Women's subjective experiences of sexism at UCT: A feminist-intersectional ethnographic study

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Abstract

Under the gaze of the decolonize UCT movement, there are complex questions raised about the unfiltered experiences of marginalized groups at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This research project aims to explore and understand the subjective experiences of female students, as a marginalized group, at this institution. Moreover, it aims to understand how femininity and female sexuality are represented in this space and whether these representations are accepted or rejected by female students. This research was conducted from a feminist intersectional approach. This approach aims to empower and create awareness through exploration of how different social divisions, within gender, interlock and produce specific experiences. This qualitative research study was conducted as an ethnographic study, which included observing and recording behaviours and interactions within public spaces on UCT campuses. This ethnographic research consisted of 4 semi-structured focus groups with between 3-9 undergraduate, female UCT students. The ethnographic data acted as a tool to contextualize the focus group information. A thematic analysis approach instructed the data analysis process. Participants shared that they had experienced sexism and gender inequality, whether covert or overt, at this institution. The research established that there are structural and institutional factors that maintain gender inequities, such as the residence system. Furthermore, the study revealed the complex nature of women's experiences at this institution. Their experiences consist of a combination of social dimensions such as race, class and faculty amongst others, which interact and produce a unique experience of oppression for the individual. The findings of the study provide support that UCT is still a predominately sexist, heteronormative, and patriarchal space. Hence this research contributes to the discussion and practice supporting the need to decolonize UCT.

Keywords: University of Cape Town; patriarchy; sexism; femininity; ethnography; intersectionality.

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Women's subjective experiences of sexism at UCT: A feminist-intersectional ethnographic study.

Throughout the last century there have been significant structural and institutional transformations in South Africa, aimed at accommodating women in previously restricted spaces. These have included political shifts, with women being afforded the right to vote; and economic shifts, with women occupying jobs previously inaccessible to them. An example is the increase in the representation of women in parliament, from 3% in 1994 to 44% in 2009 (Oliphant, 2015). There has been an "implementation of progressive gender discrimination laws" (Swim & Campbell, 2008, p. 218) and noticeable changes that have resulted in a decrease in gender inequality (Swim & Campbell, 2008). However, in 2011 there were 51.8 million people in South Africa, of which 51.4% of the population were women and 48.6% men (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Yet, in 2015 there is still an unequal enrolment ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions (Oliphant, 2015). According to statistics South Africa, only 30.8% of black women and 42.8% of white women are employed (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Moreover, according to UN research only 6% of sexual offences lead to convictions and in 2009 the female homicide rate was 5 times the world average (Oliphant, 2015). Therefore, although there have been developments in gender equity, there is a dire need for the acceleration in women empowerment and gender equality in South Africa (Oliphant, 2015). Sexism still operates at all levels; macro-level, embedded in structures and institutions and on a micro-level, maintained in attitudes and interactions; and is shaped by intersecting social dimensions.

Sexism operates in various arenas. Media is one of these crucial arenas. Media is a key contributor to the discussion around sexism as it is a powerful instrument for the socialization, privileging and normalizing (Sanger, 2009) of certain discourses and ideas. Media in the form of movies, music, television and magazines are contributors to the maintenance of a sexist, male-dominated society. Through the depiction of the ideal image of femininity (Salesess & Romain, 2014), beauty and behavioural ideals are imposed. These ideals are a male construct and are believed to originate partly from oppressive beliefs and attitudes directed at women (Swami, et al., 2012). Subsequently drawing attention away from women's real capabilities to the superficiality of appearance (Swami et al., 2012). These media outlets police women, convincing them that their value lies in their bodies but simultaneously communicating that their bodies are inadequate, hence they are inadequate (Sanger, 2009). Most of the work on stereotypes and representations is from a white, hetero-normative perspective, because white, middle-class women have spoken on behalf of all

women (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Consequently, this contributes to the "notion of white femininities as the ideal representation of beauty" (Sanger, 2009, p. 138). However, women are not a homogenous group, especially in a country as diverse as South Africa. Within the gender group categorized as 'female' there are sub-groups or branches that further divide the group (Sanger, 2009). This can be characterized as intersectionality. Intersectionality is descriptive of the dynamics of the social divisions that intersect in an individual's life to produce a specific, unique experience of the world (Crenshaw, 1991-1992). Women's experiences of oppression are different and diverse, mediated by discourses of race, sexuality (Sanger, 2009), class and language, amongst others. However, what is common in all femininity is the belief that women's bodies are defined in relation to heterosexual male pleasure, rather than their own pleasure' (Sanger, 2009), which is consistent with patriarchal thought.

Youth are particularly susceptible to these representations; hence, these ideas overflow onto university campuses and student life. The power dynamics of sexism work in daily life to disempower women and other minority groups (Ng, 1993). Individuals are implicated by these representations because of their membership to an institution (Ng, 1993). Sexism exists at an institutional level at universities. The curriculums are dominated by hetero-normativity; "structures and relations of universities…have marginalized and excluded certain groups of people historically, and continue to do so despite equity measures [being] implemented" (Ng, 1993, p. 191). Hegemonic knowledge is constructed as 'common sense', and is powerful for this reason (Ng, 1993). Although universities are designed as spaces to challenge existing knowledge systems and create new ones, they have become marketplaces following a corporate model (Ng, 1993). Therefore, they're run like a business and follow a hegemonic, patriarchal model to be successful in a patriarchal society. Although there are gender courses and feminist societies, often, marginalized groups experiences are trivialized (Ng, 1993). In an example in Ng's study (1993) one participant described how during lectures male students are given respect and attention when addressing the lecturer or class. However, female students are often dismissed or ignored by fellow students.

Another more sensitive manifestation of sexism on campuses is sexual harassment, which according to Paludi, Nydegger, Desouva, Nydegger, and Dicker (2006) will happen to most female university students. It is important to note that sexual harassment is not solely "rape or sexual assault…sexual touching" (Pryor, LaVite, & Stroller, 1993, p. 70). It also includes suggestive looks or gestures; whistles or cat calls; and sexual teasing or remarks (Pryor et al., 1993). It has been reported that women of 'colour' are especially vulnerable to

sexual harassment (Paludi et al., 2006) as a result of their multiple oppressions. There is a silence around 'minor' cases of sexual harassment on university campuses because it is seen as non-harmful and a norm (Pryor et al., 1993). Moreover, in African universities, aggressive and invasive pursuing of women, regardless of disinterest, is often defended as 'African culture' by the men involved (Bennett, Gouws, Kritzinger, Hames, & Tidimane, 2007). Hence, those who challenge this harassment are dismissed as western traitors who have turned their backs on their roots (Bennett et al., 2007). Subsequently trivializing women's experiences.

These arenas that maintain and breed sexism are important because they have real, daily implications for women and society. Stereotype threat is one of these implications. 'Stereotype threat' (Beasely & Fischer, 2012; Steele, 1997) is a theory that emerged as one possible explanation for the deficit in performance of minority groups in situations where performance is measured against the performance of dominant groups. 'Sterotype threats' are 'social-psychological threats' that arise when an individual belongs to a group that is known for a negative stereotype (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). These typecasts induce anxiety in the individual, out of fear of doing or saying something that will confirm the negative stereotype. Thus, in some cases, resulting in underperformance (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). As an oppressed social group, women are plagued with negative stereotypes. The stereotype threat that studies conducted by Beasely and Fischer (2012) focus on is the stereotype that women are bad at maths and science subjects (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). There is a deficit of women in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields in universities and professionally. This has previously been attributed to academic deficits, which were explained as a consequence of genetic differences or socialization differences that cause a lack of interest in STEM subjects (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). However, these theories are questionable when universities have conducted research and found that female interest in STEM subjects is equal to males (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). Yet the proportion of females staying or graduating in these fields remains low (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). Hence, analysts have argued that when faced with a 'stereotype threat' one of two things can happen. Either the anxiety induces physiological changes alongside the reduction of the working memory, therefore, interfering with performance in mental tasks (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). Hence, "simple awareness of a stereotype is sufficient to reduce minority group's intellectual performance" (Beasely & Fischer, 2012, p. 430). Secondly, when faced with 'stereotype threat', as a defense mechanism individuals disengage from that field as a means of protecting their self-esteem (Beasely & Fischer, 2012). These negative stereotypes, whether

implicit or explicit, contribute to the maintanence of negative representations of women and consequently, a male dominated, patriachal society.

Moreover, according to Becker, there are some men that endorse sexist stereotypes because it is beneficial for them and their status and position in society (Becker, 2010). Stereotypical traits such as 'weak', 'nurturing' and 'illogical' make it challenging for women to take on high positions in leadership and the professional spaces (Finchilescu, 2006) for the reason that these traits are not valued in these spaces. However, the question then becomes why do some women partake in the maintenance of sexist representations? Becker discusses internalization as a possible explanation. Internalization is the process of adopting social norms and values into one's own identity (Becker, 2010). It is possible that women adopt these sexist representations unknowingly and these lowered expectations act as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Ramphele, 1990). Fanon explains it eloquently in relation to racial oppression; however, it can easily be translated to gender inequality. Fanon explains it as an inferiority complex that materializes through a two-stage process, culminating in the internalization of institutional (social and economic) inequality (Fanon, 1952/2008). The same way Fanon (1952/2008) argues that the white man ensures that that which is desirable is white and the undesirable black; the patriarchal society ensures that 'masculinity' is desirable in important spaces whilst stereotypical femininity is undesirable (Fanon, 1952/2008). Masculinity functions as a template for that which is right (Fanon, 1952/2008). Hence, these ideas are internalized and women can become collaborators in their own oppression (Hook, 2012). Sexist ideas are normalized in women's collective consciousness (Ng, 1993).

Although strides have been made in the long-term goal of gender equality, unlike 100 years ago, a woman being solely accommodated is not substantial. The University of Cape Town prides itself on "effecting social change and development through its pioneering scholarship, faculty and students" (University of Cape Town, 2015). The institution also prides itself on being a liberal establishment where students are free to explore and engage with societal beliefs, and are encouraged to question the 'norm' and think beyond the surface. Therefore, UCT is a 'culture' worth studying, as it would be interesting to study the experiences of women in this institution that claims such progressiveness. With students from over 100 countries in Africa and beyond (University of Cape Town, 2015), UCT is a melting pot of people from different cultures, races, religions, classes and convictions. Therefore, it would be interesting to observe the beliefs, discourses and representations on this campus. Furthermore, to research if traditional representations of women are still firmly embedded in the society? Has existing in this liberal space shifted these popular discourses? How do

young women in this space resist negative stereotypes? Does UCT contribute to the maintenance of certain representations?

Aims & Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to explore the varied experiences of female students at UCT, through the exploration of representations of women on campus and observations of how women respond to these representations.

Main research question

How are femininity and female sexuality represented at UCT?

Sub-questions

What are the popular dialogues around femininity?

How are the different representations and dialogues around femininities intersected with racialized representations?

How do female students participate and resist these representations?

Method

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this research is a 'feminist intersectional' framework. The broad feminist theoretical framework seemed the most appropriate for this research as it acts as a tool for understanding gender representations and advocating for equality through research (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Feminist scholars argue that science is not necessarily objective (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). Hence, for the reason that psychology exists within a white, male dominated society, the bulk of psychological research has 'served the needs' of this dominant group (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). This takes place through perpetuating a hegemonic understanding of the world (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006) through the normalization of 'maleness' and suppressing the voice of the 'other'. Therefore, although feminist thought is broad and vast and no single feminist perspective dominates (Bristor & Fischer, 1993) all feminist theory is advocating for transformation (Brannon, 2011).

In order to change the hetero-normativity of how research questions are asked and how data is interpreted (Brannon, 2011) there are guidelines for feminist theorists. Firstly, acknowledgement of the influence of power relations and politics on the research process (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006) is critical. Secondly, because feminist theory is a branch off the feminist tree, researchers are obligated to challenge patriarchy and contribute to female empowerment and social transformation (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). My research did this through critical engagement and discussions. Furthermore, the research of women's experiences is central to feminist theory (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). However, feminist psychology moves away from individualism and focuses on understanding the woman within a social world (Wilkinson, 1998). This research mostly takes place in contexts that have been studied before but only from the male perspective (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Women's opinions and experiences have been overlooked (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Thus, to make their stories the centre of the research is to include them in the discussions they were previously excluded from. However, one of the key debates in feminist thought is around "notions of unitary female experiences" (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006, p. 8). White middle-class experiences have dominated feminist discourse (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006) but women are not a homogenous group. Therefore, traditional feminist theory is limiting and non-representative of the social differences within the gender group, 'female'.

Consequently, in 1981, black feminist Kimberle Crenshaw introduced feminists to the concept of intersectionality. This was as a response to the one dimensionality of feminism at the time (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Crenshaw recognized the "limitations of gender as a single analytical category" (McCall, 2005, p. 1771) . Consequently, she developed the concept to highlight the importance of exploring the multiple, interacting, complex social relations that make up a woman. Intersectionality is defined as "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities social relations and subject formations" (McCall, 2005, p. 1771). This is relevant in this research for the reason that although UCT is a middle-class, liberal academic space the students that occupy the space have distinct and different oppressions that interlock to create a specific experience of the campus. Therefore, to understand women's subjective experiences of UCT, it is necessary to understand that the gender group 'female' does not lend itself to a unidimensional experience. It consists of numerous divisions, including race, class, sexuality, faculty and accent amongst others, that intersect to produce a distinctive experience (Crenshaw, 1991-1992) of UCT.

My research aims to understand how women at UCT experience representations of femininity. Hence, engagement with this question through a feminist intersectional

framework will be the most effective in uncovering information that is representative of their unique experiences and multiple truths.

Research Design

Ethnography first emerged as an anthropological and sociological tool used to "study the culture(s) a given group of people more or less share" (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 4). It gained popularity in the psychological discipline as a powerful tool for studying human behaviour through immersion in the specific culture (Brannon, 2011). Ethnographic researchers aim to retrieve information through direct personal contact (Van Maanen, 1995), in a naturalistic setting, through observation and participation (Sangasubana, 2011). The broad blueprint for ethnographic study includes 3 general steps. (1) Collecting data, in ethnography, this requires a continuous intimate and personal contact with the 'natives' of the culture in their daily activity (Van Maanen, 1995). It is encouraged that this intimate contact include indepth interviewing or focus groups; alliances with key informants; local surveys; observation and participaton in routines or collecting samples of discussions and actions (Van Maanen, 1995). (2) A compilation of reports and results and there is more than one way to accomplish this (Van Maanen, 1995), which will be discussed further in 'data collection methods'. Step (3) takes place after the researcher has produced his/her work, it is the interpretation and understanding of the information by the public (Van Maanen, 1995). These steps are very general and allow freedom for researchers.

Therefore, ethnography was the most appropriate approach for this particular study for a number of reasons. Firstly, it provided a detailed and rich database to retrieve deep and insightful information (Sangasubana, 2011) on representations of UCT women. Secondly, it allowed me to collect data in a realistic setting in which people acted naturally, therefore, getting the most representative, realistic results (Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnography can also be conducted successfully by an individual (Sangasubana, 2011) which was beneficial for the limited resources of an honours thesis. Ethnography in its nature is unstructured and true-to-life. Therefore, it fulfils the needs of a feminist intersectional framework through allowing freedom for complex and multidimensional data (McCall, 2005). However, structures and rules of ethnographic study are casual and ambiguous which has resulted in this method has being continually questioned (Van Maanen, 1995) and often doubted by critics.

These questions and doubts, otherwise charaterized as risks include 'lack of structure and controls', which can easily allow major biases (Sangasubana, 2011). This could result in the researcher missing important information in the data and contributing to major biases in

the interpretation of the data (Sangasubana, 2011). In addition, balancing what is necessary to be both an effective participant in the culture and a researcher is difficult (Sangasubana, 2011). This was particularly difficult in my study because I was already immersed in the culture I planned to study and had been for three years prior to the start of my research. Long-term immersion results in familiarity, which naturally develops into attachment and empathy for the culture and the participants (Sangasubana, 2011). Consequently, over-identification can be harmful for the research outcome and the participants in the long-term (Sangasubana, 2011). Ethnographic study has the power to empower and engage participants but also create bounds and then emotionally abandon participants once the study is over (McNamara, 2009). Hence, ethical issues in ethnographic study (Sangasubana, 2011) are a huge point of discussion for critics. These ethical issues will be discussed further in the ethics section of the paper. These questionable elements are the points that had been considered in-depth and the points I was particularly attentive to in my engagement with this design.

Sampling

Sampling is the process of developing a sample that represents a population (Werner & Bernard, 1994). Although ethnography involves the researchers' immersion in a population, it is probable that ethnographic researchers cannot observe and engage with everyone within the population (Werner & Bernard, 1994). Therefore, it is rare that the data will be probabilistic of the entire population (Werner & Bernard, 1994). Hence, it was necessary to use purposive sampling in my ethnographic observation. Purposive sampling is the deliberate, methodological selection of participants based on specific characteristics that they possess, that are necessary for the study (Tongco, 2007). UCT campus was the pool I extracted my purposive sample from, as it was a pool of students studying at a tertiary level. I chose UCT upper campus for my observations because this is the centre of UCT campus culture as this is a shared space.

As an extension of my ethnographic observations I conducted focus groups. For the sampling of the focus groups I used purposive sampling as well. My purposive sample were recruited from UCT. Criteria for inclusion were that participants had to be female, undergraduate students studying at the institution. Faculty and age were not specified. Participation took place through volunteering. I advertised the research study, the requirements and inclusion criteria through posters on UCT notice boards around lower and upper campus, and through the SRPP site/system for psychology students. I conducted 4 focus groups with between 3-9 participants in each. There were a total of 23 focus group

participants between the ages of 19-22, with one participants over the age of 40. 19 of the participants were from the humanities faculty and 4 were in commerce or health science faculties.

Data collection

The general ethnographic research was conducted through observation of behaviours and events in public spaces on UCT upper campus. These spaces included Jameson stairs, the food court, different seating areas around campus, and Jammie bus stops on upper campus. In addition, I engaged with the observation of visual data such as, announcements, posters and advertisements on UCT noticeboards. I attended 3 humanities lectures, 2 engineering lectures and 2 commerce lectures and observed discussions and interactions in these lecture theatres. Furthermore, I attended the 'patriarchy must fall' march and others discussions/meetings. The data was captured through photography and transcription. Furthermore, the observations took place from July 2015 till mid-September 2015 on a daily basis as I went about 'my business' on upper campus. This observed data provided a context with which to interpret and understand experiences and explanations from the focus groups.

Focus group. As discussed above focus groups are one method of collecting data under the ethnographic design. In addition to observations it was important to learn about the perspectives and explanations of sexism and gender inequality from the women themselves; as a technique of getting a well-rounded understanding of the campus culture. Focus groups are a method for collecting data through group interactions based on a topic that the research is based on (Morgan, 1996). This method was the most effective for my research for the reason that focus groups are good for observing ideas and feelings that people have; and the group sitting allowed for a range of perspectives (Krueger & Casey, 2009). I conducted focus groups rather than individual interviews because "individual interviews dislocates the person from her social context" (Wilkinson, 1998, p. 111) and social context is important in understanding women's experiences at UCT. Focus groups allow for the exploration of issues that are relevant to the women-in-context (Wilkinson, 1998). Furthermore, as a result of women being a marginalized group the reflexivity on power dynamics is very important. The focus groups shift the locus of power from the researcher and balances it out amongst the participants within the group, as they have more control over the interaction in a focus group setting (Wilkinson, 1998).

As a feminist intersectional study what is particularly important about conducting focus groups is the consciousness-raising potential of the focus group interaction (Morgan,

1996). Meeting people with similar or shared experiences can help participants realise group commonalities which may help develop a clearer sense of the social and political processes that these experiences are constructed under, and empower participants (Morgan, 1996). Moreover, due to focus groups "extensive exploration of (the) topic" (Brannon, 2011, p. 33) this method will be effective in revealing the influential factors in the development of the participants thoughts, feelings and idea's (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Therefore, through focus groups I was able to retrieve and clarify the information that I may have failed to report in observations.

The focus groups were semi-structured with open-ended questions (Appendix A) such as,

1. What do you think are some beliefs about women?
2. What do you think are some of the beliefs about women in your race group? Do you think they differ from beliefs about women in other race groups?
3. How do you feel UCT handles gender issues?

The focus group discussions were 60 minutes each and as the only researcher I facilitated, recorded and transcribed the data.

Ethics

There are various ethical issues under consideration.

Informed consent. Informed consent is part of the respect for participants' rights to be informed about the study they will be partaking in and the right to freely decide if they want to participate in the study or withdraw at any time (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2004). Informed consent ensures the autonomy of the participants (Orb et al., 2004). Therefore, a consent form (Appendix B) was developed and distributed to the participants at the beginning of the focus group sessions. I read and explained each point on the form and a short period was given for participants to ask questions; withdraw from the study if they wished; or sign the consent form.

Each participant was informed that the study was completely voluntary and that they were not obligated to participate. Participants were informed that their confidentiality was guaranteed. In addition, they were informed of the risks and benefits of the study. Furthermore, a referral was given to the participants if they experienced distress as a result of the focus group discussion.

Confidentiality and Privacy. Under the beneficence principle of ethics is the confidentiality of the participants, to protect them from any repercussions for taking part in the study. I engaged in face-to-face conversations with the participants, so their identities

were not anonymous to me as the researcher. However, only my supervisors and I had access to the raw data as to secure the anonymity of the participants. Moreover, their identities remained confidential in the transcript and the final report, through the use of pseudonyms, therefore, protecting the participants' identities (Orb et al., 2004).

In addition, because this was an ethnographic study it was important to recognize private territory in public spaces (Homan, 1991). I made observations and performed my research in public places on campus; the food court, Jameson stairs and jammie bus stops. It was my responsibility, as a researcher, to use my discretion to decide what observations were intrusive and ethically corrupt. Hence, I did not intrude on private spaces and/or private conversations.

Harm to subjects

Deception. The subject may be at social or psychological risk when deceived about the purposes of the study (Cassell, 1978). Therefore, for the focus groups, full disclosure about the nature and purpose of the study was necessary. However, for the ethnographic observations, I only observed behaviours and interactions of students on campus from a distance. Therefore, this was non-intrusive and a consent form for these observations was not necessary.

Emotional risk. The point of ethnography is for complete immersion and integration into the culture. Consequently, attachments and relationships are likely to develop, which is a risk when after that period of observation the researcher leaves and cuts ties with the participants (Cassell, 1978). This can put both the participants and the researcher at serious risk for emotional harm. The participants could develop feelings of abandonment (McNamara, 2009) and rejection. Therefore, the question then becomes what are the ethical obligations of the observer after the study is over (Cassell, 1978)? When performing research, for the protection of human subjects one must weigh the risk to benefit ratio (Cassell, 1978). The risks should not surpass the benefits of the study. In my particular study, UCT is not vulnerable community, which reduces the risk. In addition, most of my study was observation based; I did not spend a substantial amount of time with the participants to develop attachments. Therefore, the risks are minimal and do not outweigh the benefits, therefore, it is ethically compliant. However, I did provide a referral in the consent form (Appendix B) if the participants experienced any distress due to the focus group discussions.

Debriefing of subjects. After the focus group discussions, a debriefing document (Appendix C) was distributed and the participants were debriefed accordingly. The

participants were asked to reflect on their experiences of the discussion as a way of addressing any distress or anxiety built up during the discussion. My supervisors and my details were given out along with the debriefing document, if any participants wished to discuss matters further. However, although the nature of the topic is personal and topical, it was not overly sensitive (like abuse). Therefore, I did expect emotionally charged reactions but not emotional or psychological breakdowns. However, I was prepared for both.

Reflexivity.

Reflexivity encourages acknowledgement of the ways in which the researcher will affect the research process and outcomes (Haynes, 2012). It works under the assumption that one's beliefs, intellect, culture and ideologies effect interpretations made (Haynes, 2012). However, this is only a negative consequence if it is not acknowledged (Malterud, 2001). Through the research process the researcher and subjects can affect each other mutually (Haynes, 2012). Therefore, as I am a female student who conducted a study on representations of female students there was an emotional and personal connection to this specific study. Since I have my own account of an experience as a female student at UCT, this could have resulted in attachments and over-identification that could have drastically biased my interpretations. Furthermore, it could have resulted in me projecting my story onto the participants and not recognizing a different perspective. As a black female, my perspective, language and resources limit what I have the ability to see (Van Maanen, 1995). Therefore, my interpretations are limited and would most likely differ from that of a white woman (Malterud, 2001). However, different perspectives on the same subject just means that the field has an increased understanding of the complex phenomenon (Malterud, 2001).

Furthermore, because I was engaging with a feminist study, issues of power are important to reflect on (Boonzaier & Shefer, 2006). Although the aim is for the researcher to create cooperative, mutually beneficial relationships with the subjects being studied and interact with participants as equals (Brannon, 2011), in the real world there are complexities and power inequalities. There is a researcher/ participant power imbalance that could result in an interaction that is not genuine or truthful to the participants' experience. However, because I was 'one of them' (a young female UCT student), we had that shared experience. So there was a level of comfort that revealed itself through the participants' use of colloquial language; the sharing of personal stories and joking and laughing.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method of data analysis through identifying, analyzing and reporting themes or patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Due to its flexibility and 'theoretical freedom', this method is complementary to this feminist-intersectional ethnographic study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This particular study followed a thematic analysis under a realist method, meaning that the analysis is reporting on the experiences, meanings and realities of the participants' lives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps for the thematic analysis were as follows: (1) familiarizing myself with the data, through transcription and re-reading (Braun & Clarke, 2006). (2) Coding the initial interesting features of the data by highlighting or underlining what stood out, and then using those codes to search for potential themes (3) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thereafter, I reviewed the themes (4) by developing a 'thematic map', this involved the process of clarifying what information is dense enough to be considered a theme and what the sub-themes were (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Moreover, I defined and named (5) the themes and then reported on them (6), with example extracts to support the themes that were developed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results

Through thematic analysis the data is organized into 4 themes with either 1 or 2 subthemes each. Firstly, 'normalization of sexist practices', which discusses how sexism is constructed as the norm on campus. Secondly, 'gender relations between male and female students', refers to the ways sexism influences the interactions between individuals of different and same genders. Subsequently, 'sexual harassment and assault' is the third theme. In conclusion, 'gender and race interdependence' refers to the intersectional nature of race and gender in producing a specific experience of UCT.

Normalization of sexist practices

All the participants were aware of overt sexism and gender inequality as problematic manifestations of power relations that needed to be phased out. It was a commonality in the focus groups that all my participants understood and were firmly against blatant sexism. They were supportive and demanding of structural changes in societies where woman are still perceived as highly oppressed, according to a western ideal. However, majority of the participants were unaware of, let alone against, subtle/covert sexism. This kind of sexism was

often perceived as the norm or the structure of society that allows society to function effectively:

Kim: *that's just how it is*

  Sexism and discrimination in university spaces. This was an important subtheme that developed. Specifically, the male domination of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects (Beasely & Fischer, 2012) at UCT. It was discussed that these subjects are still heavily male dominated and women have very little power in these spaces. One participant spoke about how when her female friend, who is in a STEM discipline at UCT, participates in group work she is often the only female student in her group and the male students generally allot her the administrative work. This includes setting up of meetings, binding documents, and creating and running the Whatsapp group. However, in terms of the actual content work the male students often tell her "not to worry" and they take it upon themselves to exclude her. The general consensus in the focus groups was that women have to be smarter than the smartest male and more aggressive just to measure up to a male student with 'average' abilities:

Emily: *[you] have to work harder to get noticed and taken seriously!*

Furthermore, class and accent were social divisions that further influenced the extent to which female students felt ignored and overlooked. Focus group participants agreed that women with prominent 'black' or 'coloured' accents were particularly undermined in STEM spaces.

  On the other hand, there are female dominated spaces, which are predominately the humanities faculty, specifically art and drama. The participants' spoke about how males looked down on the faculty and how some male students were embarrassed to tell people they are in the humanities faculty. Nandi spoke about how:

Nandi: *For example I have a friend whose studying art and she was saying that there are 97 in her class and of the 97 only 3 are males. No there were actually 7 males but 4 left…because they considered the environment feminized.*

  There is an underlying, inherent understanding that humanities subjects involve work

such as writing essays, reading and speaking eloquently and all these are soft, irrational, emotional skills, which are fundamentally feminine qualities. Whilst STEM subjects are difficult, require rationality and logic, and a clear focused mind. These are interpreted as intrinsically male qualities. One of the participants brought up the fact that men are still generally required to prove their manhood by having the ability to be the breadwinners in society; and STEM subjects generally lead to stable jobs that will allow them to occupy that role. Consequently, female careers are less important, they're decorative and an "inessential extra" because at the end of the day "a man will look after you". Hence, male students dominate STEM subjects and female students' humanities subjects. In addition, supporting this theme is the physical structure of the buildings at UCT, discovered through my ethnographic observations. Smuts, the male residence on upper campus is on the right-hand side of Jameson stairs; this is where the mathematics and science building reside. Whereas, Fuller, the female residence, is on the side of the arts and humanities buildings. Whether this was purposeful or not, it is representative of the gender categorization and discrimination that exists structurally on the campus.

Furthermore, the academic content at UCT is highly gendered and geared towards men. This group excerpt displays how content is non-representative of women and their experiences and there is little engagement with gender inequities that exists within systems in the real world and in the content taught:

Slindile: *I mean gender has come up on 2 occasions in my whole degree. Once we were being told that basically as girls we are less likely to do well in MCQs, which are basically the whole of first and second year economics.*

Jenna: *Yah and like now I guess we engage with a little bit about gender but not really. It's at a surface level.*

Slindile: *It's very general*

Jenna: *I think that's the difference, when we speak about women it's never like engaging. It's like in passing or a comment."*

Mbali: *We don't delve into it and break it down.*

This excerpt shows that gender issues are not prioritized. Furthermore, for women that are part of more than one marginalized social division, there is an experience of further

dislocation from the content. Moreover, when lecturers make reference to gender it is often in a stereotypical and prejudice manner. Mbali makes reference to a politics course where the class was taught about theory of decision-making and how it was influenced by gender:

Mbali: *they [theorists] were trying to anaylse the 3 kinds of decision makers. And they spoke about the things that make you react in certain ways. Then came in with the thing about men and women. Like men are like egotistical and dog- eat- dog and animalish; so more prone to war. But females are less prone to start a war cause they're nurturing and emotional blah blah*

The content taught normalizes the western, middle-class, and patriarchal school of thought and marginalizes anything that diverts from this. This legitimizes the gender inequality because it is viewed as a norm. Therefore, alongside women, there are other marginalized groups that are ill represented or not represented at all.

Sexism and discrimination in residences. Interestingly, this dialogue did not develop at all in the focus groups but was a prominent theme in my ethnographic observations. This is most likely due to the fact that sexism is so entrenched in the residence system that it is normalized and not viewed as an injustice by most. My focus was on the lower campus residences because these residences house undergraduate students and these students are the focus of my study. Kopano and Leo Marquard are the male residences and Baxter, Tugwell and Graca Machel are the female residences. The residence structure is intensely prejudice with most of the problematic prejudices labeled as rules and code of conducts. Wardens, sub-wardens and house committee members reinforce these rules strictly in the female residences (Naidoo, 2015), whilst the few rules that do exist in the male residences are not implemented diligently. "The double standards are frightening. Female reses reinforce the idea that we cannot take care of ourselves, that we cannot make good decisions, and that we need other people to look after us" (Naidoo, 2015, p. 1).

Examples of these discrepancies between the male and female residences are visible in appendix D, Baxter residence rulebook. "No visitor before 09:00 and after 23:45. ALWAYS SIGN OUT BEFORE 23:45, anything later and you will be fined" (Appendix D). The terms of overnight visitors in the female residences are that a student has to apply in advance and get approval before a female visitor can stay overnight. Furthermore, all visitors that have not been approved must leave the residence at 23.45, or face fines or community service (Naidoo, 2015). However, according to the *Varsity* Newspaper, male residences work

on a 'gentleman's agreement'. Guests can come in after midnight permitting they have left before reception opens the following day (Naidoo, 2015). In addition, Rule 3 in appendix D states that there is no alcohol permitted at Baxter residence. If a student is found with alcohol in the residence the student is likely to face a disciplinary hearing (Appendix D). However, most male residences have house pubs and host parties with liquor sponsored by the house. These are visible inequities that have been ignored due to the hetero-normativity of the institution. Most of these rules and regulations are constructed as methods of protecting the female students in the university space. However, these rules work under the assumption that these women are weak, fragile, and not as capable as men. Moreover, beyond the structural sexism, there are sexist attitudes that are taught and developed in the male residence spaces. Through the teaching of the Kopano residence official song which glorifies rape culture through "explicitly suggest[ing] raping a women till she is dead and then continuing till she is rotten" (UCT survivors, 2015). Furthermore, through the popular game male students play where they rate the first year girls based on appearance and whether they keep up the appearance throughout the year. These misogynistic, sexist thought patterns labeled as 'tradition' are hardly conducive to the development of a safe, equal university space.

Gender relations between male and female students

Another theme discussed thoroughly in the focus groups was the idea that women's value, self-respect and self-esteem originate from her relation to a man. This appeared to mean that a women is given more value when she assumes a role directly linked to a male. Women gain social status through their relationships with men, whether a wife, mother or sister (Forbes, Jung, & Haas, 2006). However this social status is borrowed because it is dependent on a man and is removable by a man (Forbes et al., 2006). In essence, men dictate a women's value and subsequently, everyone around her gages her value based on what men have gaged her value to be:

Alexis: *Cause I was with Mike* I feel I didn't need to impress anyone anymore.*

One of my participants believed that she is part of a new generation, and in this new generation parents want their girls to be educated, get good jobs and have their own money. However, she expressed that if she reached a certain age and was not married, she feels she would be a disappointment. This thought process suggests that the attitude towards women is that education is important but a women's most significant achievement is getting married

and having children. Sphume reiterated this through explaining her family's attitude towards university:

Sphume: *Come back with a degree, come back with a husband.*

Female sexuality as a male's possession. A subtheme that was discussed is that a women's sexuality is intended for men. Society does not allow women to own their sexuality freely. When women do take control of their sexuality they are perceived as "too much" (as my participants described). They are shamed into submission through name-calling.

Men believe that women are sexual beings for male pleasure and that they have the right, in fact it is their duty, to monitor and dictate the levels of sexuality that are appropriate. What results from this are women who are blamed and shamed when they experience any intrusion on their bodies, because according to society they did not regulate their sexuality accordingly. In my ethnographic observations what was evident is men use social media as a tool to regulate female sexuality (Sanger, 2009). Hence, women are very wary of what they share on social media out of fear of being shamed. Therefore, media is an important ally (Sanger, 2009) in this discourse. "[Our bodies] belong to potential sexual offenders and our job is to make sure we don't provoke them" (Naidoo, 2015, p. 4). My participants spoke about how they didn't feel comfortable to explore their sexuality on their own terms. The general discourse was that as a woman you have to be on your best behaviour:

Phindile*: you have to limit yourself, because you have to behave in certain ways.*

The restrictions put on female sexuality were visible even in the women's behaviour in the focus group discussions. My participants were blushing and giggling when sexuality was brought up and most of them were bashful even amongst just women. It is quite clear that women's bodies have been constructed as objects for male pleasure and women are highly aware and sensitive to this. There was a discourse about how women adjust themselves accordingly to every fad or stage of what is sexy at the time. Women attempt by all means to mold themselves to whatever society dictates will make them the most sexually attractive to men and feel inadequate if they do not attain the standards (Sanger, 2009). Appendix E displays an advert displayed on upper campus for Indian hair extensions 'for her by him'. It is evident here that the standard of beauty for black women is long 'Indian' hair because as the advert suggests, it is 'by him', which insinuates that it is what men like:

Mbali: *It's got everything to do with them [men], not you.*

Sexual Harassment & Assault

   Silence around sexual harassment and assault. This subtheme involves the silence around sexual harassment and assault in the UCT space. Through my ethnographic research I discovered a private website where UCT students write about their experiences of sexual assault and harassment on the campuses. Sometimes at the hands of UCT staff, lecturers and tutors.

   "*I am a second-year student, living in a female res. One day, during O-week, I was sexually harassed in my room*" (UCT survivors, 2015)

   "*Soon, I discovered that my rapist was a tutor at my university*" (UCT survivors, 2015)

   Subsequently, I performed more research and attended discussions on campus. I was in disbelief about the number and types of confessions made in these discussions and on the site. Through my observations and focus groups I discovered that there is a general conviction at UCT and in the mainstream media that UCT is a safe space, void of sexual violence. However, as this site has established this is not completely accurate. Institutions of higher education are not required to disclose information about sexual offences on their campuses (UCT survivors, 2015). Therefore, there is a great silence around sexual assault and harassment (Pryor et al., 1993). This was particularly clear in the focus group discussions I conducted. The general consensus in the focus groups was that the UCT campuses are a 'safe haven', a little protected patch at the top of the hill that is absolved from the problems of sexual violence and abuse that plague the rest of South Africa. This is an illusion that is maintained by the silence around these issues and the silencing of students who encounter sexual assault and harassment at the institution (UCT survivors, 2015). There is a discrepancy between what happens within the space versus how the mainstream discourse interprets the space. This is problematic because it gives room for the institution to avoid implementing changes.

   Mystification of sexual harassment. What was clear in all my focus groups was that the term 'sexual harassment' was understood in very specific, problematic manner. The underlying discourse about sexual harassment was that it happens when a stranger blatantly

intrudes or invades ones body. The 'sitting in the office and your boss comes to your desk and runs his hand up your leg' scenario is how sexual harassment was discussed. Sexual harassment is understood as this big, incomprehensible concept that is distanced from the lives of students. However, contrastingly, sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" (Rape, abuse and incest national network, 2009). Meaning that sexual harassment can also be characterized by 'minor incidents' such as "cat calls; inappropriate comments/jokes made about ones body; being touched inappropriately" (Pryor et al., 1993, p. 70) and so forth. One participant suggested that:

Mbali: *The word harassment needs to be demystified very soon. It's too far away, it's too big, it's too corporate.*

However, what was brought up frequently were inappropriate behaviours by male friends, friends of friends or acquaintances. In every group there was a story about a male 'friend' participating in some form of sexual harassment and in every story, except one, the participants admitted to laughing it off because "*you don't know what else to do"* (Slindile). There was a general consensus that in these 'minor' cases with men female students were familiar with, women play and laugh off the discomfort, otherwise the whole situation becomes uncomfortable:

Leigh: *If you're at a party and some guy makes a sexist remark and you give him a lecture you ruin the 'vibe' and make everyone uncomfortable, it's not worth it.*

In these situations women fear how men will perceive them. One participant suggested that this silence is because "*women are constantly seeking affirmation. So things like that for many women affirm them. Like he wants me, even if it is uncomfortable".* Society teaches women that they should be grateful for any male attention and that any male attention is a compliment and honour, and women accept this. The one participant, the exception to the rule, a white female spoke about standing up to a group of her perpetrators and having them laugh in her face and call her 'uptight'. The general attitude towards 'minor' offences of sexual harassment, cat calls, body shaming or inappropriate touching, are not taken seriously. They are normalized to the point that women feel unjustified for speaking up about them.

This links back to men feeling they have ownership over women's bodies and women complying.

Gender & Race

      Narratives along race lines. The intensity of the experiences of oppression were generally different for white and black participants.

      The black women. The black women's' insights were commonly a lot more intense than white women's'; and the black, working-class women's' experiences were the most intense. I attribute this to a double, often triple oppression that black women face. Slindile spoke about how *"everywhere you go, every place, every country, every corner, every industry it's there"*, 'it' being oppression and prejudice. For black women this is a rife, difficult struggle as the discourse involved comparisons to apartheid. There was a discussion about how black women felt completely invisible to white men. Black women felt that they are unconnected and hold no value to the white man. Mary discussed how she had never had a one-on-one conversation with a white man. She had been in groups with white males, been lectured by white males but she had never had a conversation with a white man. For her this was an experience of being so 'low' on the social hierarchy that the most powerful, dominant group did not recognize her existence:

Mary: I often feel invisible here. The other day a white guy literally sat on my feet, on jammie stairs and he didn't apologize or move. I had to move my feet. My feet that were there first. It's like he just didn't see me or care.

      Furthermore, the black participants shared how their oppression did not end when they left the white, patriarchal, middle-class space of UCT. They discussed how they felt oppressed in every avenue. Black women's oppression exists in every space, through going 'back home' (to rural areas or townships) and interacting with African tradition and facing overt sexism. There was a general consensus of feeling very overwhelmed and suffocated wherever they went. Not being able to escape the system.

      White women. White women's experiences and perceptions of gender inequality were generally a lot more diluted and a lot less frustrated and urgent than black women's'. In the mainstream spaces there was a milder sense of acknowledgement of the issues. A theoretical or academic understanding of oppression but a detachment from the lived reality. Many white

participants spoke about it being better than in their parents or grandparents generation, and so "it's not that bad**".**

Normalization of whiteness. What was common for all white participants in my focus group was that they unconsciously generalized their experience to all women (McCall, 2005). There was a lack of recognition that race is an important factor in the female experience of the world. Candice one of the biggest contributors to the discussions would not accept that black women may have it harder. She acknowledged that culture and class played a role but would not shift on her stance that race itself did not play a significant role, because apartheid was abolished:

Candice: I don't think its race, I think its class and unfortunately in South Africa because of our past race is associated with certain classes… Regardless of the race the person is, as the class improves so does the treatment of women, in my personal experience.

This is a normalization of whiteness. Generalizing the white female experience to every female, which is what traditional feminism does (McCall, 2005). As part of the decolonize UCT movement appendix F shows a poster on a talk at UCT about disrupting white domination in feminism. I attended the meeting and the discussion included how the privilege of whiteness allows white women to be ignorant of the plight of other raced women. In the focus groups one of the questions I asked was "do you think beliefs and representations of women differ based along race lines"? The white participants generally brushed over and were dismissive of the question. Answering with dialogues about cultural differences and refusing to engage with race:

Bianca: *maybe not stay [SO] focused on race, like I feel like we've been doing that for 20 years.*

Here Bianca expresses how race discussions are in the past and we should focus on 'more pressing' issues. This is possibly because white women need to unconsciously detach themselves from race discussions because there is difficulty in "consolidating being an oppressor and being oppressed" (Rachel). Being the victim of gender-based oppression whilst perpetuating race-based oppression are two roles that white women often have difficulty understanding can happen simultaneously, and does not diminish their experience

of oppression. Moreover, during the 'where is the white in feminism' meeting in appendix F, white women became very hostile when faced with race and immediately detached from the conversation. Alternatively, I had a group of black women and they spend 15 minutes delving into the differences society constructs them as having. How black women are seen as hard, 'the angry black women' stereotype, whilst white women are constructed as damsels in distress, soft, pretty and light. White participants were not able to see the differences because of the white privilege that allowed them to unknowingly dismiss the black women's experiences of the world.

Discussion/Conclusion

UCT is still being a highly sexist, heteronormative and patriarchal space and there are issues that come with this having not been addressed by the university. Femininity and female sexuality are still constructed under frameworks dictated by men and the general consensus is that even in this liberal space, women have little agency over their own bodies. According to the results, women's bodies are still a site of oppression. Female UCT students still appear to fear similar representations that they would have in previous generations, however, the representations are just not as explicit. Therefore, more often than not women comply with sexist representations because they are so normalized and neutralized. Furthermore, through intersectionality it is evident that race is an important factor in the type of dialogue that takes place around femininity, and white privilege allows for a type of blindness to the marginalized women's plight. This research work extends from previous literature about university culture with ease.

However, what is particularly important to acknowledge is that there are two very separate, dissimilar spaces at UCT, relating to discourses around gender and sexism. Social divisions or oppressions often influence the spaces that students reside. There is the mainstream space where majority of the students are located, this is the discourse that is projected in the public and media. In this space there is a detachment from the gender issues at UCT; phrases such as "unless someone points out sexism I don't see it" or "I don't think it's that bad" are common. Moreover, there is an acknowledgement that women and men are still unequal but it is a surface level, disengaged recognition. White, English speaking, middle-class women are prominent in this space. Contrastingly, there is the opposite end of the spectrum where women are outraged at the gender inequity at UCT and the fact that it is not acknowledged in the mainstream space. This is a much smaller proportion of women on the campus, and you have to search for them in hidden committees and movements.

However, this space is expanding with the student project aimed at 'decolonizing UCT'. Following the 'Rhodes Must Fall' movement, a project started in early 2015 aimed at the fall of the 'Rhodes' statue as a [symbol] for the inevitable fall of white supremacy and privilege at [UCT]" (Rhodes Must Fall, 2015); the 'Patriarchy Must Fall' movement is under development. The types of discourses in this conscious space are a lot more serious and active. The women that occupy this space are often women that face multiple oppressions. Black, non-hetero-sexual and working-class, amongst other social divisions. In this part of the campus, sexism and gender inequality are the new revolution. Therefore, it is valid to conclude that the intensity of women's experiences of sexism on this campus is based on their awareness and consciousness, which is influenced by intersectionality.

As discussed above, intersectionality describes how race, gender and class [amongst other social divisions] interact with each to create a specific experience of the world (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This was particularly evident in the behaviours and interactions between participants within the focus groups. Although they were all women and they all suffered a specific oppression because of that social division, it was evident that within the group there were stronger, elevated voices and weaker, stifled voices. There were automatic power relations within the focus groups and the campus in general. The most prominent/dominant voices were white, middle-class voices. They were the most eloquent voices and the loudest, and often carried the conversations. The power dynamics even within an 'oppressed' group are substantial. Moreover, questions that remain unanswered in this research that could possibly provide more insight into intersectionality in the UCT space is how African traditions and culture play a role in the experience of black women? How religion functions in the representation and experiences of femininity and feminine sexuality? Moreover, under feminist theory this research aims to empower women, however, the research has not discussed what the definition of a woman is. In the spirit of decolonizing UCT, this discussion is necessary. Hence, prospects for future research include expansion on this research, considering the intersectional nature of the lesbian, transgender, pansexual and gender fluid communities' experiences of the university.

Limitations.

One limitation of this study is the lack of generalizability. I studied women at UCT and these women represent a minority in that they are educated at a middle-class, liberal tertiary institution. In South Africa a 2011 census revealed that 12.1% of South Africans over the age of 19 are educated at a tertiary level (South African tourism, 2012). Therefore, the majority of the citizens are educated at a basic level if at all. Hence, the results cannot be

generalized to a South African context. However, this is not a quantitative study, so it does not aim to generalize results but rather to explore the experiences of this specific sample.

      Time. Ethnographic studies are long-term commitments (Sangasubana, 2011). Some textbooks suggesting a year as a solid time for complete immersion, integration and observation. However, I did not have the luxury of a year for immersion, integration and observation, due to time constraints. Hence, theoretically, I was limited in the quantity of data I could collect. However, because I had been a UCT student for 3 years prior to this study I had been immersed in UCT culture long-term. I had engaged and integrated with the people, the language, the style and the overall culture. Therefore, although immersion did not take place during the research period, the ground work had been done and I was not an outsider or an intruder. Consequently as the observations were performed ethically, it was not an intrusion or a distraction.

      When I began the research I was unaware of how relevant the topic would become at this specific time in UCTs narrative. UCT was founded in 1829 as an institution for white males. It was not built and designed for black people, women and other marginalized groups. Consequently, with the abolition of colonization and apartheid, human rights legislations and laws were created demanding that UCT accommodate those previously prohibited groups. However, in 2015, marginalized groups are still merely accommodated and tolerated, not welcomed and celebrated, and this has not gone unnoticed by the students. Hence, this feminist-intersectional research on the lived experiences of female students at this university is significant, because without understanding the experiences of this marginalized group, how can one change it?

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Appendix A

<u>Focus Group Questions</u>

1. Lets do a quick round of introductions, what year you're in? What you're studying? And why you decided to study what you're studying?

2. Why did you choose to apply to UCT?

3. How has your experience of UCT been thus far?

4. How you feel about sexism on campus? Do you think it exists? Have you personally experienced it?

5. What do you think are some beliefs about women?

6. What do you think are some of the beliefs about women in your race group? Do you think they differ from beliefs about women in other race groups?

7. How do you feel UCT handles gender issues or sexism?

8. How do you feel about your courses in relation to how they represent women?

9. Sexual harassment includes cat calls, inappropriate comments/jokes about your body, being touched inappropriately. How do you feel about this? Have you ever experienced any of this in the UCT space?

10. Any closing comments or final words?

Appendix B

Consent Form

Women's subjective experience of sexism at UCT: A feminist ethnographic study

Course code _____

1. Overview

This study aims to explore the experiences of young women who are students at the University of Cape Town, in order to understand representations of women in this liberal society. I am an honours student in the psychology department at the University of Cape Town.

2. Procedures

- You will be required to attend a focus group discussion with 6 to 7 other female UCT students where I will ask you questions about your experiences as a women at UCT. You may also be asked about your experiences beyond the campus in social situations and anything else you feel you wish to add to the discussion under this topic.

- The focus group discussion will be an hour long.

3. Risks and Inconveniences

- Overall, this study poses a low risk to you.

- There are no physical risks. There may be psychological risks in discussing personal experiences, which may bring up emotional distress. However, this is highly unlikely as you are encouraged to leave at any point you feel uncomfortable or distressed.

- In a focus group setting there is the risk of other focus group members having access to your personal experiences, although everyone has to sign confidentiality portion of this consent form.
- The inconvenience is the hour of your personal time to take part in the discussion.

4. Benefits

- Through the discussion you will have the opportunity to have your voice heard and acknowledged. In addition, I hope you will acquire knowledge through having conversations with people who have different experiences from yours and that you will be empowered through engaging with women who may have similar experiences to yours.

- Compensation for participation is still under consideration.

5. __Confidentiality & Privacy.__

- All information shared in the discussion is completely confidential. The researcher (Thato Mokoena) and supervisor (Shose Kessi) will be the only people who have access to your raw data.

- The discussion will be tape recorded for transcription purposes.

- You have the right to request that any information you have shared be removed from the study.

- You are required to agree to keep the identities of the other members of the group confidential. Signing of this document means that you agree to this.

6. __Voluntary Participation__

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are not obligated to participate and you can withdraw from the study at any point.

7. __Questions and Further Information__

You are encouraged to voice any concerns or ask any questions by contacting Thato Mokoena 078 893 8102 or my supervisor, Shose Shessi, at the psychology department, (UCT) 021 650 3429.

8. __Signatures__

The subject has been informed of the purpose, risks, inconveniences and benefits of participating in this study and has been given enough time to ask questions and make an informed decision.

_____   _____

Researchers signature   Date

I have been informed about the purpose, risks, inconveniences and benefits of participating in this study. I understand what is required of me and have been given enough time to ask questions and voice my concerns. I am participating in this study voluntarily.

_____   _____

Subjects signature   Date

Appendix C

Debriefing Document

1. This is a study that aims to explore female students experiences at UCT. How femininities and female sexualities are represented and whether women resist or participate in these representations? Furthermore, I would like to explore the similar and different dialogues around black and white femininities/womanhood.

2. The inclusion criteria is as broad because the aim is to get an understanding of the different experiences of different women at the university, as not all woman have the same experience.

3. If you have any questions or concerns about the study please feel free to e-mail me at thatomokoena310@yahoo.com

4. If you feel any anxiety or distress surrounding the group discussion contact me (thatomokoena310@yahoo.com) or (shose.kessi@uct.ac.za) and I can refer you to a UCT counselor.

Thank-you for partaking in this study if you would like to see the final results of the research please feel free to contact me.

Have a good day.

Appendix D

BAXTER RULES

General Rules

1. NO VISITORS BEFORE 09:00 and after 23:45. ALWAYS SIGN OUT BEFORE 23:45, anything later and you will be fined
2. If you lock yourself out a sub warden will cut your padlock
3. NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN BAXTER
4. Always attend to your visitor. No visitors are allowed to be roaming around Baxter, this will result in a DC hearing

Reception rules

1. Always have your student card with you at all time- the receptionists will not open for you
2. Maximum of 3 visitors at a time- anything more is a party
3. Do not congregate and make a noise at reception
4. Always sign in and sign out visitors
5. Acknowledge intercom if you are called down
6. If you need to speak to a receptionist come down to reception do not use the intercom, unless it is an extreme emergency- the intercom is not for having conversations
7. Sign out of the weekend book if you are not going to sleep in Baxter

BREAKING ANY OF THESE RULES WILL RESULT IN A FINE OR A DC HEARING

Appendix F