



Continuity and Change in Students' Account of Race and Class Relations at a South African University

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Abstract

This article draws from an interview-based study of students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal highlighting the ways in which they give meaning to race. Racist practices at universities in South Africa have received widespread condemnation and universities are at the forefront in confronting and dealing with the persistence of racism. In this context, the article seeks to develop an understanding of the contextually specific ways through which race is given content and the possibilities that they may present for change. The data shows that the specific configurations of race as described by African and Indian students at the university where the study was conducted suggest constrictions and continuities of separateness as they demonstrate change. Rejecting an analysis that is based on fixed meanings of race, the article theorises that race is complicated by broader social structures, and class remains an important variable in race relations. Race continues to be salient in the everyday lives of students but race and student life must be understood through class. The article analyses further the ways in which students point to possibilities to enhance change working creatively within the university to bring about racial mixing. The article concludes with some recommendations for change.

Résumé

Cet article donne les résultats recueillis au cours d'une étude basée sur des entretiens avec des étudiants à l'Université de KwaZulu-Natal en mettant l'accent sur le sens qu'ils donnent à la race. Les pratiques racistes dans les universités en Afrique du Sud ont reçu une condamnation générale et les universités mènent des confrontations et s'occupent de l'obstination au racisme. Dans ce contexte, l'article vise à développer une compréhension

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des façons spécifiques contextuelles à travers lesquelles un contenu est attribué à la race et les possibilités qui peuvent se présenter pour un changement. Les données montrent que les configurations particulières de la race telles que décrites par les étudiants africains et indiens à l'université proposent des restrictions et des continuités sur la séparation lorsqu'ils démontrent le changement. Rejetant une analyse basée sur des significations fixes de la race, l'article montre que la race est compliquée par des structures sociales plus larges et que la classe reste une variable importante dans les relations raciales. La race continue à être saillante dans la vie quotidienne des étudiants, mais la race et la vie des étudiants sont seulement comprises à travers la classe. En plus, le papier analyse la manière dont les élèves s'orientent vers des possibilités qui leur permettent d'améliorer le changement en travaillant de manière créative au sein de l'université pour réussir le mélange des races. L'article se termine par quelques recommandations de changement.

Introduction

Social cohesion and racial integration amongst students are important goals in the transformation in South African higher education and this imperative is rooted in the country's democracy (Department of Education 2008). The political changes premised upon racial equality, has produced a fertile environment for the creation of equitable student social relations. Against the political gains however are accounts of continuities in relations of inequality and separation. The persistence of racial inequalities is best illustrated when in 2007 a few white male students at the University of Free State (UFS) made a video which showed degrading forms of conduct which involved giving African middle-aged female cleaners food mixed with urine. Consequently, race was placed on the forefront of student identities in South Africa leading to widespread condemnation about racist practices. Following the incident, the Department of Education made a call for renewed emphasis on social cohesion and transformation in South African universities. Universities, like all institutions in the country are obliged to enhance democratic ideals and racial justice.

Against this backdrop, this article focuses on the ways in which a selected group of students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) give meaning to race analysing the implications for change. In 2012, 63.9 per cent of students at the university were African, 26.2 per cent Indian, 7.4 per cent white and 2.2 per cent coloured. This compares to 2005 statistics which show that 49.9 per cent of the student population was African compared to 15.23 per cent white, 2.97 per cent coloured and 32.63 per cent Indian. In the last seven years dramatic change in the racial/class profile has been experienced in relation to the number of African students at UKZN. The changing race and class profile of the student body must be seen against the broadening of access to higher education in the country particularly for the African majority who remain poor, despite the growth of middle class elite. In addressing the large number of

students who cannot afford university fees, the South African state has increased loan schemes and bursaries particularly to African students to further their studies. These schemes recognize the continuation of intimate ties between race and class forged through apartheid.

Beyond access however is the question of experience and the development of equitable student relations (Soudien 2008; Pattman 2007). No longer restricted by apartheid, students do have opportunities to mix with each other and develop new forms of relations based on social cohesion although as Pattman (2007) notes, there is no guarantee that such relations can be forged without active interventions. Racial mixing among students is small, and reproduction of race as a marker of identity continues to hold value as students demarcate themselves (Walker 2005; Pattman 2007). Walker's (2005) study of white and black (African) students at a former white Afrikaans university shows that race in student interactions has loosened as a direct consequence of political change in the country whilst noting simultaneously the re-inscriptions of race in maintaining and shaping relations of separation and inequality. By focusing on a group of white and black (African) students Walker's study illuminates the value of doing context specific research in the country with context specific interventions. How students give meaning to race within the broader context of South Africa has local specificity and as such crucial to the development of locally specified interventions. Research that places the value on context and local interventions are important to addressing inequalities of power as they are played out by students at South African higher education institutions.

In placing the meanings that selected students at UKZN give to race, this article aims to analyse the ways in which African and Indian students foreground race and the possibilities for change. In doing so the article highlights the need to examine specific configurations of race within specific higher education locations showing how they might enable and/or restrict equitable social relations. By drawing on a study utilising qualitative methods involving focus group and individual interviews, the article shows not only the ways in which race differentiation is reproduced but also how race changes are inflected through class. The article analyses further the ways in which students point to possibilities to enhance change, rejecting any fixed notion of race and which holds better prospects for equality.

Beyond Essentialist Accounts of Race

The UFS racist incident was important in putting into the spotlight university student life and racial dynamics in South Africa's goal towards social transformation. On the other end however, the incident has produced a context where apartheid style discursive constructions of race are being reproduced in understanding student lives and in dealing with interventions. The report on

the racist incident by the Department of Education (2008) justifiably put racial hierarchies as an important mode of analysis but often disregarding change and the significance of class to changing racial relations. Race, it is argued in this article, remains persistent in marking out the spaces and defining how students 'stick together' however race is not a fixed entity. Rejecting the essentialist accounts of race which purport that there is something unique and biologically predetermined in race differences, this article situates itself within a body of work which race has meaning in relation through the dynamics of power. In alignment with theorisings of racial identities, this article shows that student constructions of race must be held in tension with the broader social context in which class is intertwined within the dynamics of power (Dolby 2001). Race is not a stable category. It shifts and moves and is contingent upon the context in which it is located. Race is about power and the ways in which it is arranged in hierarchical ways and contested. In South Africa race and class have been intimately intertwined with the majority being poor and African illustrating clearly the ways in which structural inequalities have marked the racial landscape. As Dolby (2001) notes, racial identities are not fixed, they constantly change, formed by and expressive of power. This does not mean that race hierarchies do not persist however. Understanding race must necessarily involve the tensions with the broader social structures and as this article argues class complicates a simplistic version of race relations amongst students. Class works itself into race as race works itself into class. Race and change are important to understand. Older versions of apartheid styled race relations do have effects for student identities but they have historical basis, with constantly shifting dynamics. One dynamic that has produced shifting relations is identified by Walker (2005) as the political changes emphasising democracy. Race, it is argued can be divisive but there are spaces of hybridity fuelled by class and which troubles a simplistic understanding of race. A politics of student racial identities that connects to its social rootings can help understand the ways in which race both persists and changes. Whilst race continues to be an important area of inequality, class is coming to play an important role in shifting and changing student identities albeit in a small way particularly as African majority remain economically marginalised despite the growth of a middle class. Understanding race requires then an analysis that looks to broader structural issues which affect and influence students' lives and which includes as Pattman (2010) notes the schooling experience. Some students emerge from mixed race former all white or "model C" schools and thus interaction amongst the races is not uncommon whereas students who have rural or township schooling experience and remain largely poor have not yet interacted with different races and different students. This article contributes to building

the literature and research around student identities and race in South Africa noting that race, change and social class are important dynamics. Students come to university and are not isolated from the broader social and historical context in which they are located. Their meanings as such are loaded with contextual specificities and held in tension with power and class.

Research Methods

This study draws from a project that attempts to understand the ways in which students at UKZN give meaning to race and how intervention might be designed to address and confront the challenge of racism that continues to plague post-apartheid South Africa. The study of student identities at UKZN was given impetus as a consequence of the racist incident reported at UFS and the emphasis on UKZN on transformation and change.

The article focuses on individual interviews conducted with full time black and Indian students conducted with 19 students, aged between 19 and 25 years. Racial categories whilst problematic remain salient in the country with everyday usage of the four apartheid defined racial categories: African, white, Indian and coloured. The participants commonly used black when referring to African and much of the data an analysis uses black African interchangeably. Interviews were conducted with students in Howard College campus and the duration of the interviews was between 60–90 minutes. Students were full time and located both in undergraduate and postgraduate studies and emerged from the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal. The focus in this article is not on individual students but how both Indian and African constituting the majority of the students on campus provided content to race and the contextual specificity of such meanings.

Semi-structured interviews was the staple of this research and students were encouraged to set the direction for discussions around race in the interview on the basis of what they felt was important to raise. Again it must be noted here that the focus is not on individuals but the discursive construction of race. Two positions highlighted here relate to student separation and class tensions and the prospects for changing racial relations. These are discussed in the next section of the article.

Separation not Integration: Reproduction of Race Relations and the Effect of Class

In Walker's (2005) study, a major theme identified was the strategy used by white students to erase race whilst African students strategically ignored or resisted race inequalities within a context where white students remained in the majority. Whilst Walker's study was dominated by the erasure of race, "race is everywhere and nowhere", this was not the case for students at UKZN.

Sticking together

Students both Indians and Africans did not deny racial separation and the perpetuation of divisions:

...you see a lot of separation rather than integration and as I have said that they stick to their own race groups. Yes they usually stick to their own race groups but you would find some other groups which are racially mixed but it is not a very common thing on our campus. I don't know what it can take to make them come together, you know. Blacks have their own issue with the whites; the whites have their own issues...

Sticking together was a dominant response to students understanding of race at UKZN. Although racial mixing was evident as stated above it was uncommon. The response above is not surprising given that South Africa's social landscape, both residential and schooling, continues to reflect apartheid styled racial configurations even as middle class and elite Africans move into former white, Indian and coloured residential areas and schools reflecting a degree of racial mixing. The slow pace of change to desegregation has been linked in part to class and the inability of the majority of Africans to afford better housing and schooling, severing interactions with other race groups (Donaldson and Kotze 2006). Market forces have meant that apartheid forms of separation continue to lock out the African majority from housing and schooling in better resourced areas. Where there has been interactions and movement of races, these are restricted to white, Indian and coloured areas and schools. When the student above talks of sticking together, it cannot be analysed without an acute understanding of broader social relations in South Africa. As a working class African male student, he points to race as far more complex than simply what whites do to blacks but notes that both whites and blacks are enmeshed and caught up in their 'own issues' imputing the matrix of separation and the continuation of separation even after apartheid. Despite the end of apartheid over eighteen years ago, the consequences of racial separation in everyday life, in schools, in residential areas continues to have impact on the extent to which people can mix and also who and how class enables mixing:

Approaching them [other races] is difficult. You don't know how they react. It is difficult because you don't know how they feel about interacting with other races where if you approach a black person I know there is no race thing there you can do whatever. If it's a white guy what if the guy is not into black people?

Separation was fostered through the lack of interactions at all levels of social life. It must be noted here again that students are emerging from school contexts that continue to reflect the apartheid conventions although it is former Indian, coloured and white schools that are now mixing. The mixing however is based on the ability of better off Africans and middle and elite classes of Africans to

send their children to better resourced schools than the township schools reserved under apartheid for Africans (Hunter 2010). African schools in townships continue to remain African (Pattman 2007). Thus, separation is fostered through class differentiations with working class Africans emerging from working class township schools having little or almost no experience of relating to other races. This helps understand why the student above states that it is difficult to approach other races, "you don't know how they react".

Space, Race and Demarcation

The spaces on campus were actively produced by students. Whilst it is true that spaces on the campus are not tightly knit according to race albeit with some movement, the racialisation of space and the demarcation of students in racial ways was a dominant theme:

The mere fact is when we sit around on campus we demarcate each other you would find by the cafeteria and the library there is a large amount of black students and when you come to the park near the vendors you will find a few Indian and coloureds and maybe white students mostly internationals but if you were looking for the white students who are full time students you will find them at the upper caf next to Humanities or around TB Davis...if a person looks at it other than saying people are just scattered around because it is where their friends are, if you look at it from a perspective of race it might in a way say something because if you gate it around your specific race you become comfortable and then your identity is shaped by the people that you are around and some of the views that those people share might come into you and you might want to outplay those views so that you want to be accepted in that group.

Space is racialised on the campus with limited opportunities presented for integration. Whilst it will be shown later that opportunities to mix involve class, the point raised above is the overwhelming persistence of racial boundaries within specific spaces identified on the campus. Key to understanding racialised spacing on the campus is the continuation of race and class boundaries in South Africa which prevent mixing in the first instance. As explained earlier, interactions with different races at the school level is facilitated as Hunter (2010) notes by middle class and elite who can afford the school fees but also by Africans who continue to reside in townships but can afford to send their children to better resourced Indian, white and coloured schools. There has been limited contact with the majority of students who emerge from rural and township schools with people of other races. "Being comfortable" by being with people of your own race is the effect of separation in all instances of social life in South Africa.

...if you came from a multiracial school it is a common thing you are probably most likely to mix with other race groups when you get to varsity cos you

used to it, is not an uncommon thing to you rather than a person...from a rural school only where there is just only that race group, it is going to be a very hard adjustment for them to move in with other race groups even though they don't have any hard feelings or anything but it is going to be hard....if you come from a rural area you schooled here you are only used to this race group of your own and then you move to varsity maybe you are even used to speaking your own language now you have to change when you are with your friends and another race group you have to all understand each other so maybe sometimes language could be the barrier...

To assume that university life will automatically cease such separation is simplistic. The spatialised boundaries reflect the continuation of racialised residential and schooling spaces in South Africa as well as language differences. Whilst the spaces on campus as will be seen are not neatly defined as there is movement of students, the point here is that the racialised boundaries in student relations reflect the class divisions and continual separation of people within the broader South African context.

The coffee shop received widespread attention in student's account of race. The coffee shop was regarded as elite and a source of anger and resentment for many students who could not afford the high costs for food. The food here was far more expensive than the cafeteria where mainly Africans congregated but even in the space of the coffee shop and despite middle class similarities amongst Indians, Africans and whites racial separation continued:

Coffee shop is the common one. If you look at the coffee shop, I mostly see Indians and whites there. At the cafe you see the black people. We don't even know why the distinction, like you see this majority here and that majority there. The students socialise themselves in that manner, it's not the cafe or the setting that asks for certain races to go to certain places but it's the way the students socialise themselves and they put themselves in that position. It's like birds of the same feathers flocking together. We once had this discussion in a tutorial, where they said why is it in this place we have majority black and all, and they said people actually refer to these places as the Workshop and Musgrave...

Inseparable from understanding the coffee shop and the cafe is the fault lines of class inequalities which produce "birds of the same feathers flocking together". Race and class continue to be intimately tied creating and reinforcing geographical separation as described as Workshop (where majority working class African congregate for transport and shopping) and Musgrave (a middle/elite class and formerly white only shopping and residential area). Connecting race to its social/class formations can help explain why students separate in ways that depict apartheid styled relations. But such depictions as students attest to are not static:

In the eating areas most especially if you go to the cafeteria the Italian eating place the 'coffee shop' there is an element of class. The ones who went to model C schools they got this English they talk like the white people they

integrate much more easily with the white people but its people of a certain class people from the rural areas cannot fit into that company because they feel they are too backward...backward in the sense of they are just not modern enough. They have nothing to offer in such spaces.

Class produces racial flexibility-denouncing the sole significance of race in student lives. The ones who went to “model C” refers to African students, who are better off than rural Africans and who have been schooled in former white schools. The latter have acquired social and cultural capital and the language of class so that they are better integrated within the university environment where English acquisition is important in teaching and learning. What the student above details is an accentuation of class differences which marginalise the African poor who are regarded as backward, with insufficient English accumulation and without the social and cultural capital to insert within the predominantly Indian and white elite coffee shop space.

Race, Social and Economic Capital

Students made deep connections between race and the broader historical context through which racialised capital was produced entrenching social and economic hierarchies between whites and Africans:

I was applying for articles since I am finishing and...I'm thinking gosh being a black person sucks, I don't think a white person looks for a job like how we looking and no one is even replying to your CV. So I'm thinking I don't think a white person actually sends out a CV or a white person even knows how to write a CV. They have a friend, or their father is a lawyer or their father has a friend who is a lawyer so it's just sorted them...

Even having a qualification is not a secure prospect for getting employment. Whilst much has been done in the country in relation to employment equity and affirmative action, the student above notes that whites are historically privileged and such privilege is embedded within a social and economic network that reproduces capital and privilege. Despite the existence of policies in South Africa that provide opportunities for blacks in relation to employment equity, historical privilege and continuation of economic capital amongst white reproduces the notion that “being a black person sucks”.

When students spoke of relationships with people of a different race, class was often cited as an obstacle:

...someone who is disadvantaged they don't know how to take somebody out because of the expense and because of the way you do it. But a student who is even if they are black or white or Indian whose from an upper class residence they know a language that says “let's go out get to know each other” and all the other things that follow.

Class dynamics work themselves into understandings of race and relationships with students of other races are framed by 'lack' of cultural and social requirements that frame middle class lives. Of importance here is the extent to which class, and social and cultural accumulation related to middle class transgresses racial boundaries. The similar language of class fosters relationships with other races. Shifts in class formations as Dolby's (2001) study shows produce spaces of hybridity and boundary crossings that trouble the simplistic notion of race. Consistent with Dolby, the student above shows how racial alliances are crossing class and whilst race persists in the creation of hierarchies and separation changing racial relations involve changing class dynamics.

Shifting class dynamics influence the configuration of race as stated below:

I attended...an ex model C school and I am what is termed as a coconut an oreo...I was used to interacting with everyone so I think another point on campus when you do associate with other groups the whole stigma of being a coconut... like why are you hanging out with white people or other people so you are seen as a hybrid because you are not conforming to you being a Zulu or a black person or something...I intentionally went out and got an English accent when I in Grade 5. I think when I was 11 years old... I liked the English accent and I mimicked it until I somewhat got it. So I think it was an active thing on my part to acquire an English accent.

Being a coconut or oreo, was a form of hybridised identity. Such an identity with class privilege allowed one to hang out with white people and others and with English language acquisition enabled further the insertion within middle class white and Indian social values. Such an identity however was criticised by other Africans as noted above as non-conforming to stereotypical accounts of being Zulu or black. Important above is the strategy adopted to accumulate social and cultural values of the middle class which included developing deliberately an English accent. The emphasis on accent was important in that it identified with white and Indian middle class students, separating from working class African students and in doing so accentuating class differences and hybridity.

Changing Relations: Getting to Learn about Each Other

The lack of integration requires interventions that bring students together (Pattman 2007). How this might be achieved has not often been the focus of research attention in South Africa simply than stating that integration must be worked upon in universities (Walker 2005). In this section, I argue that whilst students located race with persistent forms of separation, complicated by class, the possibilities to engender better racial relations existed at UKZN. The flexibility of meanings that students themselves raised, troubles again the simplistic assumption that race is fixed and stable and it is argued here that the ways in which students point to change facilitates a broadening, rather than reinscription

of race thinking. Whilst students recognizing the broader structural issues which impede the development of equitable relations, the point made in this section shows students' capacities for critical reflection must be harnessed in working towards transformation at UKZN. The section will focus on how sport, music, drama are suggested as sources of togetherness and the specific ways in which lecturers might work in lecture rooms to include people as well as in university admission and orientation processes.

Race matters had to be attended confirming students' knowledge of inequitable relationships that separated students:

The importance of integrating and getting to know each other because if we don't even the next generation will be polluted with the race issues so we should spend more time learning about each other. I think it is necessary and also people should be aware rather than ignoring the issue.

Race should not be erased or ignored. Understanding race through a framework of justice and equality was an important step in broadening race categorisations which as the student above states has polluting effects. This is in contrast to white students in Walker's (2005) study who dismissed and denied the existence of race inequalities. In transforming UKZN's racialised contexts bringing students together in the creation of social and sporting activities was an important suggestion and in line with other research suggesting the university's role in bringing people of different races together (Pattman 2007).

Challenging fixed notions of race, students suggested that the creation of activities can help racial mixing:

...if we could create a situation where we have activities or events that bring students together that make them socialize or make them mix together in that interaction we will have a quite different situation...

Noting the racialised separation at the university, the student above provides compelling evidence of what UKZN should be doing to address and support racial mixing. Sport was advanced in support of mixing:

I think we have to learn about other people...we can have like games or sports so that you get every race to mingle with everyone so that you get to learn about each other because they is a stereotype that white people are racist but if you get to know then, get to talk to them you see that OK, I don't see any element of racism here. When I was doing first year we used to call Afrikaners racist because of the history and everything but that didn't mean that person was a racist...

The student above shows the capacities of critical reflection which allow people to work on stereotypes and alter their mindsets in relation to other races. In learning about each other through coming together in games and sport the possibility thus existed to break down relations of power and address historical

inequities based on apartheid's framing breaking down assumptions that associate Afrikaners (whites who controlled the apartheid government) with racism. Key strategies suggested by students reinforced sport, music and drama to bring students together:

Integrate sport which will bring white students with other races...encourage sport which is the biggest thing...encourage drama and acting in which the majority black students mix together....

From the stuff I heard most student like music...get different artists that cater for different groups. Have a spring break bash or something so have different artists who cater for different student's not just one for the night cos that will only draw the hip hop crowd if it is slicker so have varied entertainment for different students that will attract students to the same venue and hopefully they will mingle because of the commonality of the music...Tasha Becker and Locnville for the white students so have a varied ray of entertainment so they will all be there but they will be in the same space and venue and they will interact.

Taking account of contextual factors and the specific ways in which students give meaning to culture, interests (see Dolby 2001) there is recognition of the effects of apartheid which produced confinement in relation to music for example. Whilst crossover and interests in the tastes are mediated through class, the above statement recognises that in creating activities they should respond and include different interests.

Yes I do socialize with students from different races when I first got here I joined the UKZN debating team which to a large extent is a mix of races so those people that I made friends with in that society are still my friends now and other than them I do have others from different races that I consider as my friends also acquaintances in class or people I would have had a heated discussion with people in class on various topics then we end up knowing each other on a first name basis so I never really had a problem with it like I said before I studied in an environment where there is a mix of races I studied like in my primary years and a bit of high school I studied in a multi-racial school so I never had a problem of interacting with people of different races ya I have quite a lot of friends some to them who I knew when I was in primary school.

Above, it is noted that the ability to debate and mix has deeper race and class context. Here, the student notes that race mixing was evident even in the primary school and that the integration in the university was fostered and enabled through such history. At the same time however, it is noted here that, in the main, it is mixing that occurs amongst Africans whose families were able to afford the fees to attend 'multi-racial' schools – race and class are thus linked to student mixing.

Students come into universities with history of schooling that are quite specific and this has effects on how they see each other, a point noted by Pattman (2010), illustrated and confirmed below:

I think at orientation and admission level there should be more of race interaction where all students are there and there are activities to engage all students as well as I don't know if they can maybe in theatres when there is teaching going on encourage students to interact more because I think sometimes when students do that it is not because they have problems with other students but because they don't know. It just happens because maybe when you came to varsity you were friends with your friends from back home whom you interact with you don't think but maybe if there is a programme making students interact and making friends somehow or programmes instead of programmes that segregate students or something like that.

Separation is acknowledged as an experience before coming to university and configured friendships and race relations. The university here becomes the central point at admissions and orientation level to bring students together. This requires an understanding of race separations and histories of South African students. Of clear importance is the recognition that students congregate in ways that in the main reflect broader social relations that work to construct and maintain race and class separation and differences (Durrheim et al. 2004). Where there is flexibility this involves class and historical relations which enables mixing in the primary and high school level. This does not mean that race relations are fixed but they do account for why separation persists and how class complicates this substantially.

The anger and resentment that students felt about the class and race differentiations and power imbalances evident in the coffee shop and cafeteria distinction led to suggestions of a common eating place. This suggestion must be seen in the context where the majority of students (working class African and working class Indian) cannot afford the costs of food in the coffee shop and through which race was imputed:

For one, I think we should have one common cafeteria, seriously, I think if we had one common eating or social space, we are all forced to go there and sit there and eat together, I think that might reduce the levels of, if there is any racism.

Within the lecture room students noted as Pattman (2007) study that active intervention is required within the lecture room to put students together:

...they can't force people you know to move, every time in class you can't be told don't sit here today sit there. But I think group discussions normally they do, I think they are improving the situation, because if a lecturer comes in and she decides ok I got group discussion I want four groups to discuss this topic and this topic and this topic, and instead of us telling the students group yourselves into four groups or whatever you say ok, I will group you by giving you numbers, you're integrating not sticking to own kind, that maybe enables the situation to change a bit.

There is no culture of integration there isn't any cultural things to do as well. Like in the beginning when I did socio 101 in the tut we had to do for the assignment an interview with another race group so that is really interesting and because it was for marks, students were really serious about it. And it opened peoples' mind. We can have a forum or something so it could also be a bit destructive because some people are vocal about their issues but maybe it will be good to release it and work it out.

The students above provide creative ways in which lecturers might facilitate a learning environment that brings students together understanding that the default position is one where students congregate together in terms of their histories and races. Recognising the social processes which has effects for how students relate in the lecture room, has consequences for the reproduction of and investment in race separation. In group work, lecturers could use numbers to put students together and working on race (particularly as the sociology class permits) where marks are involved 'forces' students to come together and get to know each other. In challenging and transforming the lecture room environment, the students illustrate the importance of lecturer intervention in the transformational agenda. By fracturing the separation in the lecture room, the inevitability of 'sticking together' reduces its power to hold current racial relation in place and opens up new possibilities in coming together. Not only do students understand how racial separation persists but they also show how it can be challenged and transformed.

Whilst students pointed to the actions of UKZN and the initiatives required by lecturers they also showed critical reflection on student complicity and transformation of thinking within the student body:

...I think we also need to change our mind-set, because we are still stuck at mind-set you know, that if you are white, you've got different interests, you've got different likings you've got your own way of doing things, and I think I'm also different from you so I need to stick with my own kind. I think that's, it's going to take time, but I think we need to start moving forward as students, because we are all here for one purpose, to learn, so if you're learning, you don't only learn from your own kind, you need to learn from different groups of people. So integrating ourselves within other groups, in a way, it is hard but I think that could help the situation.

I don't know why they behave in that manner. I think it's all based on the whole idea about what your parents teach you about what black is and what white is...I think everybody has their own little part to play...I always say to people when they come to university through this gate you are coming to bubble because this entire university is a world on its own and if you compare it to the rest of Durban, we are much more integrated racially here than outside...

Integration is necessary for learning and whilst there are many students who resist and continually separate within narrow racial confines, students are explicitly targeted above with capacity to change the current conditions at

UKZN. Of importance in the above discussion are the deep social roots given to race. UKZN, it is argued reflects a more progressive racial environment than the city of Durban in which it is situated. Paying attention to the broader social structures and historical processes that frame the city (and the country), the discussion above suggests that social processes drive race relations at UKZN even as UKZN is seen as more advanced racially than the city of Durban.

I'd say it is so linked to where we come from because at the end of the day we go back to your rest room at the end of term you go back to your home and the perceptions that you have in your home space are still there and they get reiterated and re-emphasized every time you are at home and then you come back to the university background so these are not just something that can be done on the university front but it goes back to home. Yeah and it's a long shot I think we do have a long way to go.

Whilst students noted how dominant racial positions can be disrupted and re-examined in the university and through changing student mindsets, the point above is that more attention needs to be paid to changing structural and social positions within the broader context of the country—a strong dialect and tension exists between reproduction and change within the university and is best illustrated in the quote above. Social processes and past inequalities, hierarchies and residential make-up have effects on how students continually relate to each other even as there is evidence of change. These dynamics intersect to produce reiterations and reinforcement of racial divisions. Race and class hierarchies are legitimated as they are broken down within the broader structures of South African social life and are repeated, although not without interruption, at UKZN. Changing race involves addressing the broader structural inequalities that continually separate races. There is no quick-fix to solutions but there are in the short-term changes that students themselves illustrate are possible within the university.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to show how students give meaning to race and the deep connection with class. Simplistic assumptions based on race as a fixed category of meaning cannot do justice to the actual evidence presented here by students as they complicate race with class and broader contextual issues in South Africa. Contextual specific accounts of students in different universities matter to how race is given content (Walker 2005). On the one hand the article demonstrates the continuation of racial separation but racial separation cannot be viewed without understandings its connection to class. Class inequalities are accentuated at the university as they weave through race. This has historical specificity. Class inequalities and race in South Africa correlate even as there is evidence of changing middle racial dynamics which are altering and accentuating

class differences amongst Africans. At UKZN, the majority of African students are poor and this perhaps best explains why the university is constantly in the media showing at times violent student protests related to fees and finance. Race and class issues go beyond the university and potentially stymie greater flexibility and movement of students as the majority of African and African students at UKZN remain working class and poor. As Ozler (2007) notes the poverty rate in rural South Africa is 63 per cent with living standards closely linked to class. There are many poor whites, Indians and coloureds in South Africa but poverty is concentrated among blacks. Ozler adds that Africans and coloureds experience high rates of poverty than amongst Indians and white South Africans. The experience of race at UKZN as students illustrate cannot be understood without continual focus on histories and structures which shape and mark how students separate and come together. Given how class has effects on race and the continuation of class inequalities in the country, it is not surprising that race is constructed in the ways that show resentment for those inhabiting the coffee shop and the persistent of separation.

Notwithstanding the stark social inequalities, the article shows how students demonstrate critical reflective practices in exploring and thinking through options for change (Durrheim *et al.* 2011). Within the university however and beyond the structural inequalities that constrain social relations much more can be done to creatively work to bring students together. Recognising the different social histories, the effects of apartheid and the often limited contact that students have growing up and in school is important to realise in advancing racial mixing. Attempts to bring students together require active work on the part of the university through sport and cultural activities, in admissions and orientation programmes, in the lecture rooms requiring deliberate interventions by lecturers as well as changing students mindsets about other races. In the context of the UFS incident in South Africa and in light of enduring patterns of racial and class inequalities that continue to malign working class African students, efforts to work towards change remain critical (Department of Education 2008). What students have to say moves beyond simply recognising their experiences of race and knowledge of separation imputing class and broader histories in South Africa's hierarchical society but the critical ways in which students talked about change suggest the potential to transform relations to create racial mixing and integration to reflect the transformative agendas of the country.

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