Talking About Transformation: High School Rugby in Cape Town.

Mihlali Tshikila

The University of Cape Town

Psychology Department

Supervisor: Dr Floretta Boonzaier

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Abstract

Transformation in sport is a topic of much contestation within South Africa. Apartheid ideologies attached many stigmas and ideas on to specific racial identities, which still remain intact to this day, some of these stigmas are around sports. One such example is the idea that rugby is a white sport and soccer being for the black population. This study investigates the discourses around transformation which sports administrators, school principals and coaches draw on when talking about transformation. The findings and recommendations should assist researchers and policy makers to gain a deeper understanding with regards to the successful implementation of transformation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with coaches, sports administrators and school principals (N=8). The findings indicated that there are three discourses which are drawn upon, namely Responsibility, Assimilation and Merit. The discourse of responsibility indicated that there was the general consensus that transformation needed to occur, however whose responsibility it was to enact transformation was the point of contestation. The discourse of Assimilation refers to the need for black students who enter these schools to conform to the school's languages, cultures and social beliefs in order to fit into the environment. The discourse of Merit refers to the constant second guessing of a black athletes academic and athletic ability. These findings add to the literature on transformation within rugby, at the school level. Rugby players begin playing at high school. If the dominant rugby schools in South Africa do not transform, there can be no transformation at the national level.

Keywords: transformation; rugby; assimilation; responsibility; merit; Model-C schools; South Africa; Cape Town.

Transformation and Sport in South Africa.

In 1948 when the national party came to power, they constructed and implemented a complex system which would oppress individuals on the basis of their race, sexual preference and gender (Rabaka, 2010). This system was formally recognized as apartheid. Apartheid divided the country using a racialized hierarchy, which led to the valorisation of whiteness and the subjugation of blackness (Conway, 2004; Fanon, 1967; Rabaka, 2010). In 2017, twenty-three years after the first democratic election, the repercussions of the past continue to be felt in the country. Transformation within all aspects of society has been prioritised through various government policies. These policies include the Reconstruction and Development Program in 1994, Growth Employment and Redistribution Act in 1996 and the National Development Act in 2012 (Visser, 2004). Sport has been, and continues to be, raised as an issue when discussions arise on ways to uplift and unify the nation (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). However, even though it is clear that this is needed to redress some of the wrongs of the past, affirmative action in sport has not always been received well by members of the public. This thesis examines the discourses around transformation and affirmative action, broadly as well as within the sporting arena.

As much as the laws and legislations which served to segregate South Africans have been abolished, this country is still largely segregated. Recent census data illustrate that the average white[1] household income in 2011 was R365 134 per annum (Statistics South Africa, 2012). White households had the highest incomes, followed by Indian households, coloured households and finally black households, which earned an average of R60 613 per annum Statistics South Africa, 2012). Sport has been seen as a way to reconcile the people of South Africa, with regards to socio-economic statuses, and the psychological inequalities which have been created by centuries of inequality (Cornelissen, 2011). It is important to add that the definition of *reconciliation* used by Höglund and Sundberg (2008) is one which incorporates the restructuring of relations broken down by violent conflict. South Africa as a country had begun competing in international tournaments such as the 1995 Rugby World Cup (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). A Rugby World cup on home soul presented the perfect time for a country which had left a time oppression and segregation, and entered a new dawn, to show a united front for the whole world to see.

During the apartheid era, 85% to 95% of key positions within senior management, government offices and many professions had been occupied by white people (Adam, 1997).

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[1] Apartheid racial categories are used throughout this paper due to the fact that they are part of everyone's lived reality.

White people who then made up 10% of the population, owned over 80% of the land in South Africa, thus the need for transformative measures (Shepherd, 1994; Archibong & Adejumo, 2013). Prior to the implementation of affirmative action, employment rates and the types of jobs people found themselves in were largely dependent on one's race and gender (Archibong & Adejumo, 2013). The majority of domestic workers were black women, and the majority of people who were unemployed were women (SAIRR, 1993; Archibong & Adejumo, 2013). Indian, Coloured and black women were employed in lower-paid and menial jobs (SAIRR, 1993; Archibong & Adejumo, 2013). Coloured people were barely represented within the private sector at all (SAIRR, 1996; Archibong & Adejumo, 2013). Affirmative action was thus developed, as a measure to create fair representation within the various spheres which had largely been dominated by white men.

Affirmative action and transformation are not the same; rather, affirmative action is a measure of transformation (Alexander, 2007). As much as theoretically a black man can play for the Springboks, this situation is unlikely as suggested by the lack of transformation in the team, years after democracy (Maphai, 1989). Affirmative action exists due to the fact that formal equality only results in theoretical possibilities (Maphai, 1989). Due to this reality, special measures are put in place in order to truly see a change (Maphai, 1989).

Quotas, a measure of affirmative action, have been used in various forums where there has been a need for redress (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). Farquharson and Marjoribanks (2003) describes two types of quotas, formal and informal quotas. Formal quotas state that a certain number of players within a squad, for example, have to be from a community of people of colour (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). Whereas informal quotas work in terms of popular demand, when there is no formal quota in place, but there may be political pressure for a sports team, or a particular sector to represent the population of South Africa sufficiently (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). Both of these types of quotas are used in various arenas within South Africa, such as business, government and sport.

Despite movement toward transformation in South African society, particular sports remain associated with specific races (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). Rugby and cricket historically have been Afrikaans and English sports respectively (Merrett, Tatz, & Adair, 2011). This trend can be traced back to apartheid: rugby has largely been associated with white people, whereas soccer has been associated with people of colour (Merrett et al., 2011). At the 1995 Rugby World Cup, there was only one player of colour in a team representing a country which was predominantly populated by black people (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008).

For this reason, 23 years after democracy, conversations about sport continue to be controversial. In 2007, two black players were recorded in the world cup winning squad (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). The media described the 1995 world cup win as a triumphant victory, and a people who have been historically separated, coming together and uniting, whereas in practice, this was not the case (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). To this day, rugby is still largely segregated and it has not shifted substantively in terms of its racial demographics.

Höglund and Sundberg (2008) state that it is essential that a country move away from conflict symbols, these being symbols which have been associated with an oppressive time, when going through the process of reconciliation. One of the symbolic ways South Africa went about this was changing the national anthem and the national flag (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). The Rugby World Cup in 1995 provided an opportunity to serve as a symbol of reconciliation. If a sport which had been a traditionally Afrikaans, could be transformed into the sport which every individual in South Africa, regardless of their racial identity, could identify with, that would be the ultimate form of symbolism.

Farquharson and Marjoribanks (2003) describe the ways which the exclusion of blacks from South African citizenry was central to the imagination of apartheid South Africa. However, as sport and rugby in particular were seen as key to reconciliation, transformation was made a key concern (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008). In 1998, Steve Tshwete spoke about the ways which a lack of transformation within national teams had been creating disillusionment within the black community (Rantao, 1998). A number of reporters also noted ways in which the promise of a unified South African nation had not been delivered (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003). This still rings true to the South African context in 2017. In the squad of 31 which went to the 2015 rugby world cup, there were 8 players of colour (Godwin, 2015). This is the combination of both black and coloured players. 21 years after the 1994 world cup, there were only 8 players who were not white at the biggest rugby tournament in the world. In order to address these issues, SARFU implemented a category where players could be developed, as well as quotas (Farquharson & Marjoribanks, 2003).

Wale & Foster (2007) speak about six discourses which are used by wealthy white South Africans, to understand and perpetuate the existing economic imbalances along racial lines. Of particular interest were the discourses of 'denial', 'reverse racism vs. non-racialism' and the discourse of 'a just world' (Wale & Foster, 2007). A discourse of 'denial' was characterized by white South Africans denying their implication within the apartheid system, as well as the resulting system of white privilege which continues to benefit them (Wale &

Foster, 2007). A discourse of 'a just world' constructs the world as a fair place, where individuals get what they deserve (Wale & Foster, 2007). Those who are wealthy, or privileged, are said to have acquired those privileges through hard work, rather than their privilege being a result of historic inequalities (Wale & Foster, 2007).

A discourse of 'reverse racism vs. non-racialism' links to a discourse of denial and a discourse of a just world, in that South Africa is viewed as a fair society where all individuals stand on an equal footing. Therefore, Affirmative Action and any other policy created for the transformation of society, is deemed unjust and a form of reverse racism (Wale & Foster, 2007). A discourse of reverse racism vs. non-racialism positions white South Africans as victims to reparative policies (Wale & Foster, 2007).

When transformation is discussed, it is discussed in terms of what the issues are at the at the provincial and at an international level of sport. There is a lack of literature in terms of the types of transformation measures which high school principals, sport administrators and coaches could draw on. Most sportsmen generally begin playing at school level, and once they reach first team and provincial level, different provinces begin looking at signing them for their respective teams. Thus, the role of high schools, particularly those considered 'privileged', play in developing young players and supporting or sharing resources with 'under privileged' schools, is crucial in this discussion. If rugby at South African high schools are only producing white players, it perpetuates the idea that rugby is a white sport and transformation will remain stagnant. The South African men's cricket team, or the Proteas have proven that transformation does work and it can be fruitful and rewarding, therefore the focus of this research is to assess the levels of transformation at high school level. More research needs to be conducted on the role which high schools play in facilitating transformation and the discourses which are drawn upon in speaking about transformation.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this research was to uncover the discourses around transformation which sport administrators and those involved in sport in southern suburbs schools in Cape Town draw on. Specifically, it was hoped that this project could uncover common trends which can help to explain the failure of transformation within rugby, in South Africa.

Main Research Question

What discourses do sport administrators, school principals and coaches draw upon when they talk about transformation within rugby?

Sub Questions

How do these discourses facilitate or constrain movement towards transformation in high school sports?

Theoretical Framework

Social Constructionists draw on the idea that knowledge is socially constructed, rather than discovered (Andrews, 2012). There is an assumption that there is no objective reality which can be observed, but rather reality is constructed and formed continuously by the various actors within particular social contexts (Andrews, 2012). Therefore, Social Constructionism views reality as something which is created and recreated constantly, and the concept of reality is subjective and can differ between each individual (Andrews, 2012). Furthermore, reality does not occur by chance, it has been shaped by various actors and social contexts throughout history, therefore it did not have to be the way that it is (Andrews, 2012).

The reality which South Africa finds itself in is a result of years of inequality. This reality was constructed through formal and informal structures. The formal structures referred to are the laws and legislations during colonialism, and then apartheid which led to the subjugation of black people (Frye, Farred, & Nojekwa, 2011). The informal structures referred to are the subtle social factors and ideologies, a result of colonialism and apartheid, which continue to perpetuate the subjugation of black people through institutional and other forms of racism (Frye et al., 2011). Language is a tool which is used to construct and perpetuate specific realities and ideals (Andrews, 2012). The interest of the research was based on the ways which people talk about transformation in school rugby, and the broad discourses which are drawn upon when these discussions take place. The discourses used can have profound implications with regards to the implementation of transformation within these spaces. Understanding these discourses is thus important in understanding the ways which schools either constrain or facilitate transformation within rugby in particular. This research used a social constructionist lens to understand transformation in rugby. Due to the fact that there is a particular focus on racial transformation, critical race theory was also pivotal.

Critical race theory focuses on racial power within society (Zuberi, 2010). It critiques knowledge and the various social systems which are at play within society. The theory critiques the manner which 'relevant' knowledges, systems and histories are those which are traditionally constructed by white men (Zuberi, 2010). Furthermore, the approach looks at the ways through which the centring of a hegemonic western knowledge systems marginalize the knowledge produced by others, specifically by women and black people (Zuberi, 2010). It can thus be said that critical race theory is a study of hegemony (Harris, 2012). Therefore,

critical race theory was essential throughout this research as it is the lens which advocates for reparations for the injustices of the past. Critical race theory helps to understand the need for transformative measures. Rather than believing that racism is a concept which only existed in the past, critical race theorists believe that racism is an active, normal and integral part of contemporary society and it works to understand its manifestations, whilst challenging it (Harris, 2012).

Methodology

Qualitative researchers collect data in the form of written or spoken language and attempt to make meaning from this data (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2014). Qualitative research allows for one to study issues openly, in depth and in great detail (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). Thus, this research used a qualitative approach in that, the data was collected in the form of interviews with school principals, sports administrators and coaches at the various schools in the southern suburbs of Cape Town. This research was interested in understanding the ways which these various actors talk about, and explain the current state of transformation within school boy rugby in South Africa. Qualitative research was best suited in this regard.

This study, drawing on social constructionism, is interested in discourses around race and transformation, and is thus also framed as discourse analytic research (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). The main aim of discourse analysis is to understand how talk and text construct particular versions of reality (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Discourse analysts looks at the language used and the manner which particular phenomena are spoken about (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). The language is analysed in-depth with an interest in details about what is said, which words are used and how these words are strung to get her to create meaning (Wiggins & Riley, 2010).

Sampling

Purposive sampling is the mode which was employed in this study. Purposive sampling is a form of sampling used within qualitative research (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). Participants are sampled for theoretical reasons (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). If specific cases are good examples of a particular phenomenon, or they are best suited to the study of that phenomenon, then they are used (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). If one is studying the effects of anxiety on an individual, then participants with anxiety disorders will be used (Terre Blanche et al., 2014). This particular study looked at the discourses which school principals, school

administrators and coaches draw upon when speaking about transformation. Coaches were interviewed as they consistently had close contact with rugby players throughout the season. This consistent contact made coaches the ideal candidates to speak of the experiences at ground level. Heads of Sport and principals are key decision makers with regards to policies and the selection of boys at the school. These two positions have a profound impact with regards to which students are selected to attend the school and why, as well as social initiatives. Therefore, principals and heads of sport were interviewed as they would have the most knowledge with regards to the transformative measures the school implements and the effectiveness of such. This study used purposive sampling as it looked specifically at people in the above-mentioned positions at Wynberg, Bishops, Rondebosch and SACS. SACS, Rondebosch Boys High School and Wynberg Boys are consistently some of the most dominant rugby schools in the country, and many professional rugby players come from these schools, or schools similar to them. Furthermore, the above-mentioned schools are predominantly white schools. Transformation needs to predominantly occur in spaces such as these, therefore they were important in that they could provide valuable data with regard to transformation within white spaces. Thus, by looking at their transformation policies, or a potentiall lack thereof, many questions regarding transformation can be answered.

In the proposal, it was stated that this study would aim for 10-15 participants, however, this was not possible. At the end of the data collection process, 8 participants were interviewed from the four schools. The people concerned were contacted with regard participating in this study, however some of them were not able to participate. There were some potential participants who communicated that a lack of time was the reason behind their unavailability, whereas some did not reply to the emails.

In hindsight, these difficulties do make sense in the social and political climate which is South Africa. Transformation remains a source of contestation within broader society, thus it becomes difficult to speak about. Especially so in Model C[2] schools, which not only consist of a predominantly white student base, but white staff within major roles as well. The difficulty around conversations on transformation were made clear on multiple occasions. Whilst attempting to make an appointment for an interview with one of the headmasters, I was asked whether I would prefer to speak to "a black person about this topic". Another headmaster said that it would be great for me to speak to their head of sports, due to the fact

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[2] Model C schools are government schools which are largely funded by a governing body of parents and alumni. Prior to democracy, these schools were predominantly white, and some continue to follow this trend.

that he is a coloured man, therefore he would be ideal for my study. These two instances r speak to the fact that transformation continues to be seen as something which black people need to deal with.

Data Collection

Once ethical clearance was obtained from the University and the Western Province Education Department, I began doing research on who held the positions of interest at the SACS, Rondebosch, Wynberg and Bishops. Once I had this information, I obtained the email address of each participant of interest from each school's website, and I sent an email which requested an interview with them at a time, place and day which best suited the participants. In many cases, the participants did not respond, and I thus travelled to the schools, and physically requested to meet with them, or anyone else who could help me. Where the participants did respond, but could not participate, they provided me with the details of another individual who had the information that was needed for this research. All of the interviews took place at each of the schools, and were presented either during school hours, or after school.

On arrival, the participants presented with a consent form, and once this was signed, semi-structured interviews commenced. Semi-structured interviews have predetermined questions which can be modified, with regard to the order and the way in which they are asked, to the interviewer's discretion (Van Teijlingen, 2014). Questions can be added or omitted during the interview process depending on that particular interview (Van Teijlingen, 2014). Semi-structured interviews allow for individual's values or beliefs to be explored, especially when it comes to sensitive topics (Van Teijlingen, 2014). This study looked at the particular discourses which each participant draws upon when speaking about transformation. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were most suitable as they allowed for the interviewer to ask set questions, whilst at the same time allowing for the participant to answer in anyway which they may feel appropriate. In some interviews, some questions were added, omitted or the order was altered in order to suit that particular participant. This freedom allowed for trends to emerge which might not have been anticipated. The audios from the interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and these recordings were used to create transcriptions and to analyse the data.

Data Analysis: Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

This research was interested in the ways which school principals, coaches and sports administrators speak about transformation, and how these either facilitate, or constrain transformation in rugby. Foucauldian discourse analysis is interested in the availability of

discursive resources within a culture, and the implications that they have on those whom live within it (Willig, 2008). Once the data had been collected, I began to transcribe the audio data. Discourse analysis is interested in the language used and the way which the participant speaks on that particular subject (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Therefore, the transcription process needed to be detailed as it was an important step within the analysis of the data.

The next step within the analysis process was the coding of the data. This process requires for the researcher to decide which areas to focus on and how to begin to analyse the data (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Wiggins & Riley (2010) mention that there is no particular way to code your data with Foucauldian discourse analysis, however there are some useful steps to follow. The first step would be to note general impressions, subjects and objects (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). In this step, it is important to have a section where key words which summarize the data are recorded and another section where what the participant is saying is recorded (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Identifying key themes and finding instances to produce extracts are the second and third steps and they work together (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). The final step in coding is to identify the discourses by sorting the extracts for the different ways of talking about that particular theme (Wiggins & Riley, 2010). Willig (2008) notes that the different ways which people speak about a particular subject matter either open up, or close down opportunities for action. When constructing particular versions of reality, and positioning subjects in particular ways, discourses limit that which can be said and done (Willig, 2008). Therefore, being able to critically understand and reflect on the discourses surrounding transformation within schools is essential.

After coding, the data needed to be analysed and interpreted. The following steps suggested by Wiggins & Riley (2010) were taken. The focus of the interpretation was on the ways the discourses were constructed, and what the consequence of using these discourses may be. The construction of these discourses was assessed by looking at the extracts taken from the coded process. The plausibility of these arguments was then assessed. The analysis section provides an outline of the key findings of study. This includes an in depth write up of the interpretation of the various discourses which were identified.

Ethics

This study was based on a social constructionist framework on transformation in sport, meaning that it was interested in the ways which issues of transformation in rugby are spoken about in high schools. Transformation can be a contentious topic; however, it is not ethically problematic as it is non-distressing and non-threatening topic. Furthermore, the participants in this study are people who occupy positions where they are expected to be able

to speak on, and to answer questions with regards to transformation. There was no need for a de-briefing session as this study only looked at the ways which transformation was spoken about, and this was made clear from the beginning. There was no deception within the study. However, the participants are allowed access to the study if they so wish.

Voluntary Consent

There was voluntary consent from the beginning of the study. If any of the questions made the participant uncomfortable at any point, then they did not have to answer those questions and they were free to leave at any point without any repercussions. Furthermore, the participants were asked for their consent to audio record the interviews. The consent form explained what the study was about, issues of confidentiality and anonymity. The names of the participants were not taken; they will be referred to by the position which they hold at the schools. The various schools will be given a pseudonym, and they will be referred to by their pseudonym throughout the research study to further protect the participant's identities.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an important aspect within research, as it requires the researcher to be critical of themselves and the ways in which they potentially have an effect on the research process, as well as the analysis of the findings (England, 1994). The researcher needs to be able to know how their personal and professional identities and experiences come together to shape the lens which they may see particular phenomena; and thus, having an effect on the production of knowledge. Reflexivity is particularly important within social constructionist research due to the understanding that there are multiple realities. Therefore, the knowledge produced within this research is not absolute, but rather a reflection of the personal identities of the researcher, and the lens through which they will view and interpret the findings. It is also important to note the specific power relations which do exist in the production of knowledge. As much as the data comes from the participant's interviews, the researcher does the interpretation and analysis. The researcher himself is a man, so too are the participants. However, the researcher is a black man, whereas the majority of the participants were white men. Therefore, it needs to be noted that the potential racial differences between the participants and the researcher acted as a challenge for building rapport.

Furthermore, the interest within this particular topic was fuelled by the fact that the research himself is a rugby player and a coach, who also attended, as well as works at schools such as these which are similar in many ways to the schools which were of interest. This has led to the researcher having an increased level of interest, as in many ways, I have

experienced many of the factors which this research attempted to delve into. As to my knowledge, age factors did not play a role within this research, however, racial factors certainly did. Transformation is a contentious topic within white spaces, as transformation attacks the system which works to privilege white people at the expense of black people (Mcintosh, 1988). The fact that I am a black man had an effect on the data, especially because this was highlighted by some of the participants. It is possible that some of the progressive responses would not have been relayed had the researcher been a white male. I will show how this had arose within the analysis of the data.

Analysis and Discussion

The thesis was interested in finding out which discourses coaches, sports administrators and principles draw upon when speaking about transformation. The findings suggested that the headmasters at the various schools could see the need for transformation, however, there were problematic discourses which the participants drew upon. The analysis of the interview data with coaches, sports administrators and principles yielded 3 interrelated discourses on transformation, namely Responsibility, Assimilation and Merit.

Discourses of Responsibility

A discourse of responsibility referred to how the participants spoke about transformation, who needed to be involved, as well as who needed to do more. Often this discourse was used with regards to a deflecting of responsibility, rather than taking up responsibility to make a change. The example below illustrates:

"I think government needs to get involved, at the end of the day all of this costs money. These schools are like this because of fees, old boy's donations, not government funding. So, we can't just get a lot of kids who can't pay, otherwise we won't be able to provide this sort of service. Government must come in with funds for these boys to come into the prep school and the high school, then it becomes feasible for us to do our bit and help. You can't expect these schools to fit the bill for everything, that is where the private sector and government must get involved. I think it is starting to happen, we will see the real effects in about 10 years from now. "**School 3, Coach**

In this extract, this coach states that schools such as those in the southern suburbs, have a role to play in ensuring that transformation occurs in this country. Transformation in this sense is seen as being opportunities for young boys to attend good schools. However, he

does shift responsibility through stating that in order for schools to be able to do their part, 'government must come in with funds for these boys', as individual schools do not have the financial resources to ensure that transformation takes place. This articulates the stance that a successful transformation process needs to be a collective effort between schools, the private sector and government. The government are positioned as responsible for the lack of transformation at these schools, and the schools themselves are positioned as powerless, at least until the government steps in.

In the example below, the coach was asked about the need to develop the sporting facilities within under privileged communities. Through the response, the need for money was a constant fixture, in such a way which deflected responsibility.

> "Gugulethu [schools] and those clubs which are playing out in the townships…. That is where the unions should be stepping in, and I don't know how much work those unions are putting in, in terms of facilities at that level. If Unions have got money, that is where they should be putting a lot of money. You know, schools like ours, we should be giving more back, and I suppose every now and again we have equipment going there, and we have boot drives, but it's not enough…." **School 1, Head of Rugby**

In this instance, there is a sense of 'othering' which occurs in the differentiation between schools in the Southern Suburbs, and schools in less affluent areas. The head of rugby at School 1 admits that not enough is being done by 'schools like ours' in the process of transformation. However, he quickly moves to deflect responsibility, citing the need for rugby unions to do more. He spends little time on the school which he represents, and that which they could, and should be doing. The passing on of responsibility was a common trend throughout the majority of the interviews. However, one coach had a differing perspective.

> "You can only develop a sport depending on the passion for it, and if your stronger schools develop other schools, you could build a culture of rugby. You can't always leave it to SARU to do that kind of thing. Schools potentially have more time to do that kind of thing, but then again, it depends on your school and the size of it." **School 1, Coach**

This coach, who is also a teacher at the school, displayed contrasting views, in that he acknowledged the need to do more, however he also be expressed that far too often there is a deflection of responsibility. This particular coach serves to disrupt the normative discourse

around responsibility, through the assertion that schools themselves need to take responsibility. These three extracts evoke questions with regard to the individuals who occupy positions of influence. Are those in positions of influence truly for transformation? The fact that the interviewer is a black man, discussing issues of transformation was clearly unsettling, as on multiple occasions, I was asked whether I would prefer to speak to 'a black person'. Thus, my blackness certainly had the potential to affect that which was said.

Often there is an idea that the more marginal groups are represented within a space, the more likely change is to occur (Gouws, 2008). However, feminist theorists have begun to look at the accountability of people within important positions (Hassim, 2006). Rather than looking at the identity make up of individuals who have power, it is important to look at how accountable these individuals are with regards to bringing change (Hassim, 2006). In the examples above, it becomes clear that it is common to deflect the responsibility to transform, specifically by the people who are in positions of influence.

If those who are responsible for key decisions being made at the school refuse to take any responsibility, how can transformation truly occur? When discussing a discourse of denial, Wale & Foster (2007) speak to the fact that wealthy white South African's often view South Africa is a meritocratic society, where race privilege is non-existent. Entrenched within this belief, is the idea that opportunities are equal for each individual, regardless of apartheid, due to the fact that we are now in democracy (Wale & Foster, 2007). Without the recognition that racial imbalances remain, and they continue to systematically oppress black people, issues of responsibility will remain.

Discourses of Assimilation

A discourse of assimilation referred to how people spoke about black students, the cultural, academic and social barriers that have led to them either not being offered an opportunity to attend one of these schools, or not surviving within that environment. This indicated that these boys are to behave in a particular manner, and to take on the cultural, social and religious beliefs of the schools and the people who run them, in order to survive at the schools (Manning, 2004; Wale & Foster, 2007). Essentially, they are not embraced for who they are, rather, they need fit into these schools. As illustrated below:

> "I think the biggest problem is that we lack the knowledge and resources in under
> privileged communities where we would like the guys come out and play rugby. So
> kids are forced out of their comfort zones and forced into white institutions where

they may not feel comfortable. Yes, it might be great but that has an effect on the kids in other ways." **School 2, Coach**

In this extract, there is a realization that there is a problem with the current approach used to transform rugby. At the moment, black children are being removed from their homes, a social, cultural and political context which they have grown up in, and are being told that they need to go to schools, such as those in the Southern Suburbs in order to be a success. However, when they arrive at these schools, they struggle to settle due to the fact that they now have to take on a new culture and language in order to succeed and to be accepted in this environment. Rather than creating a diverse space of human beings, this schooling system attempts to make these boys assimilate to specific ways of being.

"Academically the boys struggle, from a social point of view, boys are being exposed to things here which are not the same as where they come from in the poorer areas. Those are the major things. In terms of sports, guys are being benefitted but these guys need more support socially and academically." **School 3, Coach**

The rugby players who are being offered bursaries to these schools are often those who not only are incredible sportsmen, but who also would not be able to afford to attend one of these schools if not for this funding. Often, they come from disadvantaged backgrounds, where often necessities are deemed to be luxuries. Thus, the social difficulties which are spoken of above are the differences in the ways things are done, the differences in languages and the pressure to learn and to speak English. The difficulties come along with the fact that in these spaces, the fluency in English has historically, and continues to be deemed a barometer of intelligence as well as the fact that African languages and cultures are deemed to have less currency than English (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012). As mentioned above, there is a process of othering which takes place, whereby boys of African descent, are not accepted unless they assimilate. These boys are thus seen to be lesser unless they are able to assimilate to the environment.

"There are however certain things we cannot get away from, like the fact that we are an Anglican school. However, within that we need to find what is offensive to people, like forcing boys who do not have the same beliefs to partake in things which their religion or culture does not allow […] So, we are trying to make sure we celebrate people for who they are rather than forcing them to assimilate. We do hope to instil certain characteristics, like hard work, honesty etc." **School 2, Headmaster**

In the previous two examples, through the assimilation discourse, there is a conscious or an unconscious perpetuation of a need for the boys entering these schools to assimilate. However, in this instance, the speaker blatantly admits to the existence of the practice assimilation within these model-c schools. Often, the assimilation of students is invisibilised through its dominant nature and its justification. Children are told that they need to behave in specific ways in order to be acceptable, and this is justified as the way which these institutions work. This justification creates the illusion that this is the norm, and any alternative would be abnormal. In admitting that assimilation is something which occurs, it is made visible and questionable. Furthermore, this headmaster goes on to challenge the act of assimilation by making the conscious effort to have an environment which embraces all individuals, rather than an environment which forces boys to partake in activities which they do not identify with. In the next extract, the headmaster speaks about the measures they have in place to assist some of the boys academically so.

> "We have had to give them additional support academically on top of support on the sports field. Particularly the subject which they need bridging with is English. Coming to this English environment is quite a culture shock." **School 2, headmaster**

The process of centring western knowledge systems, languages and religions above indigenous systems was part of the colonial mission (Sium et al.., 2012). Therefore, the act of colonizing involved making colonized subjects buy into the knowledge systems of the west at the expense of their indigenous knowledge systems (Sium et al.., 2012). This need to assimilate to whiteness is still evident today through things such as the languages which are used within institutions of learning, the history taught within schools, colourism and skin bleaching (Hook, 2004). The centralization of western knowledge systems forms the foundation upon which the assimilation of black subjects is built. In this neo-colonial South Africa, through #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, we are currently tackling issues around the decolonization of the educational system, especially so at Universities. Sium et al., (2012) states that in order to successfully decolonize, we need to re-centre power around indigenous systems of knowing. Language and knowledge systems are intrinsically interlinked; therefore, we need to begin asking questions around the languages used to learn and how they privilege some, whilst 'othering' the rest of the population. The current centring of power serves to exclude, and to other those who cannot, or will not assimilate.

The issue of power and sustainability are intrinsically interlinked into this discourse of assimilation (Wale & Foster, 2007). Post-development theory has been concerned with the way that the 'third world' has continued to be viewed as an area which needs to be saved by the powerful development industry (Wale & Foster, 2007). However, post-development theorists have attempted to shift the gaze, from the 'third world', to problematizing the development industry, and the ways with which the development discourse used, serves to perpetuate colonial relations of domination between the 'first and 'third' world countries (Pieterse, 2000; Wale & Foster, 2007). Many of the initiatives within these schools are similar in that, each school has various drives and initiatives which aim to either donate manpower or resources to disadvantaged schools as a form of their corporate social responsibility. However, none of these processes are sustainable. These processes serve to position model-c schools as the saviours of disadvantaged communities, as most of the processes are either inconsistent, or they serve to remove boys from disadvantaged communities, and place them into their schools. This model ties into the discourse of the good white Samaritan, where white people are seen as the saviours of black people in South Africa (Wale & Foster, 2007). This results in unsustainable methods which treat symptoms of the problem, rather than working against the larger system which maintains poverty among the black majority (Wale & Foster, 2007). Model-C schools draw on a development discourse through the unsustainable measures in place, in that these methods serve to perpetuate manage the current power imbalances, rather than to redress them (Wale & Foster, 2007). In the next extract, this particular Head of Rugby speaks more about the various transformative initiatives which they have in place at the school he represents.

> "we send boys to go out there and tutor and we help financially. We also have Masiphumelele in Noordhoek area, and that has helped to send 67 kids to school. We have a boy who raised money to get school equipment, they spend money on those kids. The problem is finding time to do these things, Its got to be done weekly, and that is very difficult." **School 1, Head of Rugby**

In speaking about the fact that the school he represents sends manpower to disadvantaged communities, as well as having sent a number of students to school, the school as well as the head of rugby are positioned with power. Furthermore, by admitting that not enough is being done and blaming a lack of time for this, he draws on the discourse of responsibility. In continuing to partake within non-sustainable transformative efforts, one serves to perpetuate the idea that model-c schools and private schools are the institutions

which children should be attending. However, as long as this is true, a large majority of children are being excluded and denied the right to a holistic, and good quality education.

"Naturally, as the middle class becomes wealthier and they identify that these are the schools you need to send you kids to, and you need to pay for them, then you get more numbers in." **School 1: Head of Rugby**

In the above extract, the head of rugby positions model-c schools as those which the wealthy send their children to. In doing so, Model-C schools are positioned above those within disadvantaged communities. Thus, centring power and influence around these schools. Not every child can go to one of these traditional Model-C schools, therefore many children are being excluded from receiving the same opportunities as children who are privileged enough to attend one. The lack of a sustainable approach to uplifting disadvantaged schools maintains the power which Model-C schools have, in that, the opportunities which are present at these schools remain exclusive. As long as the power hierarchy remains, the majority of black students have no other choice but to enter an environment which continues to reject their blackness.

When speaking about white privilege, Mcintosh (1988) speaks to the ways with which those with privilege and power tend to partake in behaviours which either consciously or unconsciously re-enforce and maintain the power imbalances which are present. A lack of any sustainable approach to developing schools and transforming the current institutions of education within this country serve to perpetuate many ideas around rugby, as well as the educational system. At the moment, schools in less privileged areas continue to be seen as inadequate with regards to the quality of education on offer, as well as the all-round opportunities which they can offer an individual. As long as power remains centred around the traditional model-c schools, and they continue to exclude black students systematically the possibility of transformation will remain limited.

Under privileged schools are made up of black people. Therefore, if things do not change at these schools, these players of colour will continue to be seen as inadequate on the rugby field, as well as academically. It is important to note that, even in situations where the system produces black rugby players of provincial or national calibre, the sporting abilities continue to be questioned. No matter how well these athletes perform, the second they have a bad moment, questions emerge about their development and whether or not they deserve to be in these sides. This phenomenon will be discussed within the next discourse.

Discourses of Merit

A discourse of merit referred to how the presence of black athletes within the provincial and national teams continue to garner questions about the nature of their selection. No matter how well they perform, a black athlete is never given the benefit of the doubt in the same way which white athletes are. When a white athlete plays badly, he needs time to gain his confidence, and more often than not, he is given that time. However, as soon as a black athlete has one bad game, they are immediately labelled 'quota players' and the transformation process is deemed responsible for the plight of the springboks. This is a trend which some of the participants either perpetuated, or noticed and attempted to bring light to. As illustrated below:

"There is a second-year disease, where people play very well in their first year, but in the second year they struggle. Siya, Garth April, Lwazi Mvovo, Chivanga was one of those players. Then you take the opposite side where you've got a player like Percy Montgomery who was trash at one stage, but they kept with him. He was forced out when he went to play overseas, he relearned to enjoy his rugby, came back to play and that was fantastic. But you get these guys who we're stuck with, Coenie Oosthuizen is an example, Francois Steyn, these are oaks are there on reputation instead of proven ability. So no, these guys aren't being given a fair crack. Not at all."
School 1, Coach

The coach above responded with the above when asked whether he believed that black players were being selected and treated fairly within the South African national team. The above extract serves to make visible the fact that black players continue to be seen as inadequate. There is a centring of whiteness in order to relay the inequalities which remain present, but invisible when conversations about rugby occur (Wale & Foster, 2007). Generally, the narrative that black rugby players are in the national set-up due to quota requirements is so dominant that the role which white athletes play is never the topic of conversation. It is assumed that when a white player is selected, it is done so on merit, however as soon as a black face is present, it is due to the fact that there is a quota requirement to do so. The minority within the national set up are blamed for bad performances and there are always calls for them to be dropped as soon as their performances are sub-par. Through contrasting the ways which black players and white players are treated, this extract serves to disrupt this dominant notion, and to shift focus in order to make visible the one sided and contradictory nature of the merit based discourse. Essentially, it goes

against the idea that opportunities are present for every individual, regardless of race, by making it visible that contrary to the dominant narrative, black rugby players continue to be excluded.

"But is he the best? That's the question. If I am looking for a centre and there are 4 players there, 1 white, coloured, black.. who do they choose? Do they choose the coloured guy because we need him (for numbers) or do you choose the best**?" School 1: Head of Rugby**

In this particular interview, there were plenty of uncomfortable moments, for both myself or the participant. When The merit discourse is only used when speaking about the credibility with regards to the selection of players of colour. The previous extract is in stark contrast to the one above, in that, where the coach makes visible the ironic nature of the discourse of merit and how white athletes are positioned as deserving when selected, whereas black athletes face questions with regards to their ability, the head of rugby perpetuates these notions. This head of rugby responded in this manner when asked about whether he thinks that black rugby players have been treated fairly with regard to selection, considering the fact that rugby was used as a tool for reconciliation. As can be seen above, his first response was to question their ability. Before, an athlete of colour can be accepted, he is strenuously assessed, and even if he passes these assessments, one bad game can result in questions around his ability resurfacing (Kessi & Cornell, 2015). Furthermore, it is clear from the extract that transformation is viewed as a numbers game, rather than a process of development and upliftment. In this particular interview, there were plenty of uncomfortable moments, for both myself or the participant due to the ways which black athletes were viewed. This un-comfortability would lead me to challenging the participant on his views, maybe too much so at times. It is possible that at times, the anger and awkwardness that I sometimes felt did not lead to the participant struggling freely express himself.

In a country such as South Africa, transformative measures such as Affirmative Action and the quota system were put in place with the noble intention of redressing the vast inequality between dominant and subordinate groups (Andersen, 2006). However, arguments against 'positive discrimination' have continuously used a merit discourse to discredit such legislation (Andersen, 2006). This discourse has been tied to notions of colour and gender blindness, which is why some of those who speak against legislations created to reverse historical discrimination perpetuate the idea that the enactment of these systems are a form of

reverse racism and discrimination (Berry, 2007). Post-apartheid South Africa fertile ground for such arguments. The rainbow nation myth which came with post-apartheid South Africa created the idea that political emancipation and equality are one in the same. Therefore, now that everyone has a right to vote, the dominant discourse is that we are all equal in all spheres of life. When this is the dominant narrative and belief, we silence and exclude those who continue to be oppressed.

> "Generally, I think it's unfair on players later on in their careers to put them in positions where they are actually exposed and people can see that they aren't there on merit. Whereas, if there is a natural development earlier on, there should be a natural progression into teams where you are chosen on merit. I can see the thinking behind it…. Maybe 7 or 8 years ago where there probably were not a lot of opportunities for boys to go through schools like this and get the training.. or the clubs which are established." **School 1, Head of Rugby**

In stating that transformative processes are "unfair" the head of rugby is drawing on a merit based discourse, as well as the interlinking idea that post-1994, we are all equal. This extract positions the needs of the privileged at the centre rather than those who are oppressed. He assumes that every single boy in this country by now should have the same opportunities to attend schools where they will be developed holistically. 'I can see the thinking behind it…. Maybe 7 or 8 years ago where there probably were not a lot of opportunities for boys to go through schools like this and get the training '. This speech serves to make clear that, to him transformational measures were acceptable for a certain amount of time, however that time has passed. Thus the continued conversation and implementation of transformational measures in unfair. Through theoretical understandings in post-apartheid South Africa such as the rainbow nation narrative, which perpetuate a merit discourse can have disastrous effects on the mentality of disadvantaged groups.

> "[…]. Again, there are many players who do play currently who have questions about whether they are there because they deserve to be, or if they are a number, which I think psychologically is an absolute kick in the stomach, because you start doubting your own abilities.**" School 1, Coach**

'There are many players who do play currently who have questions about whether they are there because they deserve to be, or if they are a number, which I think

psychologically is an absolute kick in the stomach'. This coach speaks about the ways with which the rugby community continues to other black players. He centres the experience of black rugby players by speaking about the psychological effects which they are subject to, due to the questions of meritocracy that they alone are subject to. Constantly having question marks about the credibility of your selection, not only silences the constant struggles which you face as a black person within this country, but it positions your racial categorization over your ability. Constantly black rugby players are faced with the fact that they are within white spaces, and that they are viewed as a number rather than an athlete, no matter how well they perform (Höglund & Sundberg, 2008).

> "[…] A lot of guys who have spoken to me have been players of colour. People feel pressure to perform to get away from being labelled as a quota player, in an environment like this where there is such an overwhelming majority of white people to black people, it becomes a thing of I need to do my job well, and on top of that I am a person of colour." **School 2, Coach**

'It becomes a thing of I need to do my job well, and on top of that I am a person of colour. The inadequacy of being a black athlete is something which one is faced with on a consistent basis. This extract serves to disrupt the idea that political emancipation has resulted in the fair treatment of all individuals. In speaking about the schooling environment, he points out that a few black students have spoken to him about feeling uncomfortable. The headmasters and the heads of sport at these schools moved to position themselves, as well as the schools as progressive, however this coach disrupts this notion in the above extract. An environment which is accepting of all individuals should not have negative psychological effects on minority groups.

The current system and the ways with which it functions has set black rugby players up to fail. It is quite clear that there is a culture which is resistant to change at many of these schools within the Southern Suburbs. It is difficult enough having to perform as an athlete, however, as the above extract makes clear, being a black athlete within white spaces comes with its own set of challenges. These are issues which the athlete himself cannot affect, they are deeply engrain within these institutions themselves and the gatekeepers enforce them, either consciously or unconsciously. A discourse of merit is used to mask the bigger issues, the gatekeepers within these institutions use a discourse of merit, in order to justify the current order of things. The idea is that black rugby players are not deserving, otherwise they would be in national, as well as provincial teams 'naturally'. The problem is located within

the oppressed, rather than oppressors, and the language used by headmaster's heads of rugby perpetuates this idea. They say all the right things in order to portray themselves in a particular light, however a deeper analysis says different.

Suggestions and Conclusion

This research found that the discourses drawn upon by headmasters, sports administrators and coaches included Discourses of Responsibility, Assimilation and Merit. These discourses were connected in that each discourse had become normative, and they were most commonly used in a way which constrained the processes of transformation. Each discourse was used alone, or in conjunction with the others, as justification for the current inequalities in rugby. There were however instances where some participants used these discourses in ways which made them visible and to speak against their usages.

Transformation is a topic which garners much contestation, however it seems as though there is often a misunderstanding with regards to what it means, or what it should mean. Many of the participants seemed to confuse transformation with quotas, which is where the levels of contestation came. The discourse of merit was used predominantly within this contestation. When presented with a different lens to view transformation, those who previously rejected transformation, or viewed it as "unfair", changed their tone, however they did continue to draw on a discourse of merit. However, the policies at these schools did not mirror this progressiveness. However, what became clear was that boys are expected to assimilate to the cultures and practices of model-c schools. We need to begin to ask ourselves whether headmasters, as well as heads of sport truly make the decisions at these schools, or whether they are just smokescreens. The discourses of assimilation, merit and responsibility help to explain why Model-C schools within South Africa remain predominantly white, as they are often used in order to centre and maintain power around Model-C schools, and thus are often used in justifying the current social order.

None of the transformative initiatives at these schools are sustainable, furthermore, in speaking of their initiatives, many of the participants tended to position Model-C schools as the saviours of children who live in disadvantaged communities. The discourse of assimilation made this very clear, as a common trend is to attempt to get the benefactors of bursaries to these schools to assimilate to the cultures and beliefs of these schools, rather than to embrace them for who they are. The lack of sustainable developments, as well as the need for boys to assimilate is something which needs to change if we are to see a change in transformation at Model-C schools. A shift in focus, which embraces blackness creates an

environment which is more conducive for black bodies, thus this can help to decrease the number of individuals who cannot survive at these schools. In order to do this, there needs to be a decolonizing of the educational system (Sium et al.., 2012).

Institutions of learning, as well as sport are intrinsically interlinked, in that athletes come out of the educational system. If schools perpetuate oppression and do not transform, transformation will not occur at the national level. Therefore, people speak about transformation occurring at grassroots level, but this conversation often blames black people for not having received the development. The focus needs to shift to look at the schools which have not developed the athlete, rather than the athlete himself.

We need to begin asking questions around the possibility of a different approach with regards to development and social corporate responsibilities. Not every child can attend a SACS or a Rondebosch, However, every child deserves a good education and the same opportunities afforded to children who attend such schools. A consistent, selfless and a committed approach which centres the needs of disadvantaged schools is needed in order to truly transform and to develop this country. At the moment, there is this idea that in order for one to be successful, they need to attend a model-c school. This is only the case because disadvantaged schools have been, and continue to be neglected. Therefore, this is just the social reality, rather than the absolute truth. The possibilities for the sustainable development of disadvantaged schools, as well as the effects this can have on transformation within rugby have thus presented themselves.

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Appendices:

**Consent Form
University of Cape Town
Consent to participate in a research study on transformation in high
school rugby in Cape Town.**

Dear Participant

Title: Talking About Transformation: High School Rugby in Cape Town.

Study Purpose
You are being invited to participate in a study which is being conducted by me, Mihlali
Tshikila, an honours student at the University of Cape Town. The study is about sports and
transformation within high schools in Cape Town.

Study Procedures
If you decide to participate in this study, you will just need to answer a few questions in the
form of an interview. All information obtained from you will be kept strictly confidential.
There will, in fact, be no way for the researchers to link the information you have given us, to
your name as you and the school you work at will be assigned a pseudonym.

Possible Risks
None.

Possible Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you in participating in this study, but we hope that information
gained from this study will help us improve knowledge on the state of transformation within
rugby at the various high schools where this study will take place.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any
question. If you decide to participate, you are free to change your mind and discontinue
participation at any time.

Confidentiality
Information about you obtained for this study will be kept confidential. As proof of this your
name will not be needed, and other identifying material will not be kept with the study
information. It and this consent form will be kept in separate, locked file cabinets, and there
will be no link between the consent form and the interview. Any reports or publications about
the study will not identify you or any other study participant.

Voice Recording
Please note that this interview will be recorded using an audio recorder.

Questions
Any study-related questions, problems or emergencies should be directed to the following
researchers:

Mihlali Tshikila   tshsim012@myuct.ac.za

Supervisor:

Floretta Boonzaier   **floretta.Boonzaier@uct.ac.za**

Questions about your rights as a study participant, comments or complaints about the study also may be presented to the Research Ethics Committee, the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town, Rosalind Adams, 021 650 3417.

I have read the above and am satisfied with my understanding of the study, its possible benefits, risks and alternatives. My questions about the study have been answered. I hereby voluntarily consent to participation in the research study as described. I have been offered copies of this two-page consent form.

* * *

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

Mihlali Tshikila

_____

Researchers Name.

PERMISSION TO TAPE-RECORD INTERVIEWS
I understand that the interview will be tape-recorded and that the researcher will take strict precautions to safeguard my personal information throughout the study.

_____
Participant's Signature

Interview schedule

- Broadly, what are your views on issues of transformation within the sporting arena?
- What are your beliefs around transformation within rugby specifically?
- Tell me, what are the issues which you encounter with regards to transformation in sports, specifically rugby, here at the school?
- Has the school developed any initiatives for rugby players from disadvantaged backgrounds?
    - If not, do they plan on doing so?
    - If so, what is your take on these programmes?
        - How successful do you think they have been?
- What role do you think that the schooling system can play in ensuring that transformation occurs at the top level of rugby
- What are your view with regards to the springboks and the conversations around transformation?
    - Do you believe that there is a need for transformation?
    - Do you believe that transformation can be beneficial? If yes, In what ways can they be beneficial? If no, please expand