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). The stigma, judgment, and the lack of formal support motivates survivors' not to report their experiences of GBV. The lack of support and adequate assistance has a negative impact on survivors of GBV and the reporting of cases of GBV. The lack of resources dedicated to assisting survivors of GBV has been labelled as a hindrance to the reporting progress.

2.3.4 Lack of Resources

The World Health Organisation (WHO) noted that services dealing with sexual harassment and sexual violence are often scattered. Victims must travel to different areas to receive assistance for the same case, making the services and the care that they receive less efficient (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). In addition, when victims report sexual offenses at their local police station the case is often handed back to their institution for investigation (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020; Senn et al., 2015). This affects the reporting of cases; victims are often discouraged because of all the trouble they endure during the reporting process.

Aina and Kulshrestha, (2018) argued that because of the complex reasons behind under-reporting, institutions need to create safer channels for victims to report. These channels need to be efficient in assisting and protecting victims and ensuring that their needs are addressed.

It is important to study and understand the reasons why survivors choose not to report cases of GBV as this greatly impacts our understanding of the prevalence of GBV in HEIs. When we understand these, we are better able to implement better ways for survivors to report cases of GBV, this then leads to better ways of addressing GBV with greater success in victim/survivor-centred ways and ensuring that survivors receive the best care and support.

The next section delves into a discussion on the interventions and policies as interventions to address GBV in HEIs.

2. 5 Interventions to address GBV at HEIs

2.5.1 Policies as responses to GBV

In the past twenty years, sexual harassment has become one of the main problems faced by universities around the world and one that requires urgent attention. Universities have the responsibility to protect students and to create environments conducive to learning and doing research. When the university fails to protect them from sexual harassment and fails to protect them after an incident of sexual harassment then it has also failed to fulfil its main responsibility which is to protect (Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004). Therefore, HEIs are ethically bound to put in place frameworks that clearly define and explain sexual harassment (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007).

To assist in addressing the issues of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and under-reporting, universities often introduce policies and strategies that seek to inform how these issues should be addressed (Perkins & Warner, 2017). The efficacy of a policy aimed at addressing GBV depends on several factors (Saferspaces, 2014). In these frameworks, the institution should clearly state their attitude towards sexual harassment, they should announce the process of lodging complaints and the penalties when one is found guilty of such an offense (Small 1990 in Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004). Policies aimed at addressing GBV need to be

integrated to address both structural factors and individual factors which shape the context of GBV perpetration and victimisation (Saferspaces, 2014). The process of developing a policy in universities should be seen as a process of strengthening awareness of the prevalence of sexual harassment on campus and the need to address this issue (Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004). Some institutions have opted to move away from "the traditional criminal justice reporting mechanisms" that they previously used and introduced mechanisms such as victims' advocates and "on-campus rape crisis counsellors" (Karjane et al., 2002, p. 132). Victims in universities that have adopted these changes are seen to report higher rates of sexual harassment (Chi Cantalupo, 2014).

2. 6 Policies of Universities in South Africa

Between 2015 and 2016, student protests in South African HEIs critiqued institutional responses to sexual violence and GBV as a whole. Students in institutions around the country mobilised to show their frustrations with the prevalence of GBV on their campuses and the unsatisfactory institutional responses. The students suggested that HEIs responses to GBV continued to enable the development of rape culture in South Africa's HEIs (Boonzaier et al, 2019; Rahlanga, 2016; Saferspaces, 2014). In response to these critiques, HEIs adopted systems that can be used to report cases of GBV and have since updated their policies on GBV. These efforts have not been seen as satisfactory or helpful in mitigating the issue of GBV in HEIs (Boonzaier et al, 2019; Corke, 2015; Toerien, 2016).

This section reviews the implementation of policies by different institutions aimed at addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Similar to other HEIs, UCKAR has implemented a policy as a response to the prevalence of GBV on its campus. This section critically outlines studies on policies put in place by universities in South Africa, the successes of these policies in the universities and their shortfalls.

Hendricks and Kanjiri (2020). conducted a study to investigate the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence in HEIs in the Eastern Cape South Africa. The study aimed to investigate the usefulness of the sexual harassment policies in addressing the issues of sexual

harassment and sexual violence in four universities namely Rhodes University, Fort Hare University, Nelson Mandela University, and Walter Sisulu University. The sample consisted of 40 women students. The researchers sampled 10 participants from each university. For purposes of this study, the researcher will focus the discussion on the findings regarding the sexual harassment policy at Rhodes University. The researchers created a checklist containing elements that they saw as important in forming a comprehensive sexual harassment policy at a HEI. The study reported on the participants experiences and discussions on the methods of reporting sexual offenses at their respective universities and the effectiveness of campus support services available to survivors at their universities. They obtained the results from interviews with the 10 participants that they interviewed and from studying the policies themselves. The findings suggested that the students and staff did not receive adequate or any education and training relating to the policy. There was a lack of display of the policy, some participants did not know where they could access the policy, there were no seminars to educate stakeholders on the policy, and the university also failed to provide adequate training to supervisors, leaders, and student leaders.

The results from a study conducted by Wilken and Badenhorst (2004) analysing sexual harassment policies in eight universities in South Africa correlated with the results from the study by Hendricks and Kanjiri (2020). The results suggested that participants of the study felt as though management had failed somehow to implement the policy at the university (Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004). The participants indicated that they were unsure of the responsibilities of leaders and supervisors regarding the policy. The university did not offer any periodic feedback regarding the policy nor any reports on cases. The participants questioned the effectiveness of the policy and the success rates of the disciplinary steps taken. Some of the participants felt as though the zero tolerance for sexual harassment statement was vague and lacked weight (Wilken & Badenhorst, 2004). The results of both these studies show that universities in South Africa often fail to implement the policies that are set to address GBV which led to the formulation of these policies. This failure, therefore, contributes to the continuation of GBV on these campuses.

In the discussion above, one could note what Gouws and Kritzinger (2007) recognised a gap between policy making and policy implementation. Even though UCKAR had formulated a policy and grievance procedure, there are huge gaps in the implementation of these mostly in the training and advertising of these. Gouws and Kritzinger (2007) also noted that literature

shows that this is indeed an issue within institutions globally. Institutions formulate policies and grievance procedures and fail to implement them, and these are seen as "only as good as paper" (p.71).

2. 7 Gaps in policy interventions

Students and researchers in South Africa have raised concerns regarding three primary gaps in the prevention practice and policy of sexual violence. Firstly, they argued that the patriarchal culture in HEIs enables the perpetration of sexual violence and assault on the campuses (Boonzaier et al., 2019; Clowes et al., 2009; Collins, Loots, Meyiwa, & Mistrey, 2009), and women are seen as sexual conquests. Secondly, HEI's responses to women students' experiences of GBV have been considered unsatisfactory as the burden to prove violation is placed on the women students. Thirdly, policies fail to address sexual harassment and sexual violence cases such as revenge pornography and online harassment (DeKeseredy, 2014; see especially Boonzaier et al, 2019; Hall & Hearn, 2018). Policies are therefore not sufficiently complex enough to deal with the issue of GBV in HEIs. With these shortcomings in policy interventions, HEIs have been accused of designing interventions that ensure that the institution's brand and reputation are protected instead of addressing the prevalence of GBV (Collins et al., 2009; Boonzaier et al, 2019). Saferspaces (2014) argued that the lack of effective structures and policies set to address GBV in HEIs are key risk factors in enabling the continuation of GBV in HEIs. This emphasises the importance of comprehensive policies and proper structures in HEIs set to deal with cases of GBV. These play an important role in ensuring the safety of students in these institutions.

Several scholars have argued that for institutions to effectively address the issue of GBV on their campuses, effective measures need to be taken to change the institutional cultures such as the long accepted rape culture and the social norms in the societies which the institutions are set which enable the thriving of GBV and rape culture in HEIs (Boonzaier et al, 2019; Collins et al., 2009; Walsh, 2015). Social norms in which the institution is set, and the institutional norms are important in "understanding the risk factors" that enable GBV in HEIs (Saferspaces, 2014). HEIs stakeholders (policymakers, educators, and administrators) need to have a better understanding of the history of rape culture, how it manifests, and the ways in which it evolves (Garcia and Vemuri, 2017). These should be considered as the starting points for designing measures which seek to address the issue of GBV in HEIs. In responding to the gaps in policies

and the failure by university managements in implementing adequate strategies to deal with GBV in HEIs and other challenges faced by students in these institutions, students in these institutions have held protests as ways of voicing their concerns.

2. 8 Student Activism in HEIs

Students around the country have challenged several inequalities which include GBV, racism, sexism, and classism, and doing so introduced an intersectional approach to protest movements in HEIs. The following section discusses some of the intersecting inequalities that students have protested against and the movements that students started in order to speak out against the inequalities they face in HEIs. The section will also outline how the students have brought a discussion of intersectional inequalities to HEIs in South Africa.

As a form of addressing the issue of the prevalence of GBV and women students not feeling safe in HEIs, women students have been at the forefront of activism and discussions. Student movements have called for changes in the leadership structures in their HEIs; they have called for leadership that is more gender-sensitive and policies that deal with and address sexual harassment more effectively (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). Some institutions in the USA have criminalised sexual harassment behaviours in their institutions and put in place policies to guide processes of dealing with sexual harassment cases on their campuses. Sexual harassment is seen as a form of sex discrimination in schools in the USA. Title IX a federal law "established civil rights in education" (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, 2001 in Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018, p. 122). Additionally, the federal government ensures that universities in the United States of America receive funding aimed at addressing the issue of GBV in the country's universities (Finchilescu & Dugard, 2018; Hull, 2015). In a similar effort, the University of Ibadan concluded its Sexual Harassment policy document, and this was approved by the senate in 2012. Individuals found guilty of sexual harassment or of falsely accusing someone of sexual harassment face penalties (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018). Policies have also been put in place in South African HEIs as responses to the prevalence of GBV on their campuses. An example of such a university is the University of Cape Town. Additionally, the university has set up a 24-hour survivor support portfolio. The portfolio aims to offer survivors of rape, sexual harassment and sexual assault support and advice relating to their experiences (*Survivor Support | Office for Inclusivity and Change*, n.d.).

Garcia and Vemuri (2017) suggested that HEIs need to have policies in place in order for them to improve their responses to sexual violence. They added that HEIs need to put in place educational programmes for all those within the institution and policies which relate to the socio-historical context in which the institutions are located. In this way, the programmes and the policies speak to the persons in HEIs and their experiences which are influenced by the context in which they are.

2. 9 Movements in Higher education: through an intersectional lens

Since the 1990s the single narrative of gender-based violence being addressed in terms of social relations and patriarchy have been queried. Feminists have believed that gender-based violence should be considered beyond these two narratives. In addition, intersectional feminist scholars have argued for gender-based violence to be studied under an intersectional lens. These individuals showed awareness of the linkage between citizenship status, ethnicity, age, disability, and sexuality in gender inequalities and how these inequalities contribute to the creation of more vulnerability to other forms of violence (Crenshaw, 1993; Mama, 1996; Boonzaier & Gadd, 2015). These linkages have been considered by students in different student movements.

Women students have often drawn inspiration from academic work by African American writers and theories such as bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins and African feminist writers such as Oyewumi Oyeronke to outline some of their experiences of inequality and violence as black women in HEIs institutions (Gouws, 2017, p. 3). Students used intersectionality to refer to the interlocking identities which resulted in being oppressed. Women students understood intersectionality as being more than identity but also encompassing experiences and subjectivities (Gouws, 2017). To explain their belief and use of intersectionality during different movements, students worked with the phrase “my feminism will be intersectional, or it will be bullshit” (Dzodan, 2011 in Gouws, 2017). This phrase was used for movements that challenged the persisting colonialism and then led to movements against the prevalence of gender-based violence in HEIs (Gouws, 2017). Johnston (2014) defined social movements as key forces used to push for change within the modern world. Movements are used by collectives, in this case by students in HEIs to push for equitable and just HEIs. Thus, students also used intersectionality to challenge the exclusion of black women from the processes of knowledge production (Gouws, 2017).

2.9.1 #RhodesMustFall (#RMF)

The #RhodesMustFall movement started with students challenging the presence of colonial symbolisms around HEIs and in particular at the University of Cape Town which still had the statue of Cecil John Rhodes. Students argued that the presence of the statue meant that the institution continued to glorify colonisation. They suggested that the presence of the statue symbolised institutionalised sexism and racism. At Stellenbosch University students started the #OpenStellenbosch campaign. The campaign challenged the use of Afrikaans as a language of instruction. Students felt as though the use of Afrikaans was exclusionary to those who did not speak or understand the language. This campaign was then transformed into #FreeEducation and #FeesMustFall. All of these encompassed the experiences of black students in former white HEIs and how these continue to be exclusionary and violent towards black students (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018).

The topic of gender-based violence emerged when a woman was violated at the administration building on the UCT campus. This incident took place during the #RhodesMustFall movement in the administration building that the students had occupied, highlighting the seriousness of gender-based violence and sexual violence at HEIs – an issue that had been somewhat silenced in student protests up to that point. On the 22nd of April 2016 at the university currently known as Rhodes, an anonymous post was shared on Facebook. The post was a list of 11 men students and former students who were alleged sexual violence offenders. In relation to this movement, students from HEIs around the country started the #EndRapeCulture campaign. The #EndRapeCulture campaign aimed to highlight the lack of support from men students that participated in other # campaigns and the lack of support from management regarding sexual violence (Gouws, 2017).

2.9.2 #FeesMustFall

Class and race are closely linked in South Africa. Therefore, black students' experiences of racism often intersect with their experiences of class. Black students trying to complete their qualifications also face the challenge of providing for their family members left behind. Some facing this challenge end up not completing their qualification because of the numerous

challenges that come with being a sole provider at home (Letseka and Maile 2008 in Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018). Black students face discrimination for being black and poor. Black students' experiences in HEIs have been made up of exclusion in the form of symbols and forms of representation around the institutions, discourses on transformation being racialised and them being black and poor students (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018).

In relation to these experiences, students started the #FeesMustFall campaign. This campaign was premised on the intersection of class, gender, and race in their experiences. Students foregrounded class identity during the campaign, but discussions lead to the revelation of how class intersects with gender and race. Students acknowledged how African women have suffered from racism, patriarchy, and labour exploitation influenced by their skin colour (Gouws, 2017).

When the #FeesMustFall and the #RhodesMustFall movements started black students raised awareness of feeling excluded in the institutions that they were part of. To raise awareness students drew on the work of black consciousness theorists such as Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko. The first decline in support from black men was at the start of the *#RUReferenceList*. Several white students supported the different demonstrations during this movement, including the topless demonstrations which were in solidarity with their fellow black women students. The discussion of intersectionality surfaced in this regard as well where their whiteness gave them a different position from that of their fellow black women students (Gouws, 2017).

2.9.3 #EndRapeCulture Campaign

University culture has often been criticised for enabling and exacerbating violence against women students. The arrangements of HEIs create conditions where people assume that sexual harassment is to be tolerated and expected in these spaces (Armstrong, et al. 2018).

The #EndRapeCulture campaign aimed to highlight the fluid relationship between gender, race, sexuality and gender-based violence. African women joined to raise awareness of the pervasiveness of gender-based violence and how institutional culture exacerbates the issue of gender-based violence. To counter the colonial gaze of hypersexualised black women, LGBTQI students' and African women held naked protests as a way of claiming their bodies back. However, the lack of visibility of white women students evidenced the differences in

experiences between them and black women students and some LGBTQI students (Gouws, 2017).

Intersectionality within HEIs movements has not been given enough attention. For black students, HEIs present several challenges and violent experiences with their identities being the determining factor of these experiences (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018). Soudien (2008 in Boonzaier

& Mkhize, 2018) suggested that black students face deep problems "virtually everywhere in the system" (p. 668). Therefore, it is imperative that we study the intersectionality of students' experiences and the movements at HEIs. To understand the complete experiences and the motivations behind the student movements, we need to understand how their individual identities influence the movements in which they take part and how these movements affect them based on their identities. As researchers, we need to do more than just speak of the discourses of students' experiences in HEIs. We need to study how persisting colonisation influences the experiences of students and how it influences other experiences of inequalities (Gouws, 2017). As seen in the paragraph above, some of the students' # campaigns were foregrounded on race then they evolved and included a conversation on gender and colonisation. Therefore, it is imperative to study the intersectionality of the experiences of students. In support of this Boonzaier (2014b) argued that one type of violence cannot be understood or studied in isolation.

2. 10 Gaps in literature

Finchilescu and Dugard (2018) note that there is still a gap in systemic surveys done to understand the experiences of gender-based violence by staff members and students in South African universities. Even though research has been conducted on the prevalence of GBV in HEIs in South Africa, there is a lack of clear understanding of the extent and the nature of the problem. This gap could be due to the issue of under-reporting of GBV cases in institutions and the lack of adequate responses to reported cases (Saferspaces, 2014), the issue of institutional culture which enable the continuation of GBV on HEIs and the lack of studies being done on gender in African HEIs (Feminist Africa 8, 2007).

Literature on sexual harassment and sexual violence mostly focuses on studying students or the victims of HEIs as research subjects. The voices of these individuals are lacking in the conversations regarding their experiences and the interventions that should be implemented to ensure their safety in these institutions. My research aims to incorporate the voices of students in conversations regarding their experiences and what their advice would be in addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence. To better understand the experiences of students in HEIs, scholars need to position students as co-researchers, as experts of their experiences. There is little to no mention of the influences and roles played by students in interventions regarding GBV. The literature mostly focuses on studying students as protesters without any urgency or understanding of their experiences. Literature reduces student movements against sexual harassment and sexual violence to just being demonstrations bearing no fruit or to irritation. These demonstrations are reduced to just the act of protesting, researchers fail to investigate the experiences of the students and the conversations that take place during these. These are important factors as they influence what happens next in the institution and the decisions that are made as a result. Student protests have influenced several decisions and changes in HEIs and should be recognized for such. Students in different universities have played significant roles in the formulation of policies and in encouraging conversations around sexual harassment and sexual violence as seen in the role played by students at the University of Stellenbosch (Gouws, 2017). My research, therefore, seeks to investigate and add to the literature on the experiences of student activists and those who took part in the

#RUReferenceList and the *Silent Protest*. My research seeks to raise the importance of students' experiences and narratives in understanding sexual harassment and sexual violence and their impact on students and staff members. Through this research, students are placed as active role players in intervention formulation and the implementation of those interventions. I seek to emphasise the importance and the great need for collaboration between all university stakeholders in formulating interventions for the issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

2. 11 Conclusion

Sexual harassment and sexual violence have become matters of great concern in HEIs. Literature indicates that sexual harassment, sexual violence, and GBV are prevalent in South African HEIs and international universities as well. Rape-culture and under-reporting have been reported as being enablers of GBV. As a response to the prevalence of GBV institutions

often formulate policies and grievance procedures in response to these high numbers. Unfortunately, the failure in the implementation of these policies and grievance procedures results in their failure and the disregard for them. When institutions fail to implement the policies that they have formulated, victims lose trust in the institutions and their ability to deal with GBV and often seek informal assistance. UCKAR is one of the South African universities which have formulated a policy in response to the prevalence of GBV at the university. A timeline of the issue of GBV shows that the university has not been successful in addressing the issue; this is shown from the responses and protest action held by students at the university. The Silent Protest and the *#RUReferenceList* have been the latest responses to the issue. The next chapter looks at the methodology of the study. The chapter will outline Intersectionality at the theoretical framework of the study with Decolonial Intersectionality Narrative Analysis as the analysis tool, followed by an outline of the ethical considerations and a discussion on reflectivity.

3. Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The thesis seeks to explore the narratives of those who took part in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest.* These are individuals who are currently attending or former students at the university or employed or former employees at Rhodes (UCKAR). The thesis seeks to study the narratives of their experiences; the similarities and differences in their experiences of the two case study protests and how participants' identities and experiences shaped their participation in the two protests. The thesis also explores how participants construct the events that inspired the two protests, and also explores how participants construct the events that inspired the two protests, as well to an end.

The study is on GBV at UCKAR; thus, this chapter will begin with an outline of GBV at UCKAR from the 1940s and responses to the prevalence of GBV. The chapter will then discuss why intersectionality is a suitable theoretical framework for studying the narratives on gender-based violence (GBV), movements, and protests aimed at addressing this issue at the university currently known as Rhodes (UCKAR). I will move on to argue for the suitability of the case study methodology, outline the methods and data collection strategies, and the suitability of the decolonial intersectional narrative as the method of data analysis. Lastly, this chapter discusses reflexivity and the ethical considerations undertaken in this study.

3.3 Study Setting

3.2.1 GBV at Rhodes University and Responses

The thesis aims to study to explore GBV at UCKAR and to explore the narratives of those who took part in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest* therefore the next section will outline a series of GBV cases at UCKAR outlined by de Klerk and colleagues in 2011. de Klerk outlined the history of GBV at UCKAR and the responses by the university to the cases. This section will draw on the report by (de Klerk et al, 2011). Furthermore, it will scrutinize the effectiveness of these strategies in addressing sexual harassment and sexual violence at UCKAR.

In the era prior to the 1940s UCKAR only admitted male students and post the 1940s the university opened its doors to admitting women students as well (de Klerk et al, 2011). With this, the university began constantly dealing with complaints regarding sexism, sexual harassment, and gender inequality. These acts were seen as a backlash against the decision to accept women students into the institution. The acceptance of women students was mostly seen as an attack on a culture that had been preserved for 100 or so years (de Klerk et al, 2011). During this time the responsibility was placed on the women to protect themselves (Brownmiller, 1976 in de Klerk et al, 2011). Recommendations to re-evaluate the university's security system were made and a call for an increase in security guard visibility was recommended. Even though the recommendation was approved by Council, five months after the approval nothing had been implemented. The Student Representative Council (SRC) expressed their dissatisfaction with how the university chose to deal with the issue. The lack of implementation of the recommendations showed that the university failed to see the seriousness of the issue, they failed to see the immediacy and the need to deal with the issue. Soon after, there were suggestions and pleas that women needed to dress sensibly and ensure that they walk in groups to ensure safety (Rhodeo, 1985 in de Klerk et al, 2011). These suggestions again assert Millers (1976) rape strategy discussion and how the responsibility is constantly placed on women to keep themselves safe against perpetrators instead of addressing the key issue which is the violating behaviour of perpetrators.

In 1986 further complaints were raised regarding restrictive residence rules placed on women students. These rules were said to be placed as measures to protect these students from the perpetrators. Women students were not allowed out of their residences after 23:30. This suggested that the responsibility fell upon women students to keep themselves safe by restricting their movements; this ignored that some attacks would happen before the curfew and therefore the restriction did not provide suitable solutions to address GBV nor to ensure perpetrator accountability. The university set restrictions for women students and ignored the pleas for better lighting around the campus, more security visibility, and for a counselling centre to be set up to support victims (de Klerk et al, 2011). In 1987 a Counselling Centre was set up on a "one-year trial basis". This was a good move toward supporting students mentally and emotionally. Sadly in 1989, there was an increase in the number of attacks around campus. This sparked rage, resulting in the forming of a women's group. The group was set up to tackle issues around gender and the issue of safety around the campus (Anon, 1989 in de Klerk et al, 2011). Again, the university responded to this by encouraging women students to walk in

groups and encouraging them to open cases against perpetrators. Once again, the solution provided by the university was to restrict the freedom of women on the campus instead of addressing the issue at hand which is the perpetration of GBV and the actions of the perpetrators (Rhodeo, 1990, in de Klerk et al, 2011).

Scholars often criticise the ways in which HEIs respond to GBV cases. Responses regarding the prevalence of GBV in higher education institutions have enforced what Gqola termed the 'fear factory'. Boonzaier et al (2019) noted the notion of a fear factory being used in a statement by the University of Cape Town post a GBV case involving a student from the university. The statement read "avoid walking or running alone; avoid areas where you may be isolated or vulnerable to attack; please think about your daily route and make arrangements beforehand so that you are walking or running in groups" (p. 6). This statement shows a common response to violence against women. Women are cautioned and their rights and freedoms are limited as a way of advising them on how they can avoid being violated. Little is said about the behaviour of perpetrators or how they need to avoid perpetrating violence against women. Women are often told to avoid going into men's rooms, to avoid certain spaces, and to move in groups. These are used as safety precautions against being violated which have proven to not prevent men from raping or abusing (Gqola, 2015). These amplify the problematic beliefs that men cannot be stopped and they "cannot control their sex drive" and they will do what they want to do including violating women (Anderson & Doherty, 2007; Weiss, 2009 in Boonzaier et al, 2019, p. 7).

In 1990 the management at Rhodes University was still predominantly men, this also included senior lecturers and heads of departments (Activate, 2003 in de Klerk et al, 2011). This influenced the manner GBV was dealt with and the kind of decisions that were taken. During this period the student body still had little confidence in the university and its handling of GBV on campus (de Klerk et al, 2011). In 1993 an ad hoc committee was established. The aim was to investigate the cases of sexual violence around the campus. In June 1993 the committee drafted a sexual harassment policy which was completed in 2001. In 1995 an Anti-Harassment officer was appointed. The position was then discontinued in mid-2004 (Activate, 1997 in de Klerk et al, 2011).

In 2000 the Board of Residences made several recommendations to ensure that students are safe on campus. The Board suggested "free, direct access telephones which would be installed"

around campus (de Klerk et al, 2011, p. 120). This recommendation was never implemented. In 2003 the Board demanded that the university investigates the issue of safety around campus, for security to start patrolling, and for better lighting. All of these were ignored by the university's management (Activate, 2003 in de Klerk et al, 2011).

In 2004 May the university implemented a 'green route' which meant that the university had increased security guard presence around campus. Despite this, a student was gang-raped during inter-varsity on the 15th of August. Some individuals were not happy with how this case was handled by the university and as a result, a march was held. As a response to the march, the university set up a task team to investigate the case and other cases of sexual violence on the campus (de Klerk et al, 2011).

In 2006 Larissa Klazinga in collaboration with the One-in-Nine Campaign organised the first Silent Protest on the campus which was attended by 80 women participants. At the time, Klazinga worked as the Student Services Officer at UCKAR. The protests aimed to raise awareness about rape, to unite rape survivors, and encourage women to speak out regarding their violations. Since then, it has attracted many women, some of whom are students and other members of the Makhanda community. In 2013 more than 1500 women participated in the protest (Khumalo, 2012). The protest was also directed at challenging the sexual violence policies set by the university. Even with these protests being held yearly and the presence of the different offices on the university campus, the issue of GBV persists on the UCKAR campus.

In 2016 the university experienced another sense of outrage at the number of GBV incidents. On the 17th of April 2016, an anonymous post was shared on the RU Queer Confessions, Questions, and Crushes page on Facebook. The post was a list of eleven names of current and former students at the university. It was alleged that the names on the list were known sexual offenders. A few hours after the list had been shared, students mobilised to the different residences to confront those whose names appeared on the list. On the 20th of April 2016, four students were arrested during the protests for barricading an entrance to the university. Later that day students were made aware that the university had applied for an interdict that prevented students from disrupting lectures and going into residences. This made it hard for the students to keep the momentum of the protest (An Activate Report, 2016).

It is important to understand the long history of GBV at UCKAR as this assist in drawing the link between student responses to the prevalence of GBV from the 1940s to date. With this

study setting we are able to note the different strategies that students have used to express their concerns about the long persisting issue of the prevalence of GBV at the UCKAR. The timeline is useful in drawing a picture regarding the responses by the university and its management to students' concerns on GBV and the prevalence of GBV.

3.2Theoretical Framework: Using Intersectionality in Addressing Gender-based violence

The study employs intersectionality as its guiding theoretical framework. The term intersectionality refers to the idea that class, race, sexuality, gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, and ability operate as corresponding phenomena (Collins, 2015).

Intersectionality is foregrounded in Critical Race Theory and Black feminism (Mabaso & Ndlovu, 2019). It emerges from black feminist theory on gender oppression and draws on the idea that gender oppression cannot be sufficiently understood without linking it to classism, racism, and other oppressions. Intersectionality is founded on the notion that experiences and "systems of oppression" are closely linked to individuals' identities (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018, p. 6). Crenshaw was the first to term this phenomenon as being intersectionality but African American women such as Sojourner Truth ("Ain't I Woman"), Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell and Harriet Tubman in the nineteenth century had written extensively about it (Gouws, 2017). Intersectionality speaks to the entangled relations of political, social, economic, cultural, material and power aspects of identity, and how it shapes marginalisation and creates complex webs of inequality (Bilge, 2010; Dill, 2020). Roth (2013, p. 2 in Gouws, 2017) added that intersectionality is a web of inequalities and termed these as "simultaneous entanglements of inequalities" (p. 22). It focuses on how one's identities, the structural systems, systems of power, ways of resistance, and sets of marginalisation intersect in moving ways. It also refers to individuals' experiences of privilege, and power, and how one's identities relate to these experiences. Crenshaw (1991) suggested that the violence women experience is complicated by the intersection of other identities such as class and race. This complex interplay of inequalities needs to be centred in scholars' analyses (Samuels & Ross-Sheriff, 2008).

The participants of both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* supported a cause that fought against the oppression of women through gender-based violence. In studying this type of oppression, it is important to study how participants' identities shape their experiences and how their identities are represented through their activism within protest action against GBV, which can be achieved through the guiding lens of intersectionality.

The use of intersectionality is important in the research as I seek to understand "the multidimensionality of black women's experiences" (Lutz et al., 2011, p. 25) and to speak against using a single axis to analyse the experiences of those who participated in the two case study protests.

Intersectionality challenges the marginalisation and exclusion of knowledge produced by black women (Gouws, 2017). As a black women researcher, this is very important for me and my co-researchers (study participants) with a majority of them being black women. This project will contribute to the experiences of those who choose to stand up against gender-based violence in HEIs and will work to legitimise the knowledge shared by participants, and importantly foregrounds how their narratives are shaped by structures of power, oppression and how meaning is attached to resistance in spaces where marginalisation is experienced.

3. 3 Gender-based violence in HEIs and intersectionality

South Africa has been named the rape capital of the world resulting of the high prevalence of gender-based violence in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2010 in Gordon & Collins, 2013). The high prevalence of gender-based violence and mostly sexual violence in the country undermines women's citizenship. The high prevalence demotes women to being "second-class citizens" in their own country (Du Toit, 2005 in Gordon & Collins, 2013, p. 97). Students in HEIs are not exempted from this violence. Safer Spaces (2015) reports that the country has a high rate of sexual violence against children. This means that students in HEIs would be exposed to this violence or would have experienced this violence before or during their university careers. Values and attitudes such as male sexual entitlement and male superiority in HEIs lead to the exacerbation of gender-based violence in these institutions (Safer Spaces, 2015).

Researchers of race and gender have always been interested in sexual violence and the interlocking of race and gender in issues around sexual violence in HEIs and the public. Researchers of sexual violence have argued that sexual violence is a consequence and a cause of inequality. They have also associated sexual violence with class, age, ability status, sexuality, citizenship status, race, ethnicity, and nationality (Armstrong, et al., 2018). Because many women's experiences of violence are shaped by their intersecting identities such as class and race, therefore researchers of violence against women need to adopt an intersectional approach to their analysis of their experiences of violence (Crenshaw, 1991).

Sociologists suggest that racial and gender inequality is entrenched and reproduced by institutions such as HEIs and other organisations (Armstrong, et al. 2018; Bonilla-Silva 1997; Collins 1990, 1998, 2004; Henry 2016; Martin 2004; Risman 2004; Welsh 1999). Ignoring the intersectional nature of gender-based violence in HEIs is one of the many reasons why it has been difficult dealing or addressing the issue within institutions. There is a greater need for an exploration of the interlocking of race, class, and gender where experiences of gender-based violence are stated and acknowledged (Safer Spaces, 2015). Interventions and movements working to address GBV need to acknowledge the differences in race and/or class backgrounds of the survivors. When this is not done it limits the assistance survivors get because of the failure to acknowledge the different obstacles that women face and how their identities shape their experiences. An example of the acknowledgment of intersectionality in addressing GBV is the #EndRapeCulture Campaign. The campaign was focused on gender and sexuality, race, and the relations between these. African women organised to address and speak out about the prevalence of gender-based violence and the harmful institutional cultures which enforce and normalise this kind of violence against women (Gouws, 2017).

Scholars from different fields have suggested that sexual violence is responsible for the reproduction of several intersecting inequalities. This results from the fact that sexual violence deeply involves domination in race, class, gender, nation, and other inequalities (Armstrong, et al. 2018). Women activist writers from Latina, Black, Asian-American, Chicana, and Native communities have stressed the need to analyse the intersectionality of sexual violence for years.

This was motivated by the notion that black women's experiences are different from those of white women and black men (Collins & Bilge 2016, INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence 2016 in Armstrong et al, 2018).

Crenshaw (1991) argued that by ignoring our identity differences, we create tension within identity politics which then affects the efforts of politicising violence against women. If we are to effectively politicise violence and in this case gender-based violence at UCKAR, we must acknowledge the differences in identities and how these identities factor into our experiences as women with different identities. The use of intersectionality is important in the case of the experiences of participants of the two case study protests. The study aims to study the experiences of the participants and understanding how their identities factor into their experiences is important as it tells us more about how women experience violence, how they experience interventions aimed at addressing GBV and protests against GBV.

3. 4 Research Design: Feminist Case Study Research

Qualitative research has been imperative in holistically capturing the experiences of individuals' lives (Gergen, 2017) and is therefore suitable for studying the lived experiences of this study's participants. Qualitative research unpacks how people interpret and how they understand their experiences. Participants' interpretations and understandings are then used to understand their social realities (Haradhan, 2018). The qualitative approach is suitable for this research as it was used to explore the study participants' experiences and narratives and how their identities influenced their experiences.

Qualitative research has been particularly popular among feminist psychologists (Gergen, 2017), which centres questions of politics, power, and reflexivity. In its application of intersectionality, this research aligns itself with black feminist theory and acknowledges that feminist research is to be done by women, for women (Gilbert, 1994); in this case to study the experiences of women and the identities which factor in their experiences. Feminist research focuses on seeking social justice and advancing the voices of women and their influence in society. In addition, feminist researchers seek to explore alternative ways in which women's experiences can be understood (Baker, 2006; Harding, 1987; Gergen, 2017). Feminist research goes against objectivity, and it interrogates the relationship between the researcher and their co-researchers (Gilbert, 1994). This research goes against the idea of using research done with white men and the results obtained from this research as a reference point for all individuals. In the research, I interrogate my relationship with the co-researchers

and most importantly as someone who has similar experiences to my co-researchers as someone who also took part in the two case study protests.

The study employed case study methodology, with the *Silent protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* as the two selected case studies. Case studies are selected according to having rich information, uniqueness, and/or revelatory aspects (Stake, 1995; Patton, 1990; Johansson, 2007). *The Silent protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* have been chosen on the bases of their revelatory aspects regarding the prevalence of gender-based violence at the university currently known as Rhodes. The case studies have information regarding the experiences of the students of GBV on campus, and interventions by all stakeholders to address gender-based violence at the institution.

The thesis comprises five interviews, two with members of staff at UCKAR and three interviews with students/former students. I was also interested in what was written about the protests at the time and thus included two documents that were released at the time of the *#RUReferenceList* protest, the first one being a letter from concerned members of staff and the second one being a court interdict which was released by the Grahamstown High Court.

3. 5 Sampling and Participants

For study participants to be considered for the study they needed to have participated in the *Silent Protest,* the *#RUReferenceList*, or both movements, participants needed to meet the following criteria: students (or former students) and staff at Rhodes. To find the participants, purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling is a method used to match the sample of participants to the objectives and aims of the research study (Campbell et al., 2020). Purposive sampling assists in improving the quality of the study, its aims, and objectives and in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research results and data (Campbell et al., 2020).

The study participants were divided into three categories: students, former students, and staff. The interviews consisted of three black women students, two are students at the university currently known as Rhodes and one is a former student of the university. I also conducted interviews with two members of staff at the university. The study participants were recruited through social media advertising. I sent out invitations via email to lecturers who actively participated in these two movements and signed the concerned staff statement. These

strategies worked as I managed to reach out to my target sample. The participants agreed to take part in the study because they felt as though it was important for them to tell their stories and for them to take the opportunity to share their narratives of events. All the student participants identified as black. One lecturer identified as being white and one as being black.

3.6 Data collection and Procedure

I employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions and collected data from archived documents. The interviews were between 60 and 90 minutes long. Participants received a consent form (Appendix A) via email before the interview, this was done to allow the participants to forward any questions and concerns that the participants might have regarding participating in the study. The participants also received a resource list (Appendix B) in case they were triggered by any of the discussions during the interviews. The participants also received a demographics form (Appendix C) which requested them to record their demographic information. I collected two archive documents from the Universities Student Representatives Councils Facebook page that were used to narrate responses and views of different stakeholders at UCKAR. The first document is a four-page long court interdict issued on the 20th of April 2016 by UCKAR issued by the High Court of South Africa in Grahamstown and the second document is a one-page statement by the concerned staff/lecturers at the university.

During the interview process (refer to the interview schedule Appendix D), the participants were asked to tell me about themselves. This was used as an introduction and to allow them to establish their association with the university. The participants were asked to speak about their experiences of being a student at the university or a staff member at the university. The study participants were then asked to state if they participated in one or both movements and a follow-up question regarding their experiences of these.

Before ending the interview, the study participants were asked to reflect on what they would like people to know about the movements and those who participated in them. This was to allow the study participants to reflect on the narratives that were publicised of the movements and how they would like to counter these narratives or if they agree with these narratives.

3.7 Data Analysis

3.7.1 Decolonial Intersectional Narrative Analysis

The decolonial intersectional narrative analysis (DINA) is foregrounded on feminist research principles. DINA acknowledges that politics and power play a significant role in knowledge production and in the knowledge of the experiences of those who have previously been placed on the margins (Boonzaier and Shefer, 2006 in Boonzaier, 2019). Psychology as a discipline has been criticised for enforcing its status as a science and ignoring all forms of knowledge which are not considered as being scientific including the experiences of individuals. Additionally, mainstream Psychology has been criticised for not advancing the development of social justice and has often been said to further enforce experiences of marginalisation of groups already placed on the margins (Boonzaier 2019). Mainstream Psychology as a science focuses on the investigation of what is 'truth' with little attention paid on investigating subjective experiences (Durrheim, 1997). As a response to the problematic practices prevalent in mainstream forms of psychological research, DINA calls for research that acknowledges how power shapes the research process and that experiences of those on the margins are made more visible (Boonzaier 2019).

To analyse the study data, I will employ the four phases outlined by Boonzaier (2019).

The first phase seeks to analyse the narrative content of the study participants. During this phase, I will use thematic analysis (TA) to seek out themes in the narratives. This phase pays close attention to the holistic meanings attached to the narratives by the study participants. This phase investigates narratives on time, historical context, and place (Boonzaier, 2019).

During this phase, I will seek out the similarities and differences in the narratives of the participants and those from the archival documents. Thematic narrative analysis will be used to examine the meanings of the study participants and the archival documents in drawing of their experiences, power relations between all the stakeholders at the university, and the inequalities within the university and during the movements (Riessman, 2008). TA is used to analyse orderings and to generate themes that are related to the data from study participants. TA is considered suitable for any study which seeks to study interpretations (Ibrahim, 2012). DINA concerns itself with the meanings that narrators attach to their narratives and the

possibility of creating group belonging, social identity, and collective action (Boonzaier, 2019). Marks and Yardley (2004 in Ibrahim, 2012) suggest that TA is suitable for a study that seeks to "understand the potential of any issue widely" (p. 4). DINA is suitable for this specific study as I seek to understand the experiences of my study participants, experiences which were because of gender-based violence, and to study how their identities impacted these experiences.

In thinking about themes and narratives, some of the questions I will ask in this first phase include: What stories do my participants talk about when it comes to their experiences of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList*? Intersectionality, as useful as it is in studying the experiences of students in the two movements often reproduces stereotypes of marginalisation and victimhood (Boonzaier & Gadd, 2015). In response to the issue raised by Boonzaier & Gadd (2015), the research focuses on the participants' subjective narratives of their experiences, their intersecting identities, and how they represent their identities through their activism within protest action against GBV. In this way, participants are able to resist and speak against marginalisation, being stereotyped, and incorrect representations being shared about them.

In analysing the narratives of the study participants, I need to analyse how they speak to these two. I need to analyse narratives on marginalisation, victimhood, and power during the two movements. Do my participants draw connections/relations of their identities in relation to their experiences? Do the study participants narrate their positions in their experiences as victims? Do my participants centre their identities in narratives of being part of the two movements?

Part 2: During this phase, the focus is on discourses of class, race, sexuality, gender, ability, religion, occupation, age, nationality, marital status, body size, and other identities and how these relate to power dynamics. This phase also focuses on coloniality and its long-lasting oppressive roots and analyses the role of coloniality in power and narratives. Historically groups placed on the margins gained political attention and visibility by creating public narratives which can advance policy change and social change (Boonzaier, 2019).

When we as decolonial intersectional researchers do work that has been ignored, we begin to uncover links between oppressions faced by marginalised groups and women. We begin to uncover the oppressions in their experiences and their narratives. Narratives and narrative research present opportunities for marginalised persons and groups where they can tell their

own stories in their terms (Boonzaier, 2019). This is what I as a researcher seeking to do with this project. I seek to give those who participated in the two movements the opportunity to narrate their stories in their terms. Narratives also present marginalised groups with the opportunity to make visible experiences that were previously silenced (Boonzaier, 2019). There is little to no literature on the experiences of individuals who take part in movements against gender-based violence. I intend to add visibility to the experiences of the individuals who took part in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUreferenceList*.

In part 2, I am set to analyse decolonial and intersectional power. This phase seeks to investigate the representations on the archival documents and the representations by the study participants of their narratives and experiences. During this phase, I will investigate what the participants are trying to tell me about their experiences and if they think that their identities had any influence on their experiences (Boonzaier, 2019).

Part 3 involves the articulation of resistance. During this phase, I work with the study participants to understand the narratives that they believe have been presented about them as participants of the two movements. We speak out about how they have resisted these narratives and what narratives they have chosen to present about them and their experiences (Boonzaier, 2019). This is very important as the group I am working with was spoken for and about in the media and society and little attention was given to the narratives that these individuals have or had about themselves and the movements that they were part of.

In the last phase, which is phase 4 the main concern is with the narratives that I as a researcher will craft about the realities of the study participants. I will concern myself with how I will narrate the participant's stories, and whom I am narrating the stories for. This is bearing in mind that I also participated in the two movements and that I shared some narratives and experiences with my study participants. During this phase, I will also consider my identities and how these influenced the archival documents which I chose and the themes and narratives I chose from the data (Boonzaier, 2019).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This project forms part of a larger project entitled, *Unsettling Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence in South Africa*

Conducting social research with human participants presents several ethical issues. Maintaining ethical practices through the research process is demanding and complex. Ethical issues emerge and exist from the initiation process to the completion process. However, as researchers, we need to constantly be cognisant of the ethical implications for us as researchers and our research participants (Williams, 2003). Gender-based violence is a sensitive topic that has the potential for harm. Gender-based violence is a widely researched topic that possesses several ethical issues which still need to be addressed (Jewkes et al., 2000). Bold (2012) argues that it is important to ensure that there is a balance between the benefits of participating in the study and the potential harms that come with participating in the study.

Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Psychology.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is concerned with basic human rights. When conducting a study with human study participants you are responsible for informing them about the kind of study that you are conducting. Consent should be obtained from your study participants before you begin with the study (Williams, 2003). Study participants who showed interest in taking part in the study received a consent form (Appendix A) which contained more information about the study, they could sign to ensure that the participants agreed to take part in the study, and they consented to be recorded during the interview. Before the interview started, the study participants were given some time to ask questions regarding the study.

3.8.2 Potential Risks and Benefits

The study advert clearly stated that the discussions of the study have the potential to bring back painful memories of trauma or violence. All the study participants received a list of resources (Appendix B) that they could access should they require emotional or psychological support following the interviews. The study participants were informed that the discussion aimed to create a space where they could openly speak about their experiences of having been involved in activism against GBV. Several of the study participants informed me

that this was the first time that they spoke about their experiences and that they experienced the interview process as healing for them.

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to researchers protecting the study participants' identities (Blanche et al., 2006). This is especially the case with issues around gender-based violence and social movements which were criminalised. The participants were informed that they can remain anonymous, or they can use pseudonyms during the research process. As a researcher, I must ensure that my participants' identities are kept private. Participants who did not feel comfortable with their names being shared in the thesis took the option of remaining anonymous and asked me to give them pseudonyms.

The interviews were all done online on Microsoft teams. The interviews and transcripts were then downloaded and stored in a google drive file on a password-secured computer as a way of protecting the participants' information and the information that they shared during the interview process. The interview recordings and transcripts are still stored on a password-protected computer on a Microsoft team application.

3.8.4 Reflexivity

Qualitative research requires researchers to reflect on their complex biases and the techniques in which they use during the research (Burke, 2005; Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014). This means that qualitative research cannot fail to acknowledge the subjective and intersubjective processes and the contexts in that researchers analyse and generate data for their research projects (Denzin & Lincoln 1994; Guba & Lincoln 2005; Medico & Santiago-Delefosse, 2014; Morse 2002; Murray & Chamberlain 1999; Murray & Poland 2006; Ponterotto 2002). Qualitative research acknowledges that researchers are instruments of research and their involvement or investments in their research projects cannot be ignored (Medico & Santiago- Delefosse, 2014). Therefore, Burke (2005) emphasised the need for researchers to constantly examine their impact, values, and assumptions during the research process. When these are ignored, they can have a negative impact on the research. Willig (2001) added that researchers also need to acknowledge the involvement of their interests,

experiences, beliefs, social identities, aims in life, and political commitments in shaping the research.

Therefore, it is very important to acknowledge the role played by the identities of both the researcher and their co-researchers in how they shape the research. Similarities and differences between the researcher and the participants also need to be addressed as this can shape how the research process unfolds (Burke, 2005; Fine, 1994; Jorgenson, 1991; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 1996). As a researcher, it was important for me to acknowledge how my identities shaped the interview process and the research. My identity is similar to most of my study participants, and I noted similarities in our experiences as well. I was reminded throughout the process that even though I was the researcher I was also once a student at the university currently known as Rhodes, I shared similar experiences with my study participants.

As a participant in both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList*, I saw my story and experiences being reflected by and through my participants. In this, I was mindful of not allowing my version of experiences to shape participants' narratives. My narratives and experiences of the two case study protests assisted in preparing for the interviews, but I was mindful for these not to influence how I conducted the interview and engaged with participants.

This chapter outlined intersectionality as the theoretical framework used within this study. The qualitative method was detailed as the research design and a detail of the sampling method, and an introduction of the study participants/co-researchers was outlined. Data collection and procedure was outlined. The chapter introduced the use of DINA (Decolonial Intersectional Narrative Analysis) as the analysis tool. Lastly, the ethical considerations of the study were outlined.

Chapter Four: Narratives of experiences of gender-based violence at Rhodes University

4.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to explore and understand the experiences of those who participated in the two student movements namely the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest*. The thesis aims to study the narratives shared by the participants and particularly how the identities of the co-researchers (participants) shaped their experiences of the movements and their decisions to participate in the protests. These narratives are important in understanding how the movements took shape, and what influenced the start and the end of the protests. It is worth noting that with the nature of the study being on GBV and experiences of trauma and violence some participants in the study have chosen to use pseudonyms. These have been used in the following narratives on their experiences of the two case study protests.

The following narratives were identified in the analysis of data, namely, (1) the illusion of safety: Silencing GBV at the university, (2) Experiences of Rape Culture, Predatory Culture and inequality at the intersection of one's identity, (3) Narratives of Community and Allyship, (4) Reclaiming blackness and the naked body: narratives of political resistance, pride, and rage" (5) Speaking against dominant narratives on the *#RUReferenceList* protest.

In this chapter I explore the following narratives: *Universities are exempt from the South African reality.* This narrative explores how South African universities reflect the reality of the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) in the country through the prevalence of rape culture and predatory culture in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The second narrative explores prevalence's of rape culture, predatory culture and experiences of inequality. The third narratives explore narratives on *community* among those who participated and the creation of *allyship* to ensure that survivors of GBV received support during the protests. The participants also narrated the *dual experience of trauma and healing* during the two case study protests. In responding to the question of identity as a motivating factor for participation in protests and advocating against GBV, the emergence of two identity groups were most apparent during both protests. *The intersection of race, class, and gender* is narrated by the co-researchers in the responses to the two case study protests. Co-researchers narrated *rage* as a theme in their

experiences of the two protests and the responses relating to the two case study protests. Co-researchers share narratives of silencing as a form of protest and as a form of resisting the silencing that survivors are subjected to by the institution. Lastly, the thesis analyses the narratives where the participants showed *resistance to the dominant narratives* of the protests and their participation in the protest.

4.2The illusion of safety: Silencing GBV at UCKAR

In this narrative, participants challenge the idea of the university currently known as Rhodes (UCKAR) being independent and separated from the broader South African experience that consistently shows high levels of GBV and sexual violence. The protests under investigation in this study were instigated in response to the high prevalence of GBV at UCKAR, yet this study's data illustrates the ways in which a culture of silencing on GBV may be pervading university spaces. In narrating their experiences and feelings toward the *#RUReferenceList,* the co-researchers are in consensus that the *#RUReferenceList* was an opportunity for the university's management to show their stance towards GBV. But missed the opportunity and instead silenced student protesters by issuing a court interdict. Thus, the university missed an opportunity to act decisively towards those accused of violating other people at the university. In discussing the attempts to silence incidences of GBV by the university Bamanye, a student at the UCKAR and a participant in the *#RUReferenceList* recalled in both quotes below her feelings at the beginning of the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Bamanye had imagined the university as a safe space from the realities of the general South African experience of GBV and expressed shock that this perception was merely an 'illusion':

> *"I wasn't aware that it [GBV] was [here]. I didn't like it. I knew this happened outside, but I didn't know it was happening at Rhodes".*

> "*I think it was just the theory of what happened (students experiencing gender-based violence at UCKAR). It could happen here as well, and no one would take it seriously".*

Bamanye narrates the disconnect between bearing witness to the high rates of GBV across South Africa, and the illusion of 'safety' and isolation while positioned within the university.

They make a narrative distinction between 'theory' and 'reality' – that acknowledging 'theoretical' high rates of violence is different from first-hand experiences thereof and although it is said that GBV could occur "here as well", there is concern that it would not be taken "seriously" or rather be considered an anomaly. Bamanye, therefore, speaks to the importance of the *#RUReferenceList* as a way to 'unsilencing' the realities of GBV at UCKAR and to address the lack of adequate response from those in power in the university. It is indeed the case that GBV is a systemic issue that is deeply well-established in cultures, traditions, and institutions such as HEIs (Saferspaces, 2014).

There appeared to be an expectation that going to university would protect students from harm. Below Bamanye recalls how this illusion of safety was presented to them and their disappointment when the promise of keeping them safe was not fulfilled.

> *"They (in the universities prospectus) said to us Rhodes had such few numbers that we know your name you're more than just a student number to us and you are more than just one of them (students or persons on the campus). You are a person".*

Similarly, Sinegugu (a former student at UCKAR and a participant in the *Silent Protest* and *#RURreferenceList*) expressed her thoughts about the lack of safety and her frustration with the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR and stated:

> *"I have a problem with not feeling safe. (...) I have a higher chance of being raped than getting a damn degree, you know".*

Participants recurrently narrated about 'not feeling safe', while constructing the university's focus on care, humanity, and ethics as a mere illusion of false safety and protection.

The illusion of safety has not only been presented in HEIs, but this illusion is also presented in the family structure where Sinegugu shares narratives of 'always having protection' and never feeling that they were in danger within her family structure prior to becoming a student at UCKAR. Thus, students like Sinegugu expected that the university would offer similar protection to the one they had outside of the university. This is shared in the narrative below by Sinegugu:

"As I mentioned earlier, coming from a very closed-of family, and I pretty much always had protection in my life. You know. I was raised by a pretty much like family of like police officials so. I never really felt in danger or felt somewhat scared, but when I got to Rhodes the whole sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape. Uhm became so apparent, you know, because not that it may not have happened in my family, but it wasn't our reality. And it's quite ironic coming from South Africa, which has for a while and unfortunately known as the world rape capital of the world".

Sinegugu acknowledges that GBV is prevalent in South Africa, but because of the protection that she received at home, the issue was not apparent. She, therefore, expected that the university would offer similar care and protection. This is expressed in her narrative "*but when I got to Rhodes the whole sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape. Uhm became so apparent".*

In the quote below Thandeka (A staff member at UCKAR) introduces the intersection of colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism, and race in the challenge of women's safety in South Africa. Thandeka narrates that women's safety is mutually constitutive of colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism, and race. Thus, a conversation on women's safety in HEIs should include a discussion of inequalities and abuses influenced by our colonial past and that of the institution, patriarchy in the country and within the institution, capitalism, and race as contributors to the challenge on women's safety and GBV.

"For generations, women have been protesting. We are probably in a much worse position now in terms of how safe we are, but we can see where it's coming from. You know, the combination of colonialism and patriarchy and capitalism are all mutually constitutive as they work to suppress and oppress those who are black, those who are poor, those who are women and and that we we are almost helpless against such power".

Universities have often been criticised for giving more interest to the university's image than in the issue of GBV on campus. Between 2015 and 2016 student protests increased around the country. These student protests challenged university responses to GBV. Protesting students claimed that the universities' responses have allowed for rape culture to develop on university campuses and have silenced victims/survivors (Boonzaier et al., 2019; Rahlanga, 2016). Students at UCKAR challenged the illusion of safety and independence of society through the

two case- study protests. The University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR) and the *one-in-nine campaign* collaborated to organise the Silent Protest (Solomon, 2012; Padmanabhanunni and Edwards, 2015). During the silent protest, those who participated would tape their mouths for 12 hours symbolising the silencing of survivors of GBV and more specifically survivors of rape (Silent Protest 2 Aug 2014). The act of silencing to maintain the illusion of safety is noted as a recurring theme in the conversations with the co-researchers and reports of the two protests. Co-researchers discuss feeling as though they were being silenced in a range of different ways in order to maintain the illusion of safety.

In relation to the different forms of silencing Chengeta (2017) accounted for a series of incidents that were acts of further silencing those acting against the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR. In April 2016, several students through the *#Chapter212 poster campaign* detailed alleged occasions where the university had failed to address cases of sexual violence. The posters contained content on the insensitive treatment of survivors, the inadequacy of the sexual assault policy, and the university's failure to expel alleged perpetrators from the campus. The posters were removed by the Rhodes campus protection unit the following day. By doing this the university attempted to restrict and shape the conversations (Houston & Kramarae, 1991).

By authorising the removal of the posters, the universities management is said to have prioritised the illusion and an image of safety instead of prioritising the safety of the students on their campus. The response of the universities management to the *#Chapter212* campaign is said to have influenced the start of the *#RUReferenceList* protest. On the 17th of April 2016, the hashtag *#RUReferenceList* started trending on social media platforms. This followed an anonymous post that was shared on the *RU Queer Confessions, Questions, and Crushes* Facebook page. The post was then later shared on the Rhodes University Student Representative Council's Facebook page. The list was said to contain 11 names of alleged perpetrators of sexual assault and/or rape. The list included past and current students at the university (Maluleke and Moyer, 2020). The release of the names of alleged perpetrators prompted the protests which were, in the main, led by black women. The women-initiated conversations and debates around the country on rape culture and rape as a serious problem within South Africa (Mahali & Matete, 2021).

Thandeka a lecturer at UCKAR and a participant in the Silent Protest and the *#RUReferenceList* acknowledged that the *#RURerenceList* could have been used as an opportunity for the university's management to address the prevalence of GBV at the university.

> *"You know, it was an opportunity for us as the smallest university to go. OK wow. How can we in this tiny town in this tiny university, how can we as a community work and see how we can fix it? That was an absolutely precious and amazing moment that we let slip through our fingers because police were called".*

> *"How the university responded to it was the most profound travesty of justice and the most idiotic missing of a really good opportunity to fix something".*

Thandeka argues that the small size of the university and the community of Makhanda could have been used as an opportunity to address the issue. Both the community and the university could have collaborated to initiate conversations on how the prevalence of GBV could be addressed.

Instead, the responses to the issue were "*the most profound travesty of justice and the most idiotic missing of a really good opportunity to fix something".* The university and the community missed what "*was an absolutely precious and amazing moment"* but the university *"let the opportunity slip through their fingers"* and instead of initiating conversations they called the police which led to a conflict with the student protesters.

In addition to the narratives of silencing and image protection as a form of silencing, on the 20th of April 2016, the university management at UCKAR issued a court interdict as a response to the *#RUReferenceList*. The interdict listed the Students Representative Council as the 1st respondent and students at Rhodes University engaging in unlawful activities on the applicant's (Rhodes University's) campus. The third respondents were listed as persons engaging in or associating themselves with unlawful activities on the applicants' campus, the fourth, fifth and sixth respondents were students who were students at the university (High Court of South Africa Eastern Cape, Grahamstown, 2016). The court interdict was received with much rage by those in support of the protest. Many saw the interdict as a way of silencing those who were part of the protest and mainly those who had been named on the court interdict as respondents (Chengeta, 2017).

This is reflected in the quote from a statement from the concerned academic staff. Members of the concerned academic staff noted the potential for increased tension because of the court interdict.

> *"We believe that the interdict of the university criminalises the student protest and could escalate tensions on campus".*

In addition, the court interdict singled out several student protesters by naming them as respondents in the interdict. According to Houston and Kramarae (1991) silencing is and can be used to isolate people who have been disempowered by their identities such as their race, class, and gender. Women student protesters were noted as respondents in the court interdict. This is indicative of the silencing of women students in the university and the disregard for their concerns about safety and the prevalence of GBV at the university.

Bamanye noted that singling out protesters in the court interdict added to the silencing of those concerned with the prevalence of GBV at the university. The court interdict contributed to the lack of discourse on the issue of GBV and rape culture at the institution.

> Bamanye: *"I think the issue is no one wants to start the conversation because they don't want to be the one who's targeted".*

Thirdly, the interdict referred to respondents as "those persons engaging in or associating themselves with unlawful activities on the applicant's campus". The interdict referred to the UCKAR campus as the applicant's campus placing ownership of the campus to those in power and taking it away from the students who live and study on the same campus. This, therefore, places the students in an inferior position and as a 'visitor' whose actions on the "applicants' campus" should be to the liking of the 'owner'. The interdict listed some of the strategies that the participants used to address the prevalence of GBV on the campus as being unlawful. An example of this is,

2. Restraining the respondents from participating in encouraging, facilitating, and/or promoting any unlawful activities on the campus of the Applicant which activities shall include, but not be limited to:

2.1.1 Access to, and the free movement on the applicant's campus of all members of the Rhodes University community and all others who have a lawful reason to move on to, or off and upon the said campus.

The use of the word unlawful throughout the interdict to refer to some of the strategies the participants used, suggests that the university criminalised the demonstrations by the student protesters. The interdict positions the university as being violated or wronged by the participants of the protest. It fails to acknowledge and sympathise with students whose movements have been restricted by their fear of being violated on campus. Again, the university's management failed to use the protest as an opportunity to show survivors and participants of the protest that the university is against GBV. The court interdict focused on addressing the protest and the effects of the protest and not the leading factors of the protest. Additionally, the university attempted to suppress the participants' authentic voices and responses to rape culture at the university. Silence is oppressive when a dominant group such as an HEI does not allow another to break their silence in their own choice or by prohibiting them from breaking their silence by any media controlled by the dominant group (Houston & Kramarae, 1991).

Members of the concerned academic staff concurred with the *#RUReferenceList* protest being an opportunity for members of management to deal with the issue of GBV on campus. In the letter, members of the concerned academic staff wrote.

> "*We urge senior management to offer proper leadership around such issues in a proactive and innovative manner and not simply to react to crises as and when they occur. In doing so, it must adopt a more inclusive and participatory approach such that academics and students do not feel marginalised and alienated".*

In this narrative co-researchers and members of the concerned academic staff acknowledged the opportunity to address the prevalence of GV on the UCKAR campus presented by the *#RUReferenceList* protest. In addition, members of the concerned academic staff also called

for collaboration in addressing the issue of GBV on campus. The members called for an "*inclusive and participatory approach"* which would involve and ensure that academics and students do not feel alienated or marginalised during the interventions. In the statement, the concerned academic staff acknowledged students as persons with urgency and understanding of their experiences on the campus and therefore are able to offer counsel regarding ways of addressing the challenges that they face within the institution.

In contrast to the above praises and positioning as an opportunity for the *#RUReferenceList* protest, some acknowledged the legal conflict that came with the confrontation of the 11 names. The release of the 11 names-initiated debates and conversations questioning the legal implications and the legality of the public release of these names (Mazibuko in African Feminist solidarities, 2021). Therefore, leaving many conflicted regarding the demonstrations of the *#RUReferenceList* protest. An example is the quote below from Ayandas a student at the university and a participant of both the *#RUReferenceList* Protest and the *Silent Protest*) narrative of this conflict.

Below Ayanda notes that the release of people's names was/could have been a legal violation, but the protest was necessary as it challenged management and the prevalence of GBV on the campus.

> *"It's talking about what a pity it was because the reference list was so necessary. But because of the things the laws that had been violated it was like she (referring to a member of management) understood that that management that the university had to be like we can't have this just for the sake of legalities".*

The *#RUREferenceList* protest according to the co-researchers' narratives, was a necessary demonstration and an opportunity for a small university to show decisiveness towards the prevalence of GBV on their small campus. Instead, the university missed this opportunity and criminalised the demonstrations of the student protesters, resulting in the management's responses being seen as alienating, marginalising, and a profound travesty of justice. Co-researchers called for collaboration between students, academic staff, the university's management, and the community in addressing the prevalence of GBV on the campus and the society in which the university is placed.

I concur with Thamm (2016) who suggested that the participants are "a generation of young feminists" who found an uncompromising and new language and methods to protest against GBV.

The language and methods were criminalised as they disturbed the status quo. These were clear ways of resisting being silent about their experiences of GBV on a campus where previous generations of feminists had continued being marginalised and silenced by male leaders who kept delaying responses to address issues affecting women.

University spaces are often assumed to be safe spaces for students and staff. The illusion is that regardless of the prevalence of GBV in public, universities are assumed to be safe spaces and that those in power have the ability to protect students and staff from the South African reality (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018; Fisher et al. 2000) of being the rape capital of the world (Mhlangulana, 2021). Often universities are positioned as though they are independent of the societies in which they are placed and therefore the reality of the society is assumed to be different from that of the university (Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2018; Boonzaier et al., 2019; Fisher et al. 2000). As a result, the pervasiveness of rape in university spaces is often seen as an anomaly (Boonzaier et al., 2019), which was the sentiment reiterated by many of the participants in this study. Ultimately "GBV is a security problem" in HEIs (Collins et al., 2009). As a way of maintaining this illusion HEIs use silencing as a way of maintaining this illusion.

Jimlongo (2018) argued that silencing around GBV continues despite the prevalence of GBV in South Africa, including media coverage of many gruesome cases. The silencing allows GBV to continue because perpetrators go unchallenged, while survivors are expected to remain silent about it, including their experiences of gender-based violence. Jimlongo called for survivors and activists to break the silence and to speak out about their experiences. African institutions' post-colonialism has kept the violence and patriarchy enacted by those in power during colonialism. As a result, black women are constantly subjected to violence and patriarchy in these institutions. University institutions continue to be oppressive to women and their bodies post-colonialism and post- apartheid (Mathebula, 2022). In this section, women at UCKAR showed their resistance to rape culture through protest action. The response to the resistance was silencing in different forms. During the *Silent Protest*, silencing came in the form of resistance. Participants taped their mouths shut and broke their silence after the 12 hours at the Grahamstown Cathedral. In contrast, the silencing during the *#RUReferenceList* protest was enacted through the management's responses to the protest. Co-researchers felt

silenced through the removal of posters raising awareness on GBV at the university and managements responses to reports on GBV and through the issuing of a court interdict.

The next narratives are on the prevalence of rape culture and predatory culture which form part of the overall university culture. These two are narrated as contributors of GBV on the campus and influences on the start of the protests.

4.3 Experiences of rape culture, predatory culture and inequality at the intersection of one's identity

The study focuses on the prevalence of GBV in HEIs. University culture has been said to carry a huge influence on the perpetration of GBV in these institutions. The prevalence of rape culture more specifically rape at UCKAR was highlighted during the *Silent Protest* (Oppidan Press, 2022) and again in 2016 during the *#RUReferenceList* (Macleod et al, 2018). Garcia and Vemuri (2017) defined rape culture as practices and cultural beliefs which enable sexual violence and rape to be prevalent, accepted, expected, and normalised in different spaces including HEIs. These beliefs and practices enable men's use of sexual aggression and further enable the violence perpetrated by men against women (Jones, 2019). The prevalence of rape culture and predatory culture were also highlighted by co-researchers in narratives relating to the start of the protests. Narratives of rape culture and predatory culture are shared in this section. In addition to narratives of experiences of rape culture and predatory culture at UCKAR, participants narrate their experiences of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protest at the intersection of their identities (i.e., their race, gender, and class). Co-researchers narrate their experiences as being directly influenced by their identities.

In the example below, Bamanye narrates their experience of finding out about the prevalence of rape culture at UCKAR and finding out that rape culture was the influencing factor to the start of the *#RUReferenceList* protest.

> Bamanye: *"I heard singing around campus, and I wanted to find out what was going on and when I got there I realized that there was a protest and then I asked what the protest was about and was told it was about rape culture at university and how perpetrators at the university go away with a lot of things"*.

The prevalence of rape culture at UCKAR became a theme as participants narrate their experiences of rape culture on the UCKAR campus and how they feel as though rape culture contributes to the prevalence of GBV on the campus. This was acknowledged by members of the concerned staff in a letter to the university's management. In the letter, the staff members wrote:

> *"The universities embedded masculine social cultures have normalised pro- rape attitudes within our university community creating an unsafe environment for women students".*

Below Ayanda a student at UCKAR and a participant in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* shares her experiences of the predatory culture at UCKAR. Ayanda also re-introduces the narrative of 'not feeling safe at UCKAR' in the quote below:

> *"But on the other side, you had individuals within the institution, men specifically. Uhm, in my case, as someone who engages in heterosexual relationships, I'll say men who did take advantage of that. And what I found quite creepy. Actually. In my first year. Is that they didn't seem to be much of a a curbing of like. Very predatory like. Yeah, it was like so you were first year right and I'm I'm very small so I was a first. Yeah, I was shy. Very small but oh you know I was. I was a woman so you have this person a woman 18, 19 just out of high school and then you have these older men like men you know like masters, PhD. OK well you're legal now* (statement by older men students). *I like that that's such a borderline argument. You know she's legal now but knowing that you know it's it's from a guy saying this is from a man who's like 4-5 years older who's been in the environment who who's been in the institution, who has picked up certain certain ways".*

Above Ayanda notes the unequal power dynamics that existed between her and those who had been in the university years prior to them (mostly postgraduate students) and the institutional cultures of masculinity, patriarchy, and sexism in HEIs. In the quote above Ayanda narrates their experiences of university culture at the intersection of her gender and sexuality. Ayanda notes that these identities impacted how "*as someone who engages in heterosexual relationships"* men *"did take advantage of that".* Clowes and colleagues (2009) also noted the

predatory culture in HEIs. They suggested that first-year women students in HEIs are at higher risk of being in unequal and transactional relationships. These relationships are often associated with violence and coercive sexual practices. The Sexual Violence Task Team (SVTT) which was set up at UCKAR post the 2016 protests against rape culture and GBV at the university defined the normalisation of the unequal power relations that Ayanda narrated, which also exists in HEIs as being rape culture (Sexual Violence Task Team, 2016).

Garcia and Vemuri (2017) suggested that patriarchy is the driving force behind rape culture, as it associates "violence with sexuality" and positions force as being a normal part of sex (p. 10). The patriarchal culture that exists in university spaces enables the perpetration of sexual violence and sexual assault (Boonzaier et al., 2019; Clowes et al., 2009; Collins, Loots, Meyiwa, & Mistrey, 2009).

> *"The conclusion I came to was like, ultimately, this place is a business. It's going to be run like a business in a capitalist society that runs off, you know, patriarchal ideas like rape culture like sexism".*

In the quote above Ayanda also draws a link between patriarchy and rape culture at UCKAR "*It's going to be run like a business in a capitalist society that runs off, you know, patriarchal ideas like rape culture like sexism"*. Ayanda argues that she concluded after analysing the *#RUReferenceList* that the ways in which university institutions are run, (as capitalist spaces) also enable rape culture to continue on their campuses.

In addition, co-researchers shared narratives of their experiences during the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protest at the intersection of their identities. In response to the question of who participated in the protests and the identities of these people, the participants noted a dominating number of black bodies at the two protests seconded by queer bodies. Co-researchers did not need to think too deeply as this was an obvious observation. HEIs have been seen as unwelcoming spaces for members of the LGBTQIA+ community. GBV experiences of members of this community are not always given sufficient care and concern (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that there were a large number of members of this community at both protests. Below Ayanda and Bamanye shared their observations regarding who was most visible at the protests.

Ayanda: *"I found that it was mostly women of colour and queer women"*

Bamanye: *"That will be queer bodies, people who actively identify as queer who actually would, who used to tell us about the queer experiences they had".*

Andiswa also narrated mostly seeing black women as participants in the Silent Protest.

"It would be women, black women".

In narrating their experiences as black women in the protests, the co-researchers acknowledged that their intersecting identities of being black, and women placed them at a higher risk of being victimised during the protest. In the quote below, Sinegugu reflects on feeling afraid of being arrested and leaving the university with a criminal record during the *#RUReferenceList* should the academic programme continue as normal. In the narrative, Sinegugu recalls that a group of students tried to engage a lecturer on the fear of not being safe on campus due to the heavy police presence. The students negotiated to stay away from campus for a few days and to continue with the academic programme online. The conversation escalated and the lecturer called the police. In her recollection, Sinegugu said:

"I came here for a degree, so it was just people guys, like. Am I about to leave here with a criminal record before leaving with a degree like but like how is this happening in this space? And she would not budge on whatever it was they were asking. Next thing there were police. I have never run so fast with my asthma in my life.

For some students like Sinegugu, being on campus during the *#RUReferenceList* protest, and the heavy police presence triggered a sense of not being safe on campus. The heavy police presence on the campus made Sinegugu fearful. The understanding is that the police were called by the university's management to stop any protest action on the campus. As a participant in the protest, Sinegugu did not feel safe because the police were not there to keep them safe but to arrest them for protesting not feeling safe at UCKAR.

Additionally, in narrating how the heavy police visibility made her feel unsafe, Sinegugu narrates feeling as though her blackness was marked, prompting deep feelings of fear and vulnerability as a black woman. Sinegugu acknowledges how her race shaped her experiences

of the protests and the academic programme as well as how the university, a previously white institution, responded to her. As a self-identified black woman, Singugu narrates about the privilege that comes with whiteness and being positioned in a class that offers social and cultural currency:

> *"Because I was like knowing the police were being called by a white woman. OK, because race has a big role when it I'm I'm in this country race plays a big role. I am. Not about to fight against a white woman. Who is uh, established financially in terms of a career in a university or university, clearly made for white people, you know"*.

Lorde (1984 in Imkaan, 2019) argued that a single-issue struggle simply does not exist because we as human beings "do not live single-issue lives". Above Sinegugu acknowledges their intersecting struggles influenced by her race, class, and the prevalence of GBV at the university. Canham (2017) suggests that solidarity among university students during protests such as *#RhodesMustFall* has been enabled by black rage which results from intersecting injustices that black students are subjected to (which have been acknowledged by the co-researchers in this narrative) in higher education institutions. Garcia and Vemuri (2017) account for the prevalence of GBV, specifically rape in universities, to the persisting nature of rape culture. Public protests in universities have become very important platforms for students to interrogate issues such as rape culture and other issues affecting students and the general South African community (Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017). With the growth in the number of protests around rape culture in HEIs, students in HEIs around South Africa started questioning their safety in these institutions (Johnston, 2016), this has been the case within the narratives shared by the participants. After participating in the Silent Protest and the #RUReferenceList, participants of the protests started questioning their safety at UCKAR as seen in the narrative's shared. One could argue that the motivating factor for participation in both case study protests the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* was the urgency to express their concerns about not feeling safe due to the prevalence of GBV in an institution that was assumed to be safe for all those in it and in addition, to counter the prevalence of rape culture and GBV at UCKAR.

The question of liberation and violence going hand in hand has occupied African scholarship for years. The *#RUReferenceList* protest is an example of such a protest. The protest started as a response to the prevalence of gender-based violence at UCKAR (Mazibuko, 2021) and moved

on to reflect the race and class issues that persist and threaten black, women students' liberation in higher education institutions in South Africa. Student protests have been very important in highlighting the different struggles experienced by students in HEIs (Johnston, 2016). It is therefore important to study these movements as they inform us of the intersecting struggles that students experience in these institutions, as narrated by the co-researchers in this section. Studying these movements gives us insight into how students think these struggles can be addressed.

4. 4 Narratives of Community and Allyship

In this narrative, participants share narratives of movements against GBV being spaces of community and allyship for survivors and those who participate in the movements. Identity-based politics such as the politics of violence against women have also been politics of community, strength, and intellect (Crenshaw, 1991). In narrating their experiences of the two case study protests participants noted the allyship and the community that was formed by those who participated as being important and needed. The *Silent Protest* was a protest or movement against GBV and a space where people could deal with their experiences of violence (Snycker, 2012). The participants noted the support and care that they received from others who participated and how these ensured that they were better able to deal with the trauma and sadness that befell them during the period of the protest (Padmanabhanunni and Edwards, 2015; Snycker, 2012). Below Bamanye asserts the narrative of allyship and community in protests against GBV. Bamanye narrates about feeling as though they had a community of people who could understand her and her experiences within the *#RUReferenceList*.

> *"Uhm, it it opened me up to the thought that I am not alone that type of community that that's what happened to me. It wasn't just the thing that happened to me by myself. Uh, it's it's it's. There's a community of us. As much as it said that there's a community of us, but at least I'm not alone. And you know people who understand where I'm coming from, who. Who who won't compete with me in terms of oppression Olympics but will be there and say. I get you, I've been there. I will catch you, I'm here for you whenever you need me so I'm I think that's my my experience".*

As Bamanye speaks about ‘community’ and not feeling ‘alone’, most participants similarly narrated about the *Silent protest* and *#RUReferencelist* as being their way of supporting those who experienced GBV, most importantly offering survivors support. Andiswa, a lecturer at UCKAR, notes the support that they as staff members offered to the students during the protests. In their narrative, they note the importance of partnership, allyship, and community in ensuring that those who participated in the protests felt a sense of support.

> Andiswa: *“Because I don’t know whether it was 2015, I mean I remember a lot of us used to go to council chambers on on a daily basis. You know, sometimes you may not be bringing food, you were just checking up on the students. I mean, I remember we were in conversation with students on a daily basis. I think the the partnership, if you call it that, I think it was as necessary and needed.”.*

The narrative of community and allyship also extended to the reasons why some participated in the two case study protests. In their study of rape survivors in South Africa who participated in the *Silent Protest* Padmanabhanunni and Edwards (2015) acknowledged that experiencing rape or any form of gendered and sexual violence creates feelings of powerlessness and helplessness in survivors. They also acknowledged that the *Silent Protest* was a space where participants were at risk of reliving their traumatic experiences and therefore needed support from those around them. Thus, the co-researcher understood and acknowledged the need to support survivors during the protests and therefore used the two protests as opportunities to create collective action in addressing gender-based violence on campus and to support survivors.

Below Sinegugu a former student at UCKAR accounted for their participation as a *“supporter”* during the *#RUReferenceList* and said:

“I was there as a supporter and also because one of the people that had been assaulted was a close friend of mine. Below Sinegugu further acknowledges that their support for those who had experienced GBV was not enough. Even though their support assisted in amplifying the voices of those who had experienced GBV but more needed to be done.

"We can only do so much from where we are, so why not try to assist where I can by just showing support for the people who have gone through this".

Like Sinegugu, Thandeka who is a lecturer at UCKAR and a participant in both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* also acknowledged the importance of showing support and forming communities with their students who had experienced GBV at the university and outside of the university. Thandeka noted the importance of being there to support the students and especially those who were taking part in the *Silent Protest* for the first time. They understood the emotions that came with participating in the protest and how some would re-live their experiences of GBV. They also understood that by positioning themselves as an ally to the participating students the students would find some comfort and refuge in her.

Thandeka: *"Every year I would take part in the silent protest largely because I knew that if my students were taking part in the protest, they were going to need help".*

Thandeka: *"Because so many on that day would come or the day before they would come needing help because it was just too much and too traumatising. And the memories and the stories and, you know, and all of that. So, I did it every year to to support the students."*

Ayanda also spoke to the narrative of being an ally to survivors of GBV and participating in the *Silent Protest* to show survivors that they are in support of the cause against GBV.

"Yeah that I was there and that people around me knew that I supported the cause. 'cause I I think that's important to you know for at you know to be an ally and for people to know that you're an ally".

Fourteen staff members at UCKAR during the time of the *#RUReferenceList* also positioned themselves as allies to the cause against GBV at the university. During the *#RUReferenceList,* the fourteen staff members came together to form a group that they termed t*he concerned academic staff.* This group of staff members supported the concerns presented by the participants of the *#RUReferenceList*. To challenge the silencing of participants of the *#RUReferenceList,* the group wrote to the management of the university to express their concerns and to assert that something needed to be done to address the issue of gender-based violence and sexual violence at the university.

The letter was labelled "Letter by *concerned staff*. In supporting the *#RUReferenceList* the staff wrote:

> *"We support the hundreds of students who have protested against the prevalence of rape at the university and the failure of the university management to provide sufficient channels for dealing with cases of rape".*

In addition, members of the group would assist students in writing statements regarding the protest and to the university's management. They would assist with an understanding of some of the legal documents (interdict) and they would assist by delivering food and water to the students.

Thandeka reflects on the support of this group in the quote below.

> *"I became part of a group that would take food to them* (protesting students) *every evening, so we had a roster, and we would take a big dish of something so that everyone could at least eat a hot meal".*

The quotes above from the concerned academic staff letter and Thandeka reflect the numerous ways in which academic staff at the university positioned themselves as allies to the students by offering support in different ways.

The *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* were spaces where students at UCKAR expressed their concern and rage toward the ongoing rape culture at the university. The narratives in this section also show that the two case study protests were not limited to politics and activism but, these spaces also served as spaces for the formation of communities and allyship. In these spaces, members of the academic staff and students collaborated to show each other support and to ensure each other's safety. These spaces became spaces where participants could support survivors and show that they are allies to the cause against GBV. The sense of community and allyship offered survivors some support, which was lacking from the university's management. Survivors found support from other survivors and allies. During the protests, some participants found healing, and some were re-traumatised by the shared experiences of GBV. Participants acknowledged the importance of having support from those around them as it assisted in dealing with the trauma during the protest and from their experiences of GBV. It is important to understand the relationships formed during movements as these inform the ways in which GBV can and could be addressed. The co-researchers narrate

finding these communities and allies important not only for survivors but for others who participate in the protests.

The co-researchers acknowledge that the protests also brought on traumatic memories as participants re-lived some of their experiences. The sub- narrative delves into the dual experiences of trauma and healing narrated by the co-researchers of their experiences during the protests.

4.4.1 *Trauma and Healing*

In relation to the narratives on community and allyship, co-researchers shared narratives of the protests presenting a dual experience of trauma and healing. In the narratives of trauma and healing, the co-researchers note the importance of both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* in addressing some of the concerns around the prevalence of GBV and how both these protests offered survivors communities, and allies. The co-researchers also recognise that being part of the protests and even being around during the protests meant that some survivors re-lived their trauma and other participants were exposed to stories of violence and trauma. These stories, therefore, triggered fear and trauma in those hearing them. Therefore, in this section, co-researchers shared a narrative on the dual experiences. I explore how that emerges from participating in protests against GBV.

During the *Silent Protest* participants wore purple t-shirts with different writings on them to note why they are participating. Survivors of GBV wore t-shirts written rape survivor. Below Thandeka reflected on the experience of wearing the survivor t-shirt as being "*so hectic"* and how they not only felt uncomfortable with the attention that it attracted but how the t-shirt seemingly made those who did not know of her experience of violence uncomfortable.

> *"I remember the first time I wore the T-shirt of a survivor, and it was probably my second or third if I am not mistaken. Silent protest. And it was so hectic for me because I'd been able to hold that story inside myself. And I knew that by just walking around campus from, you know, my office, to lecture or to wherever I was just I was on guard reading people's faces as they read my T-shirt and then avoided eye contact or, you know, didn't know how to respond because I think. You know, just as the narrative of the stranger rape is part of the discourse about rape. In the same way, the narrative of who the victim*

is, there's a discourse about that, and it wasn't expected that an older white woman would be part of that, and so it felt very hard wearing that badge".

Thandeka raises the intersection of gender, race and age in discourses of rape. They suggest that the discomfort for those who read her rape survivor t-shirt was firstly influenced by the narrative of the stranger survivor, where the survivor is never given a name or a face. Secondly, the discomfort was influenced by the discourse of who is likely to be a victim or survivor of rape. Thandeka suggests that for some it becomes an anomaly when an "*older white woman"* speaks out about being a survivor of rape, therefore creating discomfort in those who view this as an anomaly. A notable number of research done on GBV post-apartheid interpreted the prevalence of GBV "against women in relation to the" repercussions of apartheid (Boonzaier, 2018, p. 2). GBV is closely tied to black peoples' experiences of violence during apartheid and soon after the end of apartheid (Boonzaier, 2018). Thus, violence against women has been associated with black people and their experiences of violence during apartheid.

Some students within the university felt triggered by the demonstrations and the protests. They felt as though the protests would not assist them in any way, in contrast, they wanted to continue with the academic programme instead. Ayanda sympathised with those who were triggered by the demonstrations that took place during the *Silent Protest* in the quote below:

"And I think that was in response to people. Just talking about how it didn't help them. Survivors who didn't want to like to remember their trauma and people for whom the shirts and their tape just triggered them. So, for quite a few people, and I remember reading this on the confessions page up quite a few people, or just like it's actually really triggering like I just want to get on with my life. Do like to complete my studies and enjoy the time that I have here so".

Participants of the *#RUReferenceList* Protest shared similarities in experiences of trauma or re-traumatisation with those of the *Silent Protest*. For example, below Bamanye reflected on her participation in the *#RUReferenceList* as being triggering to her, how the incidents that took place during the protest negatively affected her relationship with her family and how they affected her academic work.

"I didn't want people to talk to me. I didn't attend lectures. I didn't participate in tutorials; I just stopped my academic schoolwork and my whole family could not understand why. Yeah, cause I hadn't told them about my rape. So, I like I couldn't explain to them know that, Oh no, there was this and they kept calling and asking why are you so into this protest? cause they're like, we've seen you on TV? Doesn't make sense".

In the narratives above co-researchers narrate the trauma and negative effects that they experienced during the two protests, additionally Andiswa and Thandeka introduce the importance of these two protests and the healing aspect of these two.

In the quote below Andiswa (a lecturer at UCKAR) notes the importance of the *Silent Protest* while also describing the *Silent Protest* as a heavy, very, very hard day and *"an emotionally overwhelming day".*

"It is one of those days that its very important. But in a way for various reasons for survivors themselves it's a day one dreads as well. Because of how heavy it is, you know so to be in the classroom. It's very, very hard. But I've been proud that our students participate, you know. But it is quite an emotionally overwhelming day, I must say".

Thandeka also echoed Ayanda and Andiswas sentiments by labelling the experiences as *"a double-edged sword*".

"I think that it was it was a double-edged sword because I think people were also retraumatised by it".

Both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* were responses to the continuing rape culture and prevalence of GBV on the Rhodes University campus (Chengeta, 2007), and this on its own was a trigger for some individuals. Padmanabhanunni and Edwards' (2015) research with survivors of rape also affirms the dual and complex experience of trauma and healing during protests against GBV. The participants from their study all took part in the Silent Protest after going through the experience of rape. In the study, participants share narratives of being re-traumatised by the shared experiences and also finding healing in the communities and allies present at the protest.

Gorata Chengeta, a former Rhodes University student and GBV activist interviewed participants in the *#RUReferenceList protest.* Siphokazi*,* a participant in the study, explained her experience as an offering of space for healing. Siphokazi shared narratives of being able to heal through their conversations with those who shared the same experiences of GBV. She adds that the protest taught her about rape culture and what they had experienced (Chengeta, 2017).

Dlakavu (2016) also noted the dual experiences of pride and trauma for her and many other survivors in South Africa when they heard about the *#RUReferenceList*. Dlakavu notes young women and rape survivors on their Twitter timelines being deeply triggered by the protest. They recall the messages they sent each other checking in to see if they were okay. Even though the protest was triggering for them it was equally affirming. They felt proud of the students because their actions felt as though they were standing up for every survivor in the country. Dlakavu (2016) was proud of the protesting students. These protesting students made sure that those accused of rape faced the social cost of being a perpetrator one that is inflicted on survivors when they are violated (Barnette et al., 2016).

The reflections above are evidence that protests against gender-based violence can be both traumatic and healing. The experiences of protests against gender-based violence are subjective. Many factors influence the ways in which participants experience these (Padmanabhanunni & Edwards, 2015). Participants face discrimination and what Dlakavu (2016) termed as a social cost. Meaning that there is a social cost attached to being a survivor of gender-based violence, and these protests offered the participants the opportunity to take back the power that had been forcefully taken away from them due to them being survivors of GBV. For some participants, the protests were spaces of healing, learning, and acknowledging their experiences. Participants were able to find support from other survivors and participants during the protests, which speaks to the community and the allyship discussed in the previous section. Even though the protests were sites of re-traumatisation, they also were sites of healing and community building as narrated by the co-researchers.

4.5 Reclaiming blackness and the naked body: narratives of political resistance, pride

Chabani Manganyi (1973) and Steve Biko (2004) argued that the psychological assault on black bodies forces bodily resistance (Canham, 2017). Co-researchers account for the use of the naked body as a form of bodily resistance during the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Co-researchers share narratives of the body being used as a symbol of resistance against the violent acts on women's bodies and as a way of drawing attention to the *#RUReferenceList* protest and the concerns of safety and the prevalence of GBV on the campus.

On the third day of the *#RUReferenceList*, 5 students were arrested for barricading an entrance to the university. Tensions grew between the participants of the protest and the university's management. Participants felt as though management was not responding adequately to the protest and the participants' concerns. As a result, participants held a naked protest at what was known as the purple square which is one of the university's entrances (Thamm, 2016).

In narrating about the naked protest, Thandeka narrated below the symbolic use of the naked body. Thandeka suggests that the participants of the naked protest sent a powerful message to perpetrators of GBV. Below Thandeka narrates the message that the participants wanted to send to perpetrators of GBV:

> *"You use my body for your objectification and for your oppression and pleasure. I am going to expose my body because it is mine and I'm taking back my power and I'm owning that and I'm saying how dare you do that, you know? And so, there were many moments in that protest where looking back you can see what it was. It was women taking back their power".*

Thandeka narrates the use of the naked body as a pushback against women's bodies being objectified to the point of oppression of women and their victimisation. By taking part in the naked protest, the women participants took back their power and the ownership of their bodies.

In the quote below Andiswa notes that there has been a trend of women in Africa using their bodies as a form of resistance. Women in different African countries for years have fought against injustices and used the outrage of the nakedness of a woman's body to draw attention

to some of the injustices in the African continent. Andiswa also notes that this kind of protest action has been reflected in intergenerational demonstrations against the oppression on women's bodies.

> *"And so when this happened, at Rhodes, I thought, ohh, what's happening in Africa, you know, African women are fed up, you know, the generations of, you know, the intergenerational nature of it, you know, so I remember chatting with them, a feminist, who did politics at WITS because we both knew Stella Nyanzi. And so we were like, Oh my God, the women are fed up. You know, and I had been, of course, you know, since 2011 I had thought about, you know, Liberian women stripping naked at the peace negotiations. So this is something politically that I had. I had thought about, you know. And I remember when the students invaded the Council chambers in, it was March 2015. Some of the images of the women, there were some of the pictures of the Liberian women, especially Lima Boy, who had. They had staged a naked protest in in 2003. In Ghana at the when she had threatened to strip naked at the peace negotiations. And and during the Liberian second Civil War. So in a way for me, you know, I was thinking about it in those ways that this is something that African women do, you know, and this is what women did in kinds and enduring the political violence. You know, there's some women used to strip. They said, you know, we showed that police our boobs, you know, so I didn't take you to something that is radically".*

Participants of the *#RUReferenceList* protest employed numerous strategies as responses and to address the prevalence of GBV and rape culture on the campus. Rage was narrated as a prominent feeling throughout the *#RUReferenceList* protest.

After numerous *Silent Protests*, participants grew tired, and rage filled the campus. Bamnaye, supported by literature noted the rage which flooded the university during the *#RURerenceList*. Mazibuko (2021) defined the rage during the *#RUReferenceList* as being "an indicator of resistance and" the readiness and willingness to take action (p. 27). Canham (2018) defined rage during protests as being a reasonable response to ongoing oppression. Rage is often therefore used in protests as a way of making a point, which in most cases is that they cannot continue living under oppressive conditions. Co-researchers of the *#RUReferenceList* used many strategies as ways of expressing their rage toward the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR. Firstly, participants confronted those whose names were on what was known as the

Reference list (Dlakavu, 2016). When this did not reap any positive responses from management the participants took to barricading the university and disrupting lectures. Soon after the arrest of the 5 student participants, the participants used the outrage that the naked body attracts as a way of expressing their rage towards the responses of management and the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR.

Below, Bamanye narrates the rage and confusion of some of the students who went to the different residences to confront those whose names appeared on the Reference list. In their narrative,

Bamanye narrates feeling "*Angry and frustrated"* upon finding out about the cause of the demonstrations.

> *"Angry and frustrated, and there was a group of us who, like we're coming from different places, trying to find out what was going on, and then the merge* (other students joined the protest). *We were told what was going on. We also started getting angry and upset over the whole situation so. So there was. There was confusion among some people. In some people there was anger and then once everyone heard what was going on, there was anger. There was collective anger. There was unity and we need to sort this out".*

The naked protest asserted what Sutton (2007) acknowledged as a resistance that leads to social outrage. The resistance comes from society's construction of women's naked bodies as sexual and shameful. The idea is that the nakedness attracted a lot of attention, especially on social media. Many questioned the intentions behind the protest. The participants resisted against the narrative of women's bodies being crime scenes, and passive bodies, they used their bodies to convey a clear message and to ensure that their bodies are visible (Jimlongo 2018). The participants of the naked protest used their nakedness as a tool of political resistance (Jimlongo 2018), and in many ways, the co-researchers speak to unsettling the colonial gaze on black women's bodies and instead, unsettle this dominant narrative to focus on blackness and bodies as symbols of agency and resistance. In Western discourse, human bodies have been used and read as objects of a gaze. Body movements are therefore monitored, and different meanings are attached to their movements within the social system (Oyěwùmí, 1997). This is the same attention that the naked protest attracted. Many observed the bodies during the protest and formulated different meanings about the demonstration.

Unsettling the colonial discourses that position 'Africanness' as primitive and savage, Oyěwùmí (1997) argued that nakedness in the African sense is not anything bizarre nor uncivilised. They argued that Western discourses which deem nakedness as uncivilised and innately sexual have been used and accepted widely, going against African beliefs of nakedness being accepted as natural. Among African women, the body has been used intentionally and with pride as political tools to convey messages, to communicate injustices perpetrated against women's bodies, and as tools to resist systems of oppression.

Likewise in the current study, the young women who participated in the naked protest similarly drew on the practices of black, African feminists and teachers who came before them and worked to decolonise meanings of black bodies performed through protesting. They used their bodies as tools to resist the oppression and violation of their bodies by perpetrators of gender-based violence. The rage towards the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR united the students to act and call out perpetrators of GBV. Rage was used as a form of resistance against systems that allowed rape culture to flourish at the university and it was used as a motivating factor to show solidarity with those who had experienced GBV and mostly rape at the university and outside the university (Mazibuko, 2021).

4. 6 Speaking against dominant narratives on the #RUReferenceList

The narrative on dominant narratives deals with narratives on the representations of the *#RUReferenceList* protest by the public and narratives by the co-researchers. This narrative studies how the co-researchers speak against the representations and the narratives by those in public regarding the *#RUReferenceList* protest.

One of the dominant media and public narratives on the *#RUReferenceList* was the questioning of the participants' actions. Many questioned if there was no better way that the participants could have raised their concerns about the prevalence of rape at the university (Mazibuko, 2021). These were based on the assumption that those who participated in the movement had not tried other means of raising these concerns prior to the *#RUReferenceList*. The *Silent protest* was used as a space to raise these concerns for years prior to the *#RUReferenceList.* There was a belief that the law was the appropriate channel participants

should have used to address the prevalence of GBV and rape culture at UCKAR (Mazibuko, 2021; Gouws, 2018).

In speaking against this suggestion, below the participants narrated what they wanted those who did not experience the protests first-hand to know about the protests and those who participated in the protests.

Thandeka had this to say about the *#RUReferenceList* and the participants:

> *"It was. It was the helplessness and frustration of traumatised individuals who didn't find a space that was prepared to believe them and support them in that. And so it was people taking their power back. And using their power to list names on an anonymous platform. Which gave the impetus to protest even, you know, taking clothes off. Umm was also in a weird way an autonomous thing. You use my body for your objectification and for your ******. I am going to expose my body because it is mine and I'm taking back my power and I'm owning that and I'm saying how dare you do that, you know? It was women taking back their power because….. The entire system of reporting of having to retraumatise yourself with the telling of your story, of the complete thing. It was women taking back their power and for that, I am so proud of them".*

Thandeka refers to the participants as traumatised individuals expressing their frustration and helplessness, and as individuals who did not find a space that was prepared to support them. This addresses some of the questions 'why did they not report'. The participants had experienced trauma, lack of support, and frustration with the institution which they had expected to protect them. Therefore, the participants felt helpless against perpetrators who were not being punished for violating them and an institution which criminalised them for raising concerns regarding this. Their response was fuelled by these feelings. Participants employed different strategies as ways of showing their frustration and triggering responses from those who had previously shown them little support.

Bamanye first noted the hegemonic narrative which labelled the *#RUReferenceLis*t as a disruption of the academic process. To them, the *#RUReferenceList* was a way of raising concerns about the prevalence of GBV and rape culture and sending a message to the university

about the prevalence of GBV on the campus. The participants of the protest were fighting to feel safe on the campus and for healing.

> *"Disrupting it wasn't about, it was about a subject 'cause you wanted to change the status quo. But it wasn't about not wanting to go to school. We had a message and he wanted people to listen. We wanted change. We wanted people to to to get healing. You want to provide safe spaces".*

Bamanye positions the participants as persons with urgency and awareness regarding the message that they wanted to send to the university's management. The participants wanted the management to listen to their concerns, they wanted things to change, they wanted to get healing and they wanted the university to provide them with a safe space to continue with the academic programme. In order to send a message and to receive these, the participants disrupted the academic programme.

Co-researchers acknowledged that the hegemonic narratives on the *#RUReferenceList* protest were negative, these narratives delegitimised the demonstrations by the participants and the intentions of the protest. Below Sinegugu notes the de-legitimisation of the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Sinegugu indicates that participants of the *#RUReferenceList* were being accused of trying to imitate the youth of 1976 and of trying to gain relevance below:

> *"I want my generation and the whole narrative of those movements. In fact, to be that we will disrupt if it's necessary. We will speak up. We will not tolerate being violated, and if the institution is not going to hear it, we will find ways to be heard. You know the same. Energy and respect that was deemed upon their 1976 youth. We deserve that because we aren't fighting just for ourselves. We aren't fighting just for black were fighting for black, white and everybody else. You know, we aren't just fighting for the girls, we are fighting for the boys because boys as we all have a higher chance of being raped right now. So. We aren't being selfish, we aren't just looking for attention."*

Above Sinegugu asserts that the protest was not just students seeking attention, but the participants of the protest were fighting for a legitimate cause. The naked protest held at UCKAR during the *#RUReferenceList* attracted a lot of attention and support from students in other HEIs around the country. Naked protests were held in support of the participants of the

#RUReferenceList. Some questioned the students' agency and the legitimacy of the participants' motives behind the topless protests (Johnston, 2016). In speaking against this resistance and questioning, Sinegugu argues above that the protest was not fighting only for those participating in the protest, but the protest was to raise awareness of the experiences of many South Africans regardless of their identity.

In support of the narrative by Sinegugu, Andiswa argued that instead of the hegemonic narratives where the protest action at UCKAR were seen in a negative light, the university should be proud of the feminists who stood up against GBV and patriarchy. She suggested that the university should be proud that they have feminists who were willing and able to challenge structures that continue to enable rape culture to prevail. Below, Andiswa admires the courage that the feminists at UCKAR possessed and argues that their courage foregrounded the spread of the *Silent Protest* to other universities. The courage of feminists at UCKAR influenced several other movements against GBV around the country and universities.

> *"That you have the silent protest here. You then have the reference list which I don't think could have happened outside of the silent protest, so the two go together. When the very inclusion that creates the conditions where women can challenge it to take rape and rape culture seriously is the same one, then that when is really, we are at a crisis point that it must manifest at Rhodes. And now, 28 years later, this kind of moment, public moments where rape culture comes to the fore and my sense from here is that Rhodes has been at the centre of that for better or worse and I think umm, in terms of how we think about rape culture in South Africa, Rhodes forms a part of that. A part of that history and a part of that thought formation of public thought about rape culture. And it comes at a high price for the activists. You know, some of them frankly, whom I think will never be OK".*

Andiswa suggests that UCAKR should be proud to have been a starting point for conversations on rape culture which then spread to other universities and other parts of the country. The participants of the two protests contributed to a history that encouraged public thought on rape culture. Therefore, positive representation of the protests matter as these have contributed to a greater understanding of rape culture and the effects that activism against GBV has on participants of the protests.

Representation is the process of producing meanings of concepts in our minds through the use of language (Hall, 2020). Therefore, the ways in which things are represented matter as they influence the meanings we attach to concepts in our minds, and this is the case with the representations of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest* at UCKAR. The overall purpose of the thesis is to narrate the two case study movements through the lens and representations of those who took part in the movements and to give an opportunity to them to speak against what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie termed as the single story in their talk in 2019 (Adichie, 2019). The release of the 11 names known as the Reference List and the protests that followed received notable criticism from the university's management and others in the public. The Vice-Chancellor of UCKAR Dr Sizwe Mabizela represented the *#RUReferenceList* protest as "a violation of their rights" this is referring to the alleged offenders' rights as being violated (Johnston, 2016, p. 7). This, therefore, criminalises the participant's actions and the *#RUReferenceList* further affirms the idea that university managements often favour offender's rights without considering those of the survivors or the events that have influenced the participants' protest techniques (Bashonga & Khuzwayo, 2017).

The purpose of the study was to give the participants an opportunity to narrate their stories in a way that they would have liked for their stories to be narrated in publications and by others who never experienced the two case study protests first-hand. This was an opportunity for the participants to speak against the hegemonic narratives about them and the movements. The co-researchers narrated the *#RUReferenceList* as being a necessary response to the prevalence of rape culture and GBV at UCKAR. According to the co- researchers, the protest was necessary as it challenged management at the university to consider the issue of safety on the campus and the lack of punishment for perpetrators of GBV. The protest and the actions of the participants were ways of breaking the silencing of survivors by the university and by perpetrators of GBV on the campus and in greater society. The protest actions were ways of challenging the status quo by showing urgency and taking back power by not being silent and by using the black woman's body as a tool of taking back power from those who violate the black woman's body. According to the co-researchers the protest had nothing to do with evading the academic programme or imitating political figures, but of being safe in an academic institution that promised them that they would be.

One would imagine that after the *#RUReferenceList* and after the many conversations that were triggered by the *#RUReferenceList* the university would have taken steps in addressing

rape culture at UCKAR. Co-researchers share narratives of what happened post the *#RUReferenceList*.

Students like Siphokazi (in the study with Gorata Chengeta, 2017) noted that not much has changed since the *#RUReferenceList* protest. In the study Siphokazi narrated their experience of continued isolation and elusion at UCKAR (a previously white university) at the intersection of her race, social class and gender post the *#RUReferenceList* protest.

The expectation is that there would be some change post the *#RUReferenceList* protest. But co-researchers are in consensus that nothing changed at the university. Siphokazis narrative suggests that black women at the university still experience marginalisation and numerous inequalities influenced by their identities. Additionally, Bamnaye narrates the lack of communication regarding the resolutions from the university.

> *"They weren't being vocal about it after it finished. And then meeting this Saturday didn't come back to the people and say OK if you guys asked us to do this. They didn't address it in the in as big as it happens it was. It was a minute. It was. It wasn't minutes. It was in things. People who sit in certain committee could sleep, but people who didn't sleep were the regular student".*

Bamanye expresses her disappointment with the lack of communication or meetings aimed at updating the students on resolutions by the university. Bamanye suggests that the "regular student" who did not sleep during the *#RUReferenceList* protest deserved to be updated and involved in conversations regarding the next steps of making the university safe for its students.

Dlakavu (2016) termed the *#RUReferenceList protest* a historic moment, not only for UCKAR students but for the entire country. Such a well-publicised protest deserved its resolutions to receive the same kind of attention (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007) as suggested by the co-researchers. As an alumnus of the university and a participant in the *#RURerefenceList* protest and the *Silent Protest* I wonder about the progress of ensuring that students at UCKAR are safe and if survivors of GBV at the university feel as though they get justice. Therefore, UCKAR needs to employ better communication of these resolutions with current and former students at the university.

4. 7 Conclusion

The *Silent Protest* held demonstrations yearly as responses to the prevalence of GBV at UCKAR, but frustrations regarding the continued issue of GBV at UCKAR grew and gave rise to the *#RUReferenceList protest*. The *#RUReferenceList* was fuelled by concerns about the prevalence of GBV on the campus even though the *Silent Protest* had been active annually and even though the university continued to issue statements about being against gender-based violence and promised to deal with perpetrators of GBV decisively (Mazibuko, 2021). My research is centred around the experiences of participants of the *#RUReferenceList* and the *Silent Protest*. The aim is to position my co-researchers as experts in their experiences. The questions of the research have been formulated to allow the participants and myself to co-create knowledge of their experiences. In responding to questions about their experiences of the two protests, co-researchers shared narratives of (1) the illusion of safety: Silencing GBV at the university where co-researchers learned of the prevalence of GBV and rape culture at the university which diminished the illusion of safety at the university and the continued maintenance of this illusion by the university's management, (2) Experiences of rape culture and predatory culture and inequality at the intersection of one's identity (3) co-researchers shared narratives of community and allyship being created in order to support each other during the protests (4) co-researchers narrate reclaiming their blackness and the African viewpoint of the naked body: narratives of the naked body used for political resistance, pride, and a show of rage to the oppressions of the black womens body. (5) Lastly, co-researchers had the opportunity to push back against some of the negative and hegemonic narratives which have been formulated about them and the protests that they participated in. Thus, the thesis has succeeded in giving co-researchers the opportunity to re-write the narratives on the protests and about them as participants of these.

Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will outline the study findings which explore the narratives shared by students who participated in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest*. A discussion on the methodological contributions of the study, and the social and theoretical contributions will be discussed. The chapter will outline the limitations of this study and lastly, the recommendations for future research will be outlined.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study employed intersectionality as the theoretical framework and employed Decolonial Intersectional Narrative Analysis (DINA) as the analysis tool. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with five participants: three being students and former students at UCKAR and two being staff members at the university. Two documents obtained from the Rhodes University Student Representative Councils page were also analysed as data, with one being a court interdict issued by the High Court of South Africa in Grahamstown and a statement by the concerned staff/lecturers from the university.

The first narrative in the study outlined the illusion of safety in HEIs, where co-researchers shared narratives about being silenced. Co-researchers also shared narratives where numerous forms of silencing (e.g., court interdict) were used to maintain the illusion of safety and the university being independent and separate from the South African reality. In this narrative, co-researchers spoke about an institutional narrative of the "illusion of safety" that works to enforce perceptions that GBV is unlikely to occur or affect the university space, despite its rampant presence in South Africa. The main aims of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protests were to raise concerns regarding the prevalence of GBV at the institution and to bring awareness that the institution is indeed not independent of the society in which it is set. In this narrative, co-researchers also narrated being shocked by this realisation and not feeling safe at the institution as a result of the prevalence of GBV at the university. In relation to the first narrative of silencing, co-researchers shared a narrative of fear. This narrative was mostly shared by the black women co-researchers.

The second narrative reflected on the shared experiences of co-researchers, relating specifically to rape and predatory culture in UCKAR. In this narrative again, co-researchers shared narratives of not feeling safe due to the rape culture and predatory culture which had been accepted and become part of the university's culture. Co-researchers spoke of the fear of being arrested by the heavy police personnel who were present during the *#RUReferenceList protest.* Co-researchers believed that the university and the police had criminalised the protest. In this narrative, co- researchers spoke to the ways in which identity markers of race and class shaped their fears and their criminalisation by the police and the university's management. Thus, reinforcing the narrative of not feeling safe during the *#RUReferenceList protest.* The third narrative concerned the formation of community and allyship during the two protests. In narrating their experiences of the protests, the co-researchers shared narratives of the formation of communities and forging allyship with survivors and other participants during the protests. For the co-researchers, the protests were spaces where they showed survivors of GBV support and presented themselves as allies to the survivors and to the cause against GBV. Therefore, those who participated in the protests formed communities of allies with each other, offering support to those who might be triggered or re-traumatised through their participation. In relation to the above narrative, co-researchers also shared narratives of trauma and healing. For some participants, the protests possessed a dual experience of trauma and healing.

They found healing in the communities that they had formed with other participants of the protests.

In the fourth narrative, co-researchers also explained the ways in which rage from student protesters served as an instigator for the *#RUReferenceList protest*. In this narrative, co-researchers narrate feeling rage as a response to the prevalence of GBV and rape culture at the university. To articulate the feeling of rage, participants of the *#RUReferenceList protest* also used the outrage that is drawn by the black naked body as a form of political resistance, as a way of decolonising the protest, and as an expression of pride in their black bodies. In narrating the responses by the universities management to the *#RUReferenceList protest* the co-researchers argued that management failed to clearly demarcate their stance and show that the university is against GBV, and that the institution supports survivors who have experienced this violence. Rather the university neglected those survivors who spoke out about their experiences of GBV at the university.

Introducing a fifth narrative speaking against dominant narratives on the *#RUReferenceList*.

In the last narrative speaking against dominant narratives on the *#RUReferenceList*, co-researchers started by noting some of the hegemonic narratives by the public regarding the *#RUReferenceList* protest and the participants of the protest. In noting these hegemonic narratives, Haith (2016) suggested that some members of the public and the national media have had discourses erasing and damming the actions of those who participating in the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Haith (2016) argued that these individuals have chosen to "remain wilfully ignorant to the harm" that their discourses have had on the survivors and those who took part in the *#RUReferenceList* protest. Seddon (2016) added that the court interdict served as a way of discrediting the protests and positioning them as "disrespectful hooligans" with the intention of "damaging university property and disrupting the academic project" (Seddon, 2016). Additionally, the vice-chancellor at UCKAR Dr Sizwe Mabizela was reported describing the protest as "unconstitutional" and "damaging" (Reporter, 2018). The co-researchers concluded the interviews by speaking against these and constructing narratives that narrate the leading cause of the protest, the participants' experiences and their central messages about the protest and their participation. Co-researchers and some who wrote about the *#RUReferenceList* protest note the importance of the *#RUReferenceList* in raising their concerns regarding the prevalence of GBV and rape culture at the institution and the importance of showing support to those who had experienced this kind of violence at the university and outside of the university (Haith, 2016; Nowicki, 2017; Nyulu, 2020). During the protest, the police suggested that the naked protest was public indecency (Haith, 2016) ignoring the greater intent that the protesting students had. Co-researchers spoke against this and noted the naked protest as a demonstration of taking back their power and using their bodies as tools of protest against GBV at the university.

5.3 Methodological Contributions of this Study

Methodologically, the study has contributed to highlighting the narratives shared by co-researchers of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protest, through its employment of intersectionality and the decolonial intersectional narrative analysis. The study gave the co-researchers a platform to share their experiences of GBV and the two case study protests at the University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR). Co-researchers had the platform to speak about interventions that they thought would have been beneficial for both the students and the

university. Lastly, the co-researchers had the platform to speak against hegemonic narratives of black women student protesters, and other participants of the protests they were also part of. Thus, the study raised the importance of considering students who participate in protests against GBV as experts in their experiences instead of centring them as deviants unable to narrate and speak on their own experiences.

The study has contributed to the understanding of women's experiences of GBV and experiences of GBV protests through an intersectional framework and analysed through the Decolonial intersectional narrative analysis tool. Thus, the study ensured that co-researchers' subjective experiences were studied.

The study employed semi-structured interviews. Due to the lack of literature and academic work done on the experiences of student protesters against GBV, the researcher will additionally provide a platform for the co-researchers to share their narratives through a documentary. The documentary will be a contribution to the Unsettling Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence Project in South Africa. Through the documentary, the researcher seeks to advance the voices of student protesters who protest against GBV.

The next section delves into a discussion of the theoretical and social implications of the study.

5. 4 Theoretical and Social Implications of the Research

This study aims to contribute to the knowledge on the prevalence of GBV in HEIs, student protests against GBV, the experiences of those who take part in these protests, the influences of their identities in their participation in these protests and the start and end of the case-study protests the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest*.

Student protests and movements have been important sites where students have shared their experiences of inequality within higher education institutions. In these spaces, students have raised concerns over being marginalised at the intersection of their race, gender, sexuality and class. Movements such as *#RhodesMustFall* and *#FeesMustFall* have been monumental in raising awareness of the intersecting inequalities faced by students in HEIs, in informing their experiences and for being influencing factors for students who take part in these movements (Boonzaier & Mkhize, 2018; Dzodan, 2011; Gouws, 2017). Through student protests, the

general public has been exposed to the inequalities that students' in HEIs face including the prevalence of GBV in these institutions. Co-researchers' narratives of their experiences and reflections on GBV and protests at UCKAR, indicate that their experiences are shaped by their intersecting identity markers of race, class, gender and social class.

The two protests that the co-researchers participated in started as responses to the prevalence of GBV and the prevalence of rape culture at UCKAR, the co-researchers also shared narratives of experiences of racism. The narratives shared by the co-researchers in this study included narratives of fear of being criminalised as a result of their participation in the *#RUReferenceList*. An issue was raised in the study by Goodmark (2021) on the criminalisation of survivors of GBV in the USA. Goodmark (2021) argues that in the USA the criminalisation of survivors is due to a system that fails to recognise the survivors' statuses as victims of violence, but instead punishes them for their failure to act out a status of the victim. This is similar to the criminalisation of those who participated in the *#RUReferenceList protest*. Participants were criminalised for speaking out against a system that rendered them victims of violence, they challenged the interventions by the system and confronted the alleged perpetrators. Women who participated in this study spoke about feelings of unsafety and vulnerability. This is related to the prevalence of GBV and rape culture at the institution. On a broader institutional level, these narratives highlight the need for more exploration into the safety of students in HEIs and the interventions by the management in these institutions.

Co-researchers shared narratives of the protests being spaces where they found trauma and healing, community and allyship in both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest*. These indicate that protests against GBV can be supportive spaces for those who participate in these protests. Instead of these being criminalised, there is a need for more spaces like the two protests. These also indicate that there is a great need for adequate support for protests against GBV and those who participate in these protests as these also have a factor of re-traumatisation. Similarly, to the above-mentioned narrative, the narrative of rage and the use of the black body as political resistance and pride addresses a contrast of the positive and a negative aspect of the protests.

Women in this study narrated the ways in which rage acted as the central instigator for the *#RUReferenceList protest*, whereas the narrative of resistance and expression of bodily pride represents imagery of black women's strength and pride. In the narrative *speaking against hegemonic narratives*, co-researchers articulated how they see the protests as being necessary,

the influence that the protests will have on those who will follow them and how their experiences in these are important as these can be used to influence future responses to GBV activism in HEIs.

Similar to previous literature on the prevalence of GBV, the study can be used to understand the issue of GBV in HEIs, factors exacerbating the issue, interventions to GBV in HEIs and the gaps in these interventions. Thus, this study has contributed to the gap in knowledge regarding the experiences of student activists in HEIs. This study presents knowledge on intersecting inequalities present in protests against GBV in HEIs. Through this study we are able to understand student activism in the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList protest*, the initiating factors and factors which contributed to the end of these two protests.

5. 5 Challenges and Limitations

Firstly, finding participants to take part in research on GBV and protests relating to GBV was a challenge as these are sensitive topics. Some individuals find talking about their experiences of GBV and being part of protests against GBV traumatising. The second challenge was remaining reflective during the research process. As a participant in both the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* I shared similar experiences to the research participants. I would suggest that co-researchers found it easier to share their experiences with an insider, someone who shared similar experiences to theirs. This meant I needed to constantly ensure that my experiences and narratives of my experience did not influence or have a negative impact on the narratives of the research participants.

In terms of limitations, the study sample solely consisted of individuals who identify as women. This could be viewed as limiting as the narratives shared only consist of those shared by women participants of the two case study protests. The protests were also attended by men students and lecturers. Therefore, the study might be seen as neglecting the narratives of this group.

Furthermore, participants to the study were recruited through social media (through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). This therefore excludes participants of the protest who are not on social media.

5. 6 Recommendations for Future Research

Despite there being increased attention towards violence against women, there is still a lack of data and concrete information on the extent of the issue. Therefore, more data on black women's experiences of GBV activism in HEIs are required to better understand the issue that is GBV and its intersections with class and gender. When an understanding is developed those in power are better able to take adequate measures in responding to GBV this is the case in HEIs (Hossen, 2014). Thus, more data and information regarding the prevalence of GBV in HEIs is needed in order for university managements to be able to respond to the issue and the protests which come as a result of the prevalence of GBV in these institutions.

The review of the literature indicated that interventions in HEIs on GBV are inadequate. HEIs often formulate policies as means of addressing the prevalence of GBV in these institutions but fail to adequately implement these policies. Some critics suggest that universities fail to recognise students' lived experiences in their definitions of GBV in their policies. They argue that to address this failure, universities need to acknowledge the diversity in the ways that young people express themselves and how they understand consent within different relationships (Garcia and Vemuri,

2017). Thus, asserting the need for an intersectional understanding of students' experiences of GBV in HEIs raised in the study.

Jessica and Krause (2017 in Hendricks and Kanjiri, 2020) suggest that the best intervention for sexual harassment should be preventative rather than proactive or reactive. The implementation of the policies should be interrogated as the reasons why certain institutions have policies (Boonzaier et al, 2019). The growth in number of student protests in HEIs is proof of the dissatisfaction with universities interventions towards GBV. Therefore, HEIs should collaborate with the student body in creating victim-centred strategies that will help prevent sexual harassment from taking place on their campuses rather than reacting to cases that have already happened. Survivors and students in HEIs have greater awareness of their experiences of GBV in HEIs, a collaboration in interventions would be beneficial to both the student body and university. Thus, students in HEIs need to be presented as individuals with awareness and agency to issues affecting them in HEIs. As indicated by the co-researchers in the study, a lack of collaboration between a university and its students creates a divide and conflict in interventions to an issue which affects all stakeholders in a university.

African tradition is often criticized for its views about women. Women in the African tradition are often seen as being inferior to men, and young girls are socialised to accept that they are inferior to boys (Dhlomo, 2012). In the context of patriarchy, traditional upbringing plays a role in how women students view sexual harassment. Their upbringing also plays a role in their reporting or silence (Hendricks and Kanjiri, 2020; Matchen & DeSouza, 2000; Stockdale, 1993). Culture also plays a role in the context of sexual harassment in HEIs. Sexual matters in cultural spaces are never spoken of. When one speaks out about sexual matters openly, they are seen as an embarrassment. This culture of silencing forbids, and censures conversations on sexual matters including sexual harassment (Dhlomo, 2012). Therefore, HEIs need to offer training and mentoring to educate their students about sexual harassment. The training sessions need to encourage conversations about sexual matters to avoid students being embarrassed talking about being victimised on their campus (Hendricks & Kanjiri, 2020). This form of training is needed for all stakeholders in HEIs, as a way of encouraging reporting of cases of GBV in HEIs and of breaking the chain of silencing of survivors of GBV. Thus, by employing intersectionality *#RUReferenceList* protest this research study has contributed to knowledge on the methodology, theoretical framework, and ethical considerations of researching student protesters' experiences in protests against GBV. In conclusion, this section addressed the narratives of the co-researchers, the methodological contributions of this study were discussed, the theoretical and social implications, the challenges and limitations and the recommendations for future research were discussed. Student movements and protests have been important sites of knowledge on the experiences of students in HEIs. Thus, this study has contributed to knowledge on the experiences of participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceLis*t protest at UCKAR. Through the narratives in this study, we are able to understand the motivations to the start and the end of the protests and the demonstrations during the protest as a theoretical framework in studying GBV in HEIs. The study acknowledges the complexity of the issue and the varying and intersectional experiences that students have of GBV in these institutions.

Institutions need to ensure that victims get justice, and the institutions need to send clear messages to perpetrators by implementing the disciplinary measures noted in their policy documents. When institutions do not enforce proper discipline on perpetrators this leads to mistrust of the institution and a view that the grievance procedure and the policy are not legitimate (Gouws & Kritzinger, 2007). Co-researchers narrated *the Silent Protest* and the

#RUReferenceList protest as responses to the prevalence of GBV on the UCKAR and as responses to a lack of adequate responses and punishment for those as GBV perpetrators. There is a shortage of literature on what is considered as justice in cases of GBV in HEIs. Therefore, discourses on interventions of GBV need to include discussions of what justice looks like for all those in the institution.

There is a shortage of literature on men students' participation in protests against GBV.

Therefore, the contributions to GBV activism of this group of individuals have been neglected in literature and in academia. More studies need to be conducted to better understand the contributions by men in activism against GBV.

Lastly, there is a great need locally (in South Africa) and internationally for research which centres on the experiences of student protesters and survivors of GBV in HEIs.

5. 7 Conclusion

The study contributed to knowledge on the prevalence of GBV in HEIs, the experiences of student protesters of GBV and specifically participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceList* protest. This research study has contributed to knowledge on the methodology, theoretical framework, and ethical considerations of researching student protesters' experiences in protests against GBV. In conclusion, this section addressed the narratives of the co-researchers, the methodological contributions of this study were discussed, the theoretical and social implications, the challenges and limitations and the recommendations for future research were discussed. Student movements and protests have been important sites of knowledge on the experiences of students in HEIs. Thus, this study has contributed to knowledge on the experiences of participants of the *Silent Protest* and the *#RUReferenceLis*t protest at UCKAR. Through the narratives in this study, we are able to understand the motivations to the start and the end of the protests and the demonstrations during the protest.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

Protesting Against Gender-Based Violence: Narratives on The Silent Protest and #RUReferneceList

1. Invitation and purpose

I would like to invite you to take part in my research project. The research aims to create a space for activists and individuals who took part in the Silent Protest and #RUReferenceList to share their stories and experiences of these two movements.

2. Procedures

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to do one online interview with me. The interview will focus on your narratives on The Silent Protest and the #RUReferenceList protests at Rhodes University. The interviews will be between an hour and 30 minutes. Both these interviews will take place online on Microsoft teams or zoom which everyone that you feel comfortable using.

3. Discomforts & Inconveniences

If at any point of the interview you feel anxious or distressed, you may withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. I have attached a list of resources that you can contact

should you feel as though you need support. We will discuss a convenient time for both of us to have the interviews.

4. Benefits

Your participation will help allow you to tell your story and to share your experiences of the two movements and how these affected you. The study could act as a space to help debrief and could present as a space of healing. Your participation in the study would help contribute to the understanding of how GBV movements affect those that take part in them.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

The interviews will be recorded for note-taking purposes. The information you give during the interviews will be kept safe on a password-protected computer. The folder on the computer will not have your details on it. The recordings and information will be kept safe for 4 years and later destroyed. While this research will be used for educational purposes, it might be published in an academic journal. Should this happen, your identity will still be kept confidential. I will conduct the interviews in a private room to ensure confidentiality.

6. Money matters

The data costs for the interview will be covered by the researcher and *the Unsettling Knowledge Production on Gendered and Sexual Violence project.*

7. Contact details.

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, please contact the Researcher: Aphiwe Mhlangulana or email at MHLAPH008@uct.ac.za OR Contact the Ethics Committee: Rosalind Adams on 021 650 3417 or email at Rosalind.Adams@uct.ac.za

8. Signatures

The participant has been informed of the nature and purpose of the procedures described above including any risks involved in its performance. He/she has been given time to ask any questions and these questions have been answered to the best of the researcher's ability.

Researchers Signature _____ Date_____

I (participant) have been informed about this research study and understand its purpose, possible benefits, risks, and inconveniences. I agree to take part in this research as a participant. I know that I am free to withdraw this consent and quit this project at any time and that doing so will not cause me any penalty.

Participants Signature _____ Date

PERMISSION TO TAPE-RECORD

I consent to the interview/focus group being audio-recorded. I understand that the interview and group discussion will be recorded, and that the researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard my personal information throughout the study.

Participants Signature

Appendix B: Resource List

Referral List for Counselling and Support

- The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO):

Mitchell's Plain: 021-397 3782
Cape Town: 021-422 1690
Bellville: 021-944 3980 or visit their website on: www.nicro.org.za

- Lifeline South Africa National

Counselling Number: 0861 322 322

- Stop Gender Violence (toll-free lifeline) Number: 0800 150 150
- The Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC) Number: 0800 428 428

Please call me: *120*7867#
Skype Line 'Helpme GBV
SMS Based Line for persons with disabilities (SMS 'help' to 31531)

- Tears Foundation

Free SMS helpline: *134*7355# Number: 010 590 5920
Email: info@tears.co.za

- The Tauma Centre Number: 021 465 7373

E-mail: info@trauma.org.za

- Thuthuzela Care Centre Number: 021 690 1000

Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA):
Observatory: 021 447 7951 or visit their website on: www.famsa.org.za

- Mosaic Training, Service and Healing Centre for Women:

Wynberg: 021 761 7585 or visit their website on: www.mosaic.org.za

- Saartjie Baartman Centre for Women and Children:

Manenberg: 27 21 633 5287 or visit their website on:
http://www.saartjiebaartmancentre.org.za/

- Rape Crisis

Observatory (Head office)
23 Trill Road, Observatory, 7925, Cape Town P O Box 46 Observatory 7935
Email: communications@rapecrisis.org.za Complaints: complaints@rapecrisis.org.za
Telephone: 021 447 1467

Athlone
335a Klipfontein Road, Athlone Telephone:
021 684 1180
Khayelitsha
89 Msobomvu Drive, Khayelitsha Telephone: 021 361 9228

- Rhodes University Wellness Centre Telephone: 046 603 8111

Email Address: Communications@ru.ac.za

- Psychological Care Centre in Grahamstown/Makhanda Telephone: 046 622 8197

- Destiny Helpline for Youth & Students Telephone: 0800 41 42 43

- ·SADAG Mental Health Line Telephone: 011 234 4837

- Cipla Mental Health Helpline Telephone: 0800 456 789

- Fort England Hospital Telephone: 046 602 2300

- Counselling Centre

Telephone: 046 603 7070
Email Address: counsellingcentre@ru.ac.za
Psychological Emergencies (24-hour) Telephone: 082 803 1077

Appendix C: Demographic sheet for Protesting Against Gender-Based Violence: Narratives on The Silent Protest and #RUReferenceList

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Department of Psychology

1) What is your name and surname?

2) How old are you?

3) How do you identify in terms of race?

4) What is your highest level of education?

5) How long have you been working in the activist space?

6) What is your current relationship status? E.g., single, married.

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

1. Please tell me about yourself.

2. Could you please tell me about your experiences of being at Rhodes University and/or at Makhanda?

3. Which movement(s) did you participate in?

4. What motivated you to take part in the movement(s)?

5. What prompted the start of the movement you participated in?

6. When you think back to the time of the movement(s) that you participated in, what do you remember about that time?

7. Do you think your experiences of the movements were different to those of the other participants and how so?

8. Have the movements and what happened during the time affected your life in any way?

9. Do you have any last remarks?