"*Munhu wese ihama yako* (everyone is your relative)": *Ubuntu* and the social inclusion of students with disabilities at South African universities.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, my brother Harry, and my sister-in-law Lerato, as well as my uncle Davison. I would like to thank you for realising my potential all the way back from high school and grooming it up to now. I love you dearly, and always will, because without your motivation this thesis would not have been possible. I am happy that I have reached this far because of your faith in me.

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Abstract

Background: During apartheid, South African students with disabilities (SWDs) were educated in special schools and taught an inferior curriculum. Black learners with disabilities were discriminated against on grounds of both race and disability. Following South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) government put in place a range of new laws to address the educational and other needs of those disadvantaged under apartheid, including persons with disabilities (PWDs). The South African government is a signatory of the 2006 United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which has resulted in the country assuming obligations to promote inclusive education for SWDs. However, research (see, for instance, Chiwandire & Vincent 2019; Chiwandire 2019; Mutanga 2019; Majoko & Phasha 2018; Mutanga *et al*. 2018; Mutanga 2017a; Chiwandire 2017; Israel 2017) has shown that SWDs continue to fare differently in comparison to their non-disabled peers in terms of participation in education with the likelihood of success. Higher education institutions (HEIs) have thus been urged to create conducive environments for the academic inclusion of SWDs with particular attention being paid to lecturers employing inclusive instructional strategies as well as flexible curricula, if they are to ensure the equal opportunity for academic success of SWDs in the regular classroom setting. The focus, to date, on academic inclusion, while important, has meant that issues relating to the social inclusion of SWDs have received minimal attention.

Purpose: To date, there is a dearth of South African studies which have investigated the social inclusion needs of SWDs on South African campuses. Although a number of studies have given voice to the perspectives of SWDs and lecturers, with respect to their experiences in relation to matters of academic inclusion in South African higher education (HE), few have focused on Disability Unit Staff Members (DUSMs) who are pivotal to ensuring fair and equitable policies and practices for SWDs in HEIs. Disability Studies (DS) as a field has been criticised for being dominated by voices from the Global North, which fail to consider or effectively theorise Global South disability experiences in a contextually relevant way. The thesis argues that the failure to recognise the value of diversity and to treat SWDs as valued and welcomed participants in South

African HEIs partly stems from policy, practice and relationships being informed by the Western individualist paradigm that prizes individual achievement and success rather than cooperation and mutuality. The African philosophy of *Ubuntu,* which stresses values of communalism, hospitality and respect for human dignity is offered here as an alternative starting point for achieving genuinely inclusive campuses.

Methods: In-depth face-to-face qualitative interviews were conducted with 40 participants, most of whom were, at the time of being interviewed, Heads of Disability Units and DUSMs based at 10 different universities in four of South Africa's nine provinces. Data were coded and analysed using Braun & Clarke's (2006) method of inductive and deductive thematic analysis.

Results: The findings of this study indicate that South African campuses are ableist spaces in which the social needs of SWDs are not prioritised. The thesis argues that in order for campuses to become genuinely inclusive, South African campuses ought to seek to inculcate in their members the values of the African worldview *Ubuntu*, in contrast to the dominant Western individualist orthodoxy. SWDs are being excluded and denied a sense of belonging and equal participation despite universities giving lip service to embracing such inclusive education-oriented values as co-operative learning. Non-disabled students steeped in Western individualism, which affirms the solitary pursuit of individual success rather than the value of interdependence and diversity, end up marginalising SWDs who are seen as less capable. DUSMs addressing the needs of SWDs through an ableist/Western individualist lens are not challenging unfair practices which are impairing the dignity of SWDs, particularly students with physical disabilities who are being forced to "fit into" oppressive inaccessible built environments on campuses. These DUSMs may unwittingly re-inscribe ableist assumptions that normalise discrimination against SWDs.

Conclusions and Recommendations: *Ubuntu* values offer a starting point for building mutual respect and interdependence between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. The thesis finds however that as was the case in traditional African communities, which embraced the values of

Ubuntu, acts of leadership are required if *Ubuntu*'s values of human dignity, mutual respect and acceptance are to be fostered on campuses. In a range of important ways, the dignity of SWDs is not respected at HEIs in South Africa. This includes, for example, such practical matters as the inaccessibility of toilets to wheelchair users and the lack of appropriate signage for blind students. Disrespectful attitudes and assumptions about SWDs on the part of non-disabled university members also result in SWDs' human dignity being impaired.

Ubuntu's value of hospitality stresses the importance of promoting relations of group solidarity and interdependence between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. Both academic inclusion-oriented programmes and the promotion of a wide range of social activities, involving both SWDs and non-disabled students, can play an important role in cultivating the formation of long-term fruitful and respectful friendships between SWDs and non-disabled students.

An enabling classroom environment alone is not enough to holistically address the social inclusion needs of SWDs. South African HEIs that embrace the *Ubuntu* values of communalism, human dignity and hospitality will be in a position to respect the needs of SWDs as "whole persons". Amongst other things, this requires DUSMs to be fully empowered to make important decisions regarding vital matters such as disability inclusion, and it necessitates university management to relinquish their power, so that they may work collaboratively with DUSMs and SWDs, all on equal footing, to ensure that HE funding allocation, policy and planning also prioritises the social needs of SWDs.

Problem Statement

Several recent South African disability policies, including the 2018 *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System,* have called upon this country's HEIs to seriously consider the significance of social inclusion of SWDs on campuses, if these students are to flourish. The rationale for these policies is that including SWDs socially also enables them to lead balanced lives, since this group spends most of their time outside the classroom setting. Even though the academic inclusion approach, which is endorsed by many South African universities, emphasises the need for these institutions to make their classroom practices be as inclusive as possible to SWDs but this is not the reality. This academic inclusion-oriented approach to inclusive education is endorsed in international literature debates on inclusive education which assumes that promoting inclusive classroom practices will automatically result in the automatic formation of reciprocal friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers.

However, this conventional academic inclusion-oriented approach to inclusive education has been disconfirmed by the recent literature on the experiences of SWDs at South African universities, most of whom have raised concerns about being socially excluded by their non-disabled peers on the grounds of their disability. These studies report that most of the students with visible and invisible disabilities are facing social rejection by their non-disabled peers both inside and outside the classroom setting. Other students, especially wheelchair users, have pointed to the inaccessible campus residences built environment and sport facilities as frustrating the possibility to this group's social inclusion through the formation and sustenance of potential friendships. In response to this problem the present thesis proposes to investigate measures which selected South African universities are taking to socially include students with diverse disabilities on their campuses through sampling Heads of Disability Units, DUSMs, residence wardens and SWDs. The data analysis was predominantly informed by the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, particularly the values of communalism, human dignity and hospitality.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABA:	Architectural Barriers Act
ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
A-DL:	Anti-Discrimination Legislation
ADHD:	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ANC:	African National Congress
CAS:	Central Administration for Statistics
CHE:	Council on Higher Education
CPUT:	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CUT:	Central University of Technology
CDS:	Critical Disability Studies
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA:	Disabled People South Africa
DUT:	Durban University of Technology
DSA:	Disabled Students' Allowance
DDA:	Disability Discrimination Act of 2002, UK
DDA:	Disability Discrimination Act of 1992, Australia
DDA:	Disability Discrimination Act of 1995
DoES:	Department of Education and Science
DoE:	Department of Education
DUSMs:	Disability Unit Staff Members
DSU:	Disability Support Unit
DS:	Disability Studies
EU:	European Union
FOTIM:	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
FSD:	Fund for Students with Disabilities
FET:	Further Training and Education

HEMIS:	Higher Education Management Information System
HEPSN:	Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs
HEDSA:	Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association
HESA:	Higher Education South Africa
HWIs:	Historically White Institutions
HBIs:	Historically Black Institutions
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
HE:	Higher Education
IEPs:	Individual Education Programmes
IDEA:	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
ICF:	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
JAWS:	Job Access With Speech
NSFAS:	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NMMU:	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NWU:	North West University
NII:	National Insurance Institute
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD:	Office for Students with Disabilities
PWDs:	Persons with Disabilities
PWD Act:	Persons with Disability Act of 1995, India
PSET:	Post-School Education and Training
SAHRC:	South African Human Rights Commission
SARAs:	Sports and Recreational Activities
SENDA:	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
SWLDs:	Student with Learning Disabilities
SFPS:	Student Friendship Perception Survey
SWDs:	Students with Disabilities

SRC:	Student Representative Committee
SRV:	Social Role Valorisation
SSA:	Special Schools Act
TVET:	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TUT:	Tshwane University of Technology
UL, MEDUNSA:	University of Limpopo, Medical University of South Africa
UPIAS:	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UDHR:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UCT:	University of Cape Town
UFS:	University of the Free State
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UID:	Universal Instruction Design
UGC:	University Grants Commission
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UDL:	Universal Design for Learning
UK:	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US:	United States
WENA:	West European and North American
WHO:	World Health Organization
ZANU-PF:	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Context

Guided by the 2006 UNCRPD, for purposes of this thesis, I define "disability" as "an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations 2006: 5). Furthermore, under Article 1 of the UNCRPD, "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations 2006: 5). It is evident that this definition focuses on the elimination of barriers created by society that prevent persons with differences from enjoying their human rights on equal basis with others in relation to education (UNESCO 2005). Barriers that limit the full participation of SWDs in HE include "negative attitude, discriminative policies and practices, and inaccessible environments as a result of these barriers" (Kochung 2011: 144).

Education is regarded as a significant tool to enable PWDs to change the conditions of their lives (Van Kham 2018). However, historically, learners with disabilities had to learn in segregated educational settings where they were being taught an inferior curriculum which limited their chances of gaining access to tertiary education opportunities (Kohama 2012: 2 see also Osgood 2005). Such segregated special education has also been criticised for attaching stigma to SWDs (Dupre 1997: 793). This radically changed with many countries adopting the inclusive educational approach which "call[ed] for the end of special education" (Cross 1997: 10).

Internationally, the concept of inclusive education has seen HEIs being "encouraged to facilitate greater access and participation for people from marginalised groups who have traditionally been excluded from higher education" (Shevlin *et al*. 2004: 15). Countries which adopted the inclusive education approach saw their schools integrating "all students into general classrooms

regardless of their learning, physical, or emotional characteristics" (Reganick 1995: 2). To date, most available literature defines inclusive education as academic inclusion. For instance, Fuller *et al*. (2004: 455) write that inclusive education includes "a number of key perspectives, policies and practices such as, firstly, reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students and, secondly, learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of students".

This academic inclusion-oriented definition of inclusion was also endorsed by the 2006 UNCRPD which resulted in countries (especially signatories) further strengthening their initiatives to support the educational needs of SWDs. Article 24 of the UNCRPD on education enjoins States Parties to recognise the right of PWDs to education, through ensuring an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning for this group (United Nations 2006: 16). Numerous scholars have applauded the UNCRPD for endorsing inclusive education (Guthrie & Waldeck 2008; Schuelka & Johnstone 2012).

Inclusion/inclusive education has largely been understood from the point of view of human rights (Donald *et al*. 1997). Within this framework, inclusive education is important because it is about the children's rights "to be seen and treated as normally as possible (not labelled and separated) and to have their needs met within the mainstream as far as possible" (Donald *et al*. 1997: 236–237). The exclusion and segregating of SWDs from mainstream educational institutions due to their disability is seen as constituting unfair discrimination against this group (Sretenov 2017).

These achievements of the human rights approach, of calling into question the inadequacies of segregatory education, have resulted in few scholars subjecting this approach to scrutiny even though it has its own limitations. While advocates of this approach have called for countries to put human rights at the core of struggles for more inclusive policy and practice with respect to disability (MacArthur 2004), in practice this has failed to materialise. As Clifford (2011: 11 see also Hosking 2011) has argued, "although some progress has been made to introduce legal

safeguards to overcome discrimination against disabled people", discrimination and intolerance are still widespread against this group.

Globally, countries which have signed and ratified the UNCRPD endorse the human rights approach to disability inclusion and have grounded their national disability policies in the provisions of the UNCRPD. The focus of support for SWDs in HEIs has been on *academic* inclusion. HEIs, in most countries which are signatories of the UNCRPD, have witnessed a growing number of SWDs enrolling in these institutions (Baker *et al*. 2012). In part the increase in number of SWDs enrolled in HEIs in countries like the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), Canada, Australia, South Africa and India has been attributed to these countries enabling funding mechanisms which give deserving SWDs access to HE (Chiwandire & Vincent 2019). Despite notable successes in providing *access* to historically excluded SWDs, most HEIs, including those in South Africa, have and continue to fail when it comes to appropriately supporting the *retention and academic success* of these students (Chiwandire & Vincent 2019).

Studies of SWDs from both Global North and Global South HEIs have attributed these institutions' failures to the discrepancy between policy and practice—in other words, relatively sound policies which are not manifest day-to-day practices (Ryan 2011 see also Järkestig Berggren *et al*. 2016; Riddell 1998). This gap between policy and practice has resulted in SWDs facing persistent challenges on campuses even in countries with enabling interventions and policies in place (Mutanga & Walker 2015). Some argue that barriers to learning and poor educational outcomes encountered by SWDs at universities have negatively impacted these students' prospects of gaining equal opportunities to transition into the labour market (Fuller *et al*. 2004). SWDs from Global South countries are disproportionately affected by institutions that seem to pay attention only to the increase of number of SWDs and do not provide individual tailored support to enable their academic success (Kiyimba 1997). Global North countries such as Sweden, Australia and the US, which embarked on policy initiatives to include SWDs much earlier than their Global South counterparts, have established disability legislation that is backed by funding which they provide to HEIs on condition that these institutions enrol and support diverse SWDs. Failure to do so is met by legal consequences (Katsui 2009; OECD 2003;

Wolanin & Steele 2004). While these countries have done reasonably well with regard to addressing the educational needs of SWDs, social inclusion remains under emphasised and overlooked.

Inclusive education grounded in an individual human rights approach to disability inclusion, focuses on addressing the academic needs of SWDs in the regular classroom setting. Hall & Sandler (1982), for example, argue that the classroom climate should be as enabling as possible, especially for SWDs if this group is to also succeed academically. Likewise, Baker *et al*. (2012) argue that HEIs can achieve the academic success of SWDs if these institutions create a positive classroom climate. The emphasis is often on the educational institution's promotion of acceptance of difference (Bunch & Valeo 2004), and individual students' differences and difficulties being embraced in the classroom setting if these students' (including those with disabilities) rights are to be respected (Donald *et al*. 1997).

It is argued that the general classroom setting that provides such diversity, in the sense of heterogeneous mixing of SWDs and their non-disabled peers, is central in giving all students (including those with disabilities) equitable educational opportunities to succeed academically (Dupre 1997). To achieve this, it has been recommended that "the curriculum itself has to become flexible enough to accommodate individual differences at many other levels as well" (Donald *et al*. 1997: 236–237). The academic success of SWDs could also be facilitated by the provision of reasonable accommodations in class (Lombardi *et al*. 2011). In order to design and deliver a curriculum accessible to students with diverse disabilities lecturers should employ the concept of universal design for learning (UDL), which "involves planning and delivering programmes with the needs of all students in mind from the outset. It applies to all facets of education: from curriculum, assessment and pedagogy to classroom and school design" (Mitchell 2010: 13). Central to UDL is that "it helps in dismantling intersecting and compounding forms of ableist exclusions embedded in the curriculum" (Waitoller & Artiles 2013: 376).

The imperative of making the classroom climate as enabling as possible has seen numerous studies recommending the need for lecturers to employ inclusive teaching, learning and assessment strategies which are equally beneficial to students with diverse disabilities, if these students are to succeed academically on par with their non-disabled peers (Research Briefing 2008). Given that the academic success of SWDs has partly been associated with lecturers' positive attitudes and willingness to support SWDs in the classroom setting this has resulted in some studies investigating the experiences of lecturers in this regard (Wolman *et al*. 2004; Baker *et al*. 2012; Lombardi *et al*. 2011). A recurring finding is that lecturers feel "challenged to provide an atmosphere that is supportive and encourages academic success" (Baker *et al*. 2012: 309). Many lecturers, moreover, still hold preconceived stereotypes about SWDs which continue to be a barrier to the academic success of the latter (Baker *et al*. 2012).

A study by Lombardi *et al*. (2011) found that lecturers report feeling underprepared to provide reasonable accommodations to SWDs, thus requiring training on how to do so efficiently. There are examples of countries, such as Australia, where it has been made mandatory for HEIs to conduct awareness raising activities targeting lecturers in order to promote positive attitudes and train lecturers to deliver accessible curricula which enhance the learning process for SWDs (O'Connor *et al.* 1998). Coupled with sensitising lecturers on how to best support SWDs, HEIs have also been enjoined to facilitate the academic inclusion of SWDs by putting in place transitioning programmes aimed at helping SWDs to successfully negotiate the HE environment (Eckes & Ochoa 2005; Ontario Human Rights Commission 2016; Kochung 2014).

There is also a view that SWDs themselves ought to be the ones taking responsibility for their own inclusion if they are to succeed in HE. SWDs, for example, are expected to self-disclose their disability to their relevant university authorities in order for their institutions to take appropriate measures to support them academically (Kraglund-Gauthier *et al*. 2014). Disability disclosure is seen as beneficial to SWDs as this will make educators aware that there are SWDs in their classes who may require accommodations (Orr & Hammig 2009). It has also been argued that upon transitioning into HEIs SWDs need to acquire good self-advocacy skills as this will

enable them to self-advocate for their academic needs from their lecturers in the classroom setting (Kell 2012; Janiga & Costenbader 2002).

While some literature does mention the importance of HEIs also playing an important role in promoting the social inclusion of SWDs (Bradley *et al.* 2008), this has not, however, been a priority for these institutions in either Global North or Global South settings. The conventional understanding of inclusive education has assumed that the placement of SWDs alongside their non-disabled peers in the regular classroom will automatically result in friendship formation between both parties and thus social inclusion will flow inevitably from academic inclusion (Bunch & Valeo 2004; Downing & Eichinger 1996).

The focus in the literature on academic inclusion to date, as well as in its policy and practice, has meant that there is a significant gap in knowledge such that "social inclusion is becoming the direction of research and practice in the area of PWD[s] worldwide" (Van Kham 2018: 222). As defined by Kim *et al*. (2017: 20), "the concept of social inclusion includes anti-exclusion policies and practical strategies for opposing the pathologisation and suppression of people with disabilities". Social inclusion is about a person's sense of belonging within their community (Rimmerman 2013; Hall 2010a). This could be through being accepted by others in that community, having friends, being a part of rich social relationships and networks and sharing common interests, activities and experiences (New Brunswick Association for Community Living 2019).

Despite the obvious importance of social inclusion for the well-being and happiness of people, including PWDs, to date there is a paucity of literature exploring social inclusion. Those studies that do explore social inclusion in educational institutions have largely focused on the experiences of learners with disabilities in primary or secondary educational institutions (Place & Hodge 2001; Butler & Hodge 2004; Van Kham 2018). Findings from these studies have shown that learners with disabilities seldom engage in social interactions with their non-disabled peers, inclusive education notwithstanding (Hodge *et al*. 2017). Place & Hodge's (2001) study found

that SWDs shared feelings of exclusion and social isolation resulting from neglect and being seen as objects of curiosity by their classmates. Other studies on social inclusion (see , for instance, Butler & Hodge 2004; Hodge *et al*. 2004; Place & Hodge 2001) have found that interactions between SWDs and their non-disabled peers are limited, and often unidirectional — initiated and dominated by a SWD towards a peer (Sherrill 2004).

Rationale

The present study locates itself within the research on disability and HE globally, with specific attention on South African HEIs. In order to close the gap between access, retention and throughput rates in HEIs or to achieve what Belyakov *et al.* (2009: 1–3) have referred to as achieving "access with success" for SWDs, the literature on disability in South African HE, that has up to now, only focused attention on how these institutions could best support SWDs to succeed academically, must refocus on the aforementioned issues. Recent literature in South Africa shows how studies continue to take this conventional academic inclusion approach with many studies also focusing on the experiences of SWDs as well as those of lecturers. Mutanga's (2017) recent synthesis of published studies on the experiences of SWDs from 1994 to 2017 point out that SWDs are still facing numerous barriers hindering their access and successful academic participation at South African universities.

Thus, most recent South African studies continue to explore the experiences of SWDs from an academic inclusion standpoint (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013; Tugli *et al.* 2013b; Mutanga 2013; Mutanga & Walker 2015; Mutanga 2015; Lourens 2015; Mutanga 2017a; Mutanga & Walker 2017; Israel 2017; Chiwandire 2017). Findings from these studies are that some lecturers are unwilling to support SWDs in the classroom setting by adopting inclusive instructional strategies which are accessible to SWDs with diverse disabilities. In the words of McLean *et al*. (2003: 224), lecturers are hindering "a learning environment that addresses the marginalisation or isolation of students on the basis of difference".

South Africa's dominant academic inclusion approach is endorsed in the *White Paper 6,* which associates the academic success of SWDs with lecturers' ability to utilise enabling instructional teaching strategies and flexible curricula in mainstream classes accommodating SWDs (DoE 2001). Many studies sample South African lecturers to explore measures being taken to academically include SWDs (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015; Mutanga & Walker 2017; Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015; Mayat & Amosun 2011). South African studies have shown lecturers to be resistant to delivering a flexible and accessible curriculum when it comes to supporting the educational needs of SWDs in the classroom setting (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015; Howell 2005; Matshedisho 2007; Mutanga & Walker 2017; Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015; Howell 2006). Despite this violating the provisions of the *White Paper 6* and the Constitution, these lecturers' institutions have not held them accountable because "academic staff members within South African higher education institutions are allowed to choose whether they want to 'help' disabled students or not" (Matshedisho 2007: 689).

Although universities have committed themselves to approaching disability as a campus wide issue rather than being the sole province of disability resource providers (Evans *et al*. 2017), in the South African literature, educators have been portrayed as people without agency to independently take initiatives to support SWDs academically. Educators are often portrayed as being in need of constant training and support in order to learn how to best support SWDs in the classroom (Van Rooyen *et al*. 2004). DUSMs are then expected to conduct campus disability awareness activities on issues of teaching and learning with lecturers being their main target (Howell 2015; Hlalele & Alexander 2012; Department of Education Directorate: Inclusive Education 2005).

The broad assumption that is often made is that social inclusion will follow naturally from initiatives aimed at achieving academic inclusion. This is despite the fact that the assumption that the classroom environment is an enabler of friendship formation, between SWDs and their non-disabled peers, has been contested by some South African studies showing that SWDs feel marginalised by their non-disabled peers in these spaces (Swart & Greyling 2011; Matshedisho 2010; Chiwandire 2017). A couple of South African studies have shown how some lecturers

assume that SWDs cannot perform well academically compared to their non-disabled peers (Ndlovu & Walton 2016; Howell 2006). This is significant for social inclusion because, as Bunch & Valeo (2004: 62) have argued, "if a teacher, for instance, responds to a student with disability in a manner marking that student as different from typical students, typical students also would see the student as different. This would lead to lack of friendships and, perhaps, abusive behaviour" by non-disabled peers. This scenario highlights how "typical students learn their behaviour through observation and imitation of peers, and through reference to authority figures" (Bunch & Valeo 2004: 62).

Against this unfavourable background, the purpose of the present study is to explore measures which are being taken by South African universities to socially include SWDs by sampling Heads of Disability Units, DUSMs, SWDs and residence wardens, as key informants. By focusing specifically on social inclusion, the present study builds on recent research which indicates that supporting SWDs' academic inclusion needs alone is a narrow conceptualisation of the challenge of promoting inclusive, welcoming and just campus environments for all students (Geisthardt *et al*. 2002; Stoneman 1993). Just like anyone else, SWDs have lives outside the classroom setting. The focus on academic inclusion has limited our understanding of the experiences of SWDs. The aim of the present study is thus to contribute towards understanding how our approach at HEIs needs to change in order to facilitate the social inclusion of SWDs.

Conceptual Framing: *Ubuntu*

The millennium witnessed a burgeoning of literature pointing to deficiencies in the field of DS with criticisms being particularly directed at how this field is dominated by voices from the Global North at the expense of those from the Global South (Meekosha 2008; Meekosha 2011). When it comes to specifically understanding issues of disability and inclusion in HE, the Western individual human rights approach has informed a predominant focus on academic inclusion. Evans *et al*. (2017) have voiced their concerns about how some HEIs are currently failing to respect the rights of SWDs. The authors criticised these HEIs' erroneous conventional understanding and association of students' disabilities with deficiencies, limitations and

inabilities (Evans *et al*. 2017). Although the UNCRPD acknowledges the importance of social inclusion for SWDs in educational institutions, informed by the individual human rights standpoint, the emphasis has been on promoting the autonomy and freedom of PWDs to make their own choices (United Nations 2006). In this study, I suggest that HE policies and practices aimed at disability inclusion, which are informed by some Western individualist ontology, are limited in what they can achieve — and that a paradigm shift in our understanding is required in order to provide a new basis for building ethical practices and social relations on our campuses. I proffer the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and its core principles as a useful alternative starting point (Chataika *et al*. 2015; Mutswanga & Chataika 2016; Mji *et al*. 2009; Mji *et al*. 2011).

It is hoped that by utilising *Ubuntu* as the theoretical lens for this study, it may provide an alternative to the current dominant human rights model informing disability inclusion and will yield new insights into our understanding of how South African HEIs can approach the social inclusion of SWDs. Mugumbate & Nyanguru (2013: 88) argue that "the social ethic of *Ubuntu* has been Africa's largest contribution to the world". Yet its precepts have not been widely utilised to inform how we might go about dismantling unjust institutional policies and practices and build new institutional cultures, informed by different values, norms and assumptions.

Seen through the lens of *Ubuntu* values, for example the obligation to treat all visitors, including strangers, with unconditional African hospitality that makes them feel welcome (Mbiti 1991; Oppenheim 2012; Mbigi 1997), it becomes clear that South African campuses are failing to create enabling, welcoming institutional cultures in multiple ways. Thinking of the social inclusion of SWDs from the perspective of *Ubuntu* means taking the view that what is morally good is "that what brings dignity, respect, contentment, and prosperity to others, self, and the community at large" (Cornell & Van Marle 2015: 2–3). *Ubuntu* ethics thus offer a series of guiding principles for how people should behave towards others and how to become human within a collective community which values interdependence (Van der Merwe 1996). The aim of the present thesis is to explore the implications of this moral standpoint for thinking about disability inclusion in South African HEIs.

Research procedures

Over two decades ago, Llewellyn (1995: 108) called upon disability researchers to move away from quantitative methods like surveys to qualitative methods of inquiry like face-to-face interviews if they are to effectively "explore the personal experience of disability". Qualitative research is able to ground its findings in PWDs' experiences and views (Kiernan 1999). Proponents of inclusive education have argued that "qualitative research can access the perspectives and experiences of oppressed groups lacking the power to make their voices heard through traditional academic discourse" (Nind 2008: 5). Central to qualitative research, as observed by Domegan & Fleming (2007: 24), is that it aims to "explore and to discover issues about the problem on hand, because very little is known about the problem".

Although a number of studies have explored the experiences of SWDs on South African campuses, and have reported that these participants are often highly appreciative of the role played by Disability Units (Matshedisho 2010; FOTIM 2011), few existing studies, if any, have focused on the views and experiences of DUSMs — despite the centrality of these bodies with respect to the promotion of disability inclusion.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an overview and the background of the study and how it aims to add new knowledge to the field of DS, with specific reference to disability in the South African HE context. In addition to that I also discuss the rationale, methods and theoretical framing employed in the study – all of which aim to fill the gap within the current literature on disability at South African universities.

Chapter 2: Framing the social inclusion of SWDs in HE

This literature review chapter aims to broaden understanding of global issues of social inclusion for SWDs in HE by highlighting how the academic inclusion-oriented approach has been, and continues to be, the dominant approach to providing for the needs of SWDs in HEIs, including those in South Africa. Firstly, the chapter begins by showing how, on an international level, the educational provision for SWDs in most HEIs mainly reinforces the dominant academically-oriented inclusion approach. This is evidenced by the literature from Global North/Global South countries' historical and current efforts of achieving inclusive education for SWDs. The chapter then moves to funnelling down these debates to the South African HE context by discussing this country's national disability framework, as well HEIs' institutional disability policies and practices that also uphold the dominant academically-oriented inclusion approach. This will be elaborated on by a discussion on how the six "pillars of support for inclusive education" play a role in supporting the learning needs of SWDs. This is followed by a discussion on how most of the South African studies endorsing the academic inclusion approach have mainly explored the experiences of SWDs and lecturers, with few of this these studies focusing on the lived experience of DUSMs. Against this background, the chapter concludes by raising concerns about the continual dearth of studies exploring the experiences of DUSMs, specifically on issues related to the social inclusion needs of SWDs in South African HEIs, and then subsequently

provides a rationale as to why this gap in the literature ought to be addressed by exploring the perspectives of DUSMs.

Chapter 3: The social inclusion of SWDs in South African HE

This chapter is divided into two major sections. In the first section, I begin by discussing the South African HE context with particular attention paid to the country's developments in moving from segregated special education to an inclusive education approach that prioritises supporting SWDs using the dominant academic inclusion approach at the cost of social inclusion. I then argue the need for South African HEIs to also focus on finding ways of meeting the social needs of SWDs, as recommended in the country's millennium HE social inclusion policy framework. The second section provides a deeper understanding of what is meant by social inclusion, specifically in the South African HE context. I begin by defining the concept of social inclusion by drawing on South African disability policies. I also show how recent South African disability policies are urging HEIs to move away from supporting SWDs only from a conventional academic inclusion approach in the regular classroom setting, to also prioritising the social inclusion through all aspects of university life. In addition, I also draw on South African literature about the experiences of SWDs, in which some SWDs have discussed issues of social inclusion. I then discuss the findings of these studies of SWDs, which predominantly reveal that the social inclusion of this group in South Africa could be facilitated through the provision of various opportunities and services by their HEIs. These may include the provision of co-curricular or extracurricular activities; inclusive campus residence culture, as well as the physical comfortability and accessibility of residence buildings; opportunities for reciprocal friendships and social interaction; the role of DUSMs in providing social inclusion-oriented services; issues of campus student engagement, specifically disability activism; and the provision of campus health promotion initiatives and services. Lastly, in my concluding remarks, I discuss the rationale for the present thesis, specifically how it can fill the gap in the literature on DS in South Africa and also generate findings that can add new knowledge to current debates on the inclusion of SWDs in South African HEIs.

Chapter 4: Conceptual Framing: Ubuntu

In this chapter an in-depth discussion on *Ubuntu* is provided with particular attention paid to how *Ubuntu* is theorised by numerous scholars in Africa and particularly those from South Africa. In addition to that I provide a detailed discussion on how this thesis advocates for *Ubuntu* as an alternative framework to the Western individualist human rights approach as the former emphasises the viewing of every individual (including PWDs in this case) as a "whole person". Hence, I explain how *Ubuntu*'s holistic conceptualisation of a human being as a "whole person", who is important to society, is used as an interpretive lens in the study.

Chapter 5: Methodology

In this chapter, I provide a step-by-step account of the research process, the knowledge paradigm within which the work is rooted, the data-collection process, the data-analysis process, and how the theoretical lens employed influenced the development of thematic constructs to interpret the data.

Chapter 6: Communalism

In this chapter, issues of friendship formation and sustenance between SWDs and their non-disabled peers on South African campuses are discussed in light of the *Ubuntu* value of communalism, with particular emphasis on how friendships which are not grounded in *Ubuntu* lead to discrimination against SWDs by their non-disabled peers. Central to this chapter's argument is challenging the current conventional view by proponents of inclusive education, in South Africa and elsewhere, which associate the placement and educating of SWDs and their non-disabled peers in the same regular classroom setting as automatically resulting in friendship formation, a view that has been disconfirmed by the findings of the present study. I argue that my participants, especially Heads of Disability Units and DUSMs are blaming only SWDs for being the ones who are the barrier to the formation and sustenance of reciprocal friendships with their non-disabled peers as the former (especially SWDs with special schools educational backgrounds) are being negatively constructed as being shy, emotional, lacking good social and

self-advocacy skills, not taking the responsibility to disclose their disability, as well as not initiating friendships with their non-disabled peers. I also argue that contrary to what many DUSMs assume, non-disabled students are the ones who are the barrier to friendship formation and sustenance with SWDs, because the former are distancing themselves from the latter despite the latter trying to reach out to the former to make friendships. I show how some non-disabled students are discriminating against SWDs by resisting making friends with SWDs as non-disabled students do not want to do groupwork/assignments with SWDs, as well as how non-disabled students react with fear in their encounters with SWDs. These reactions are contrary to reciprocal social relationships and friendships grounded in *Ubuntu*'s value of solidarity. DUSMs who approach friendship formation from the standpoint of Western individualism have normalised these discriminatory friendships by invoking such autonomy-oriented concepts as interpersonal chemistry as central in determining friendship formation. I argue that such an erroneous reasoning is biased towards non-disabled students who are easily getting away with constantly discriminating against their SWDs peers both inside and outside the regular classroom setting, thus violating both the concepts of inclusive education and social inclusion. I conclude by recommending that Western individualist systems should embrace the values of *Ubuntu* if South African HEIs are to be fully inclusive of the needs of students with diverse disabilities. In order to achieve this in practice, DUSMs can largely adopt the values of *Ubuntu* that are constructive and progressive as well as utilise Western values that are positive and/or align with the concepts of *Ubuntu*. In particular, I call for DUSMs to embrace *Ubuntu*'s communalist values in the conceptualising of friendship formation and sustenance, if this group is to create an enabling environment where the social inclusion needs of SWDs are to be met. Hence, it is hoped that this can potentially avoid a situation whereby DUSMs and non-disabled students distort the experiences of SWDs.

Chapter 7: Human Dignity, Respect and Acceptance

Rooted in *Ubuntu*'s values of human dignity, mutual respect and acceptance, this chapter asks what makes SWDs feel disrespected and/or accepted and welcomed on South African campuses. Against this background, I argue how *Ubuntu*'s conceptualisation of human dignity is totally different to the Western individualist conventional Kantian understanding of human dignity,

which is grounded in the concept of autonomy, an approach that has infiltrated South Africa's human rights approach to disability inclusion. In critique of Kantianism, I rather argue in favour of *Ubuntu*'s human dignity which is afforded to members who respect their community values and who are able to make reciprocal and mutual friendships with their fellow members. On this basis, we would be in a position to challenge ableist world views, assumptions and practices. Drawing on my findings I argue how the failure to embrace *Ubuntu* values on the part of the university's non-disabled community, particularly those in leadership positions, is forcing SWDs to "fit into" an oppressive and ableist university environment. This oppression has manifested itself in different unfair practices such as inadequate or inaccessible toilet facilities, non-inclusive signage and non-disabled people's reactions, such as pity and fear, towards SWDs. I also discuss how non-disabled university community members construct SWDs as dependent, how the former use demeaning language and disempowering terminologies in their social interactions with SWDs, the lack of collective responsibility on the part of the leadership of universities, particularly the management personnel's reluctance to financially invest in making the built environment accessible. I conclude this chapter by recommending the need for those occupying positions of leadership on South African campuses to move away from addressing issues of disability inclusion from a narrow Western Kantian individualistic framework and towards the conceptualisation of human dignity based on *Ubuntu*'s values of mutual respect and acceptance if they are to create enabling campus environments where SWDs are also equally able to live dignified lives.

Chapter 8: Hospitality

Participants spoke at length about campus residence life. *Ubuntu* gives prominence to the value of hospitality, a value which leaders in African traditional societies had an obligation to uphold, if they were to promote fair practices, especially when addressing the daily needs of the minority disadvantaged members of the society, including strangers. In this chapter, I am interested in whether or not residence life on South African campuses could be regarded as hospitable to SWDs. Drawing on my findings, I argue that most residences (and other spaces in general) on South African campuses are still lagging behind in providing a hospitable life, especially for SWDs who are Deaf, blind and those with physical disabilities. I cite such discriminatory

practices as the lack of appropriately adapted transport, inaccessible sport infrastructure, lack of professional sport human resources, especially coaches, and the lack of other basic services such as shops and entertainment, as the main barriers to the social inclusion of SWDs on these campuses. Inaccessible residence buildings force SWDs to "fit into" an oppressive inaccessible built environment which poses safety threats especially to blind and Deaf students. While DUSMs should be intervening to resolve these challenges, they suffer from "status subordination" (Fraser 2003) – unequal power relations biased towards the management who seem to be independently influential in institutional structures' decision-making processes dealing with issues of disability. This is the reason DUSMs are seen as failing to fight for the rights of SWDs, and instead are viewed as advancing the management personnel's oppressive practices which further marginalise and exclude SWDs. I conclude this chapter by recommending the need for the management personnel and DUSMs to work collaboratively, guided by *Ubuntu*'s value of African hospitality and to use their influence for the benefit of creating hospitable campus environments where SWDs can equally flourish and reach their full potential.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This chapter wraps up the thesis' argument, which I proposed in the research design, in an attempt to fill the under researched gap in the South African literature. This gap in the literature involves the relegation of the issues of the social inclusion of SWDs on campuses to the margins of policy and research endeavours. The chapter presents a summary of the conclusions I reach based on my findings regarding the measures that my participants are taking to socially include SWDs. I distil here how the various representations in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 contribute towards understanding and interpreting the meaning of the social inclusion experiences of students with diverse disabilities on South African campuses as provided by my participants. Throughout this concluding chapter, I revisited the *Ubuntu* values of communalism, hospitality and human dignity, which I discussed in the conceptual framework chapter, in order to critically examine whether or not they were promoted in the sampled South African universities. Furthermore, where these *Ubuntu* values were not promoted, I provided recommendations on how these values could best be operationalised.

Summary

This thesis describes and interprets data from my participants regarding the question of the social inclusion of SWDs on South African campuses. Steered by thematic analysis and having first analysed the data inductively and then deductively, guided by *Ubuntu*'s values of communalism, human dignity and hospitality, I yielded these three major themes which I have presented in this thesis' analysis chapters. Central to these three major themes is that they provide the interpretive lens through which my participants' narratives are critically analysed to describe and understand whether or not South African campuses could be regarded as enablers or disablers of the social inclusion of SWDs. Looking at my participants' data using the *Ubuntu* lens, I show how this helped me to unearth indirect and subtle discriminations against SWDs by South African HEIs on the grounds of disability and their minority identity. I then show how this unfavourable situation indicates how my participants also deployed and reinforced the Western individualistic human rights approach, which only focuses on the academic inclusion of SWDs, and thus, failing to treat the "whole person" according to *Ubuntu* values, neglects the social inclusion of this group. The thesis concludes by enjoining those in leadership positions, particularly DUSMs and university management, as well as non-disabled students to embrace the values of *Ubuntu,* if they are to relate to SWDs with respect and dignity and thus create a conducive environment for the latter's social needs to be fully addressed as "whole people" with equal membership status in South African campuses' daily life.

The dominant finding of this study is that the non-disabled university community, particularly the management, non-disabled students and some DUSMs, is the barrier to the social inclusion of SWDs as they expect the latter to "fit into" an oppressive unchanged ableist HE environment. The study concludes by recommending that the university's non-disabled community relates to SWDs with respect and dignity despite the latter's occupation of the position, in non-disabled dominated institutions, as strangers and minorities. At the heart of *Ubuntu* is respect for a diversity of what it means to be human regardless of one's social position in a society (Eze 2008).

Chapter 2: Framing the social inclusion of SWDs in HE

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to introduce the literature necessary for one to develop an in-depth understanding of issues of social inclusion for SWDs in HE internationally as well as in South Africa. Firstly, I begin by discussing the Global North/Global South divide and the challenges and opportunities countries within these conceptual frameworks are facing in providing meaningful inclusive education to their SWDs. Secondly, I provide a detailed context that traces the various historical approaches towards the inclusion of SWDs, illustrating how the human rights model is currently a dominant approach adopted by many HEIs as a response to the needs of SWDs. This will be followed by a discussion of the dominant models of disability, and the impact of these models in the educational provision of SWDs in HEIs. Thirdly, a discussion of the dominant academically-oriented inclusion approach to the provision of education for SWDs internationally is presented. Through unpacking what Loreman (2007: 22) has referred to as the six "pillars of support for inclusive education", I show how South African national disability policies, as well as most of its HEIs policies and institutional practices, also endorse this dominant academic inclusion approach. Fourthly, I show how disability in HE research in South Africa endorses the academic inclusion approach, as is evident from most of the available literature that addresses measures which need to be taken by SWDs, lecturers and HEIs if they are to create an enabling environment for the academic success of SWDs. Lastly, I show how the voices of DUSMs are largely absent from this literature, with the little research that does utilise the voices of these personnel only focusing on how they support SWDs from an academic inclusion standpoint. I highlight that this stems from the fact that previous studies have focused on how HEIs can achieve the academic success of SWDs, documenting the experiences of SWDs and lecturers regarding academic inclusion of SWDs. I then conclude this chapter by showing how the present study is aimed at addressing the absence of literature both on the social inclusion of SWDs, and the perspectives of DUSMs.

Global North versus Global South countries' record regarding the inclusion of SWDs in HEIs

Global North countries are those often referred to as having initiated the facilitation of the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream education and the labour market much earlier than their Global South counterparts (Pillai 2012). Such countries include Australia (Australian Commonwealth 1992); the Netherlands (Belyakov *et al*. 2009); the US (Dupoux *et al*. 2005; Vogel *et al*. 2006); Canada; and the UK (Drewett 1999). Fuller *et al*. (2004) note that all these countries have legislation concerning the integration of SWDs into HE and supporting the rights of enrolled SWDs. Central to these countries' anti-discrimination legislation (A-DL) legislation is that they make "it unlawful to exclude people [with disabilities] from universities on the grounds of disability" (MacLean & Gannon 1997: 217). One of the reasons why these Global North countries currently have well established A-DLs is because they began initiatives to support SWDs in HEIs as early as the mid-1970s (Graham 2015), whereas Global South countries, such as India and South Africa, started to introduce such initiatives in the 1990s. As a result, most of these Global North countries have well-established national policies, funding mechanisms and incentive schemes aimed at facilitating the inclusion of PWDs in HE (Pillai 2012: 15-16). Global North countries have thus made significant strides in supporting SWDs not only in HE, but in primary and secondary educational settings as well. European Union "institutions have supported the modernisation of higher education among Member States and encouraged greater cooperation since the late 1990s with the integration to the Bologna Process" (McGrath *et al*. 2014: 9). Most Global North "countries' involvement in the Bologna Process has positively resulted in these countries taking numerous initiatives to increase access" to HE for students including those with disabilities (Belyakov *et al*. 2009: 1).

All the Global North countries mentioned above are member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), originally "founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade" (Naaz 2012: 27). According to Naaz (2012: 27), "the OECD defines itself as a forum of countries committed to democracy and the market economy, providing a setting to compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify

good practices, and co-ordinate domestic and international policies". OECD member states have in recent years committed themselves to advancing inclusive education for SWDs (Fisher *et al.* 2002).

Eleweke & Rodda (2002: 118) attribute the effective implementation of inclusive programmes in many Global North countries to laws which make such practices mandatory — "ensur[ing] that the required services will be provided and that a basis for quality control (that is, monitoring) will be ensured […] [through their] consequential effect (that is, punishment) for non-compliance". Commenting on the importance of these mandatory policies and laws, Fuller *et al*. (2004: 305-306), for instance, contend that the passage of A-DL in the UK resulted in disability issues "now appearing not only in institutional teaching and learning policies, but also, more importantly, in discussions at department and course levels".

Unlike Global North countries, Global South countries seem to be struggling to provide equal educational opportunities to SWDs in HEIs with a lack of adequate financial resources often cited as a major obstacle to the implementation of meaningful inclusion for SWDs (Eleweke & Rodda 2002). Where inclusive education programmes are designed in these Global South countries, they often fail to materialise because of a lack of financial support (Eleweke 1998). Yang & McCall's (2014: 28 see also Mariga *et al.* 2014) study, for example, found that "policies might not be well implemented and evaluated in developing and least developed countries due to a lack of the necessary economic infrastructure and the absence of carefully designed programmes". In some cases, like Botswana, for instance, countries have not yet ratified the UNCRPD (Moloi 2019). Where non-discriminatory disability policies exist, implementation is often "limited and slow" (Shrivastava & Shrivastava 2014: 810).

Context: Global Approaches to the inclusion of SWDs in HE

Globally, to date, there are no exact statistics of PWDs, thus most of the available statistics are based on estimations. In 2002, Quinn *et al*. (2002: 11) estimated there to be more than 600

million PWDs in developed and developing countries around the world, and further argued that this population experiences extreme forms of discrimination and social exclusion because of their disabilities and high levels of poverty in their communities. The available statistics further shows that there are more PWDs in countries in the Global South (particularly African countries) in comparison to countries in the Global North. As indicated by the 2011 *World Report on Disability,* "more than one billion people in the world [are estimated to] live with some form of disability, of whom nearly 200 million experience considerable difficulties in functioning", with the majority of PWDs living in countries in the Global South (WHO & the World Bank 2011: xi).

For Meekosha (2008), this wide discrepancy of statistics in the Global North and Global South should on its own be a justification as to why DS should take the experiences of PWDs in the Global South as a starting point. Meekosha (2008: 2) argues that one of the ways of doing DS better is to recognise "the majority World/Global South and including the 400 million disabled people that live in these regions in our thinking, our practice and our politics". In agreement with Meekosha's argument, Grech (2012: 52) also calls into question the fact that in spite of estimations that "around 80 per cent of the planet's 650 million disabled people are located in the so-called Global South…disability studies [nevertheless] remain profoundly [centred on the] West European and North American (WENA) [countries] and focuse[s] exclusively on urban post-industrialist settings".

Historical educational provision for SWDs: from segregated special schools to inclusive education

Segregated special schools

Following Cara's (2013: 93-94) definition, special schools are primary or secondary schools which provide tailored support for students with severe difficulties, including physical, mental, "social, emotional and behavioural difficulties". Historically, children with disabilities were educated in segregated special schools where they were denied any physical classroom contact

with their non-disabled peers (Parmenter 2008 see also Osgood 2005). This form of segregated education occurs when SWDs learn in completely separate classrooms from their non-disabled peers (Kohama 2012: 2). Often, especially in "developing countries, segregated education takes place in the form of special schools created specifically for the education of students with disabilities" (Kohama 2012: 2). Rather than being taught the same mainstream curriculum as their non-disabled peers, learners with disabilities in these segregated special schools were often taught a completely different as well as inferior curriculum, and different methods of testing were employed. This inferior curriculum often resulted in learners having poorer educational outcomes which did not meet university entry requirements. This further denied them equal opportunities to access the mainstream labour market in comparison to their peers educated in mainstream schools (Lipsky & Gartner 1992).

Inclusion/inclusive education

The concept of inclusion or inclusive education emerged in the 1990s in response to avoiding the negative impact of integration, and it is for this reason that Farrell (2001: 7) sees the concept of inclusive education as a "true integration" through ensuring that children with disabilities can belong and learn together in the general classroom setting. For Thomas (2013), the concept of inclusive education has emerged as a reaction to its opposite, namely special education. According to Allan (2010), the paradigm of segregated special education was criticised in the 1980s, particularly its fixation on individual deficits and remedies, rather than the oppressive social environment.

Hence, inclusive education seeks to remove the distinction between special and regular education completely as a way of providing appropriate education for all students regardless of their level of disability (Konza 2008). Inclusive education involves a complete restructuring of the educational system, with particular attention being paid to the provision of appropriate curricula accessible to all students irrespective of their disability type in order for their diverse learning needs to be met (Konza 2008). In other words, inclusive education is achieved when more SWDs are studying side by side in mainstream educational institutions with their non-disabled peers,

and when SWDs have an equal opportunity to succeed, and their particular educational needs are met fully (Mukhopadhyay *et al*. 2012).

Under inclusive education, all mainstream educational institutions have an obligation to provide the assistance of appropriate support if these institutions are to ensure learners with disabilities are to learn effectively alongside peers of the same age (Pivik *et al*. 2002; Prinsloo 2001). Very often, this support comes in the form of specialised adjustments, such as large print or Braille materials (Konza 2008), sign language interpreters, note-takers, and the provision of assistive devices, among other things. With all this support, SWDs, even those with severe disabilities, could have some level of success both socially and academically in mainstream settings. Regular classrooms will subsequently no longer be an obstacle for SWDs (Shore 2016). It is further important that for educational institutions to be inclusive, relevant stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and non-disabled students should hold positive attitudes towards SWDs (Kohama 2012).

Inclusive education, human rights and social justice

Central to inclusive education is the manner in which it emphasises the enjoining of educational institutions as to focus more on increasing the participation and educational attainment of SWDs against the backdrop of this group's historical marginalisation (Wolanin & Steele 2004), all of which is evident from the segregated special schools era. This historical exclusion from opportunities to be educated alongside their non-disabled peers, particularly the denial of access to the general education curriculum (Artiles *et al*. 2006), resulted in calls for inclusive education as an appropriate means to achieve social justice for SWDs (Artiles *et al*. 2006 see also Liasidou 2014; Konza 2008). For some commentators this could be achieved through maximising the participation of SWDs in the curriculum (Rizvi & Lingard 1996). Treating disability as a matter of social justice enables educational institutions to dismantle social barriers which hinder the full participation of SWDs effectively, rather than blame the individual with an impairment (Burchardt 2004) for being unable to succeed in an unaltered mainstream environment.

The right to inclusive education is also protected by international human rights instruments like the UNCRPD. Following the entry into force of the UNCRPD, disability increasingly came to be understood as a human rights issue (WHO & the World Bank 2011). This subsequently resulted in the international community urging states to implement supportive inclusive education policies geared towards increasing the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream settings (de Beco 2018). Given this centrality of inclusive education legislative policies, as noted by the WHO, it follows that HEIs have a moral obligation to respect this right by providing quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches the lives of SWDs (WHO 2011 see also Subrahmanian 2003). Article 24 of the UNCRPD thus promotes the concept of equal participation, as it underlines the importance of inclusive education as a means of enabling disabled people "to participate effectively in a free society" (United Nations 2006: 16). In addition to that, the UNCRPD was "designed within an international law context and sets out the duty of nation states to protect disabled people's human rights. It is said to be legally binding on any country that ratifies it" (Barnes 2012: 9).

Historical background of dominant Models of Disability (ICF)

In the DS discipline, there are four dominant models of disability and these include the medical model of disability; the social model of disability; the ICF and the human rights approach (or human rights model). Central to most of these models is that they have historically influenced the formulation and implementation of educational policies and legislation at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Against this background, the purpose of the subsequent sections is to define each of these models, discuss their advantages and disadvantages and finally discuss their application, and policy implications, in addressing issues of disability inclusion in the South African HE context.

Medical Model of Disability

The medical model of disability originated long before the 1950s as the dominant approach used by philanthropic, charitable institutions and Christian missionaries to address the welfare of PWDs, particularly blind or Deaf children in both developed and underdeveloped countries (Giffard-Lindsay 2007). The medical model of disability defines disability from a scientific perspective as a physical and medically diagnosed deficit, which, according to Oliver (1999: 4), is seen as "an individual problem requiring medical treatment". This was done in order to normalise people with disabilities (Singal 2005). As argued by Kumar *et al.* (2012), the medical model of disability has informed policymaking under the aegis of the welfare state. According to Singal (2005), this has taken the form of the individualisation of disability as a personal, inherent problem of mind and body, thus reinforcing the image of one's disability as a problem that needed to be diagnosed and cured so that that person could be more "normal". This has been criticised by Singal (2005: 16), as it resulted in "charity and welfare-focused support by providing aids and appliances (e.g., wheelchairs or hearing aids) to assist those with disabilities to be 'normalised'".

The medical model of disability has been criticised for historically privileging medical personnel's views as they were responsible for diagnosing PWDs, and then passing judgement accordingly. They often recommended the referral of PWDs to mental institutions. When this model of disability held sway, medical personnel were regarded as the best advisors to national governments on how to address the welfare of PWDs (Philpott & McLaren 1997). Commenting on the historical influence of medical personnel, Llewellyn & Hogan (2000: 158) have argued that, "in the past[,] the problems arising from the care of children with physical disabilities have been the province of medicine, to be treated by professionals with a medical training". The credit given to medical personnel and therapists under the medical model of disability stemmed from the fact that they were "regarded as the 'experts', who 'know best' the needs of adults and children with disabilities, and therefore ha[d] the power to make decisions on their behalf" (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012: 20). Through focusing narrowly only on individual impairments as requiring a remedy of curative strategies, the medical model of disability

approach "ignores the fact that disability experience is socially produced or erected by the disabling society in which we live" (Chard & Couch 1998: 606).

Oliver (1990) has moreover criticised medical personnel for historically perpetuating professional domination of the manner in which disability, together with appropriate social responses to disability. Under the medical model of disability, this professional domination took the form of the application of medical personnel's recommendations through "state interventions aimed to provide treatment in order to 'cure' the disability" (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012: 20: 20). This is because governments endorsed the medical personnel's suggestions at face value, which, for Oliver (1990), has little relevance to contemporary society and the struggle of PWDs against institutional and attitudinal barriers. As Oliver (1990: 3) argues, "doctors are trained to diagnose, treat and cure illnesses, not to alleviate social conditions or circumstances". On the contrary, the social conditions and circumstances of PWDs can only be alleviated by "the rest of society['s]"[1] (Finkelstein 1980: 47) response through holding positive attitudes towards PWDs.

It is this influential medical discourse which resulted in little to no efforts or attention being paid to changing the environment's "external influences such as societal attitudes" (Giffard-Lindsay 2007: 2). This was done in favour of constantly "fixing" the individual with a disability (Hahn 1988). Curative or rehabilitative strategies were employed with the aim of changing the individual to fit societal expectations and the environment which was considered to be "neutral" (Burchardt 2004 see also Office of the Deputy President 1997).

The medical model of disability was influential in the approach taken by educational institutions to SWDs and formed the underlying rationale for the "special schools" approach described earlier. According to Du Toit (1997: 14), historically, the education of learners with disabilities was largely influenced by the medical profession in the form of "the clinical, medical, individual or healing (curative) approach" to specialised education. Drawing on the ideas of the medical

1 This stems primarily from Finkelstein's (1980: 47) definition of disability as "[…] the outcome of an oppressive relationship between people with impairments and the rest of society".

model of disability, many states formally legislated the educating of PWDs and non-disabled persons in separate educational institutions, with the former in special schools[2] and the latter in mainstream schools. This was considered the most effective way of delivering education. As Clough & Corbett (2000) have argued, the medical model of disability took root in the 1950s where it began to reflect itself in the psycho-medical dominance of segregated education for children with disabilities.

A pervasive reluctance on the part of many developing countries' governments and the general population to put disability issues on their public policy agendas or educate children with disabilities existed (Rao 2008 see also Fidzani & Mthombeni 2009). This resulted in neo-colonialists, development agencies and mainly Christian missionaries transporting the medical model of disability approach to these settings (Giffard-Lindsay 2007 see also Mukhopadhyay & Musengi 2012). In Botswana, for instance, the missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church established the first school for children with disabilities in 1969 which catered mainly for learners with visual disabilities, and in the 1970s more specialised schools were also developed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Fidzani & Mthombeni 2009 see also Obuye 2014). The same holds true for colonial Zimbabwe (or then Southern Rhodesia), until it changed in 1980 with political independence through the development of a policy of integrated provision for most children with special needs by the newly elected Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) government (Musengi & Mudyahoto 2010).

In the context of apartheid South Africa (as in other African countries), religious groups and NGOs were the first to establish special schools "specifically for children with sensory impairments (i.e. blindness and/or Deafness)" (see, for instance, Fagin 2011: 7). In 1948, the National Party government statutorily provided for specialised education through the passage of the "Special Schools Act [SSA] which catered strictly for the minority white population" (Fagin 2011: 7). Unlike learners of other ethnicities, education for white pupils was compulsory (Asmal & James 2001). Under the SSA, the education of black learners "remained low on the priority list

2 It is "the specially designed instruction provided by the school district or other local education agency that meets the unique needs of students identified as disabled" (Shannon 2004: 5).

of the apartheid government" (Fagin 2011: 15). This took the form of unequal service provision to black and white children (Gwalla-Ogisi *et al.* 1998). Special schools for white learners with disabilities were furthermore well-funded and well-resourced, whereas support services for learners with disabilities who attended black special schools were uncommon (DoE 2001; Lomofsky & Lazarus 2001). This further made it difficult for learners with disabilities to access HEIs: "students with disabilities who found themselves admitted to higher educational institutions had to find ways to adapt or the harshness of the system would soon push them out" (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013: 150).

By categorising and separating children with disabilities in terms of both race and disability (Muthukrishna & Schoeman 2000), South Africa's specialised educational system was clearly distinguished from those of other African countries. South Africa's specialised educational system resembled that of the US, which similarly highly racialised with white and black learners being educated in separate special schools' settings (Lomofsky & Lazarus 2001; Klingner *et al.* 2005; Ferguson 2008).

By "providing limited instruction in mathematics and science" (Asmal & James 2001: 186), South Africa's specialised education system was not geared towards equality of outcome in the sense of producing learners with disabilities who could qualify to enrol in post-secondary educational institutions, particularly universities. The dominant mainstream secondary education system consisted mainly of a limited number of special schools or special classes which catered particularly for black learners with special educational needs (DoE 1998). In the US, despite the fact that many states' educational systems paid little attention to supporting SWDs both from a policy and practice standpoint, some SWDs were however able to complete their secondary education with good grades which qualified them to meet the academic entry points requirements of HEIs, and subsequently become enrolled. However, for some this did little good as they were denied entry into HEIs which were still considered a privilege only for non-disabled learners. Elaborating on this, Kamalam *al.* (2004: 332) have pointed out that in the US, "prior to the 1970s, many students with disabilities were denied admission to colleges and universities". Fonosch (1980), for instance, cited a 1974 survey of 1000 four-year institutions which found that

18% rejected blind applicants, 27% rejected applicants in wheelchairs, and 22% rejected Deaf applicants.

Further, the traditional application of the medical model of disability approach by educational institutions also made equal participation impossible for those SWDs who happened to have successfully enrolled in these institutions by lessening their chances of succeeding academically. Among other reasons for this was that these institutions had a disability-unfriendly built environment. The reluctance on the part of traditional educational institutions to make their built environment accessible was justified by placing the onus "on individual students to fit in to the university regime with little reciprocal adjustment [on the part of the institution" (Riddell 1998: 213).

Advantages of the medical model of disability

Mutanga (2019: 1) argues that most of what we know about the medical model of disability stems predominantly from how it has been interpreted by its critics, especially advocates of the SMoD who mostly "see it as a negative medical intervention". He further argues that, at times, this has had negative repercussions, including "misleading and dangerous conclusions about this model" (Mutanga 2019: 1). Against this background, Mutanga (2019: 1) then cautions that "while many disability activists have fought the dominance of medical interventions into disability, this does not translate into an absolute rejection of any medical intervention when appropriate".

The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) has confirmed support for medical intervention, and this is evident when it notes that "our Union rejects entirely any idea of medical or other experts having the right to tell us how we should live, or withholding information from us, or taking decisions behind our backs" (UPIAS 1976: 5). This, for Mutanga (2019: 1), shows how "ethical medical conduct is important as being healthy has enormous influence on people's lives". To support this view, Mutanga (2019: 1) continues to give an

example of how “modern cataract surgeries have restored vision lost to cataracts for many people (the work of the Christian Blind mission in Ethiopia for instance, with the LSHTM)”. Oliver (1996) also adds that some illnesses might have far reaching disabling consequences if not attended to with medical intervention for purposes of reducing or minimising further disabilities. In this regard Oliver (1996: 33) acknowledges that “doctors can have a role to play in the lives of disabled people: stabilising their initial condition, treating any illnesses which may arise and which may or may not be disability related”. Similarly, given that the pain experienced by some PWDs might be relieved by medical intervention, Mutanga (2019: 2) cautions that “without some medical standards and norms of health, we risk failing to address destructive but correctable states of poor health”. In applying the advantages of the medical model of disability to the South African HE context, Mutanga (2019: 2) suggests that South African universities should acknowledge that PWDs, including SWDs, “have a right to live as other humans and this include[s] the right to be healthy” while pursuing their studies. These universities should therefore take proactive measures to ensure such rights are respected and promoted especially by campus healthcare providers.

Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability was first put forth in the UK in a 1976 statement by the UPIAS (1976). According to Reindal (2008), the social model of disability was later discussed in detail in the 1980s by key disability activists and DS scholars themselves, many of whom have a disability or an “impairment” as depending on the terminology preferred. These include people like Vic Finkelstein, Mike Oliver, Len Barton, Paul Abberley, Jenny Morris and Colin Barnes (who does not have a disability) (Reindal 2008 see also Lang 2001). In contributing to disability activism and scholarship, these important individuals, for the most part, drew heavily on their personal experiences as disabled people to challenge the limitations of the then dominant medical model of disability espoused by non-disabled people (French & Swain 1997).

Central to the social model of disability is its disassociation of “impairment from disability” (French & Swain 2000: 570). This makes it a radical departure from the medical model of

disability which narrowly focuses only on disability as an individual problem. To further elaborate on this, while the medical model of disability approach has framed PWDs' conditions as "abnormal", proponents of the social model of disability strongly reject this framing as a myth (Llewellyn & Hogan 2000). In the view of Ash *et al*. (1997: 606), an oppressive society is one in which its non-disabled members subscribe to "social and cultural norms which reflect a preoccupation with normality". Normality, also referred to as normalcy, "is equated here with an everyday eugenics, which heralds a non-disabled person without 'defects', or impairments, as the ideal norm" (Madriaga *et al*. 2011: 901). As for Abberley (1987: 7), an oppressive society is one whose members subscribe to a "group of ideologies which justify and perpetuate this situation [that is the assumption of the inferior position occupied by PWDs because of their disabilities]".

It could further be argued that those non-disabled individuals endorsing the concept of normality are likely to disable persons with impairments by failing "to provide appropriate services and adequately ensur[ing] [that] the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its [that is the society's] social Organization" (Oliver 1996: 32). Arguing from a labour market environment viewpoint, Modise *et al.* (2014: 578) argue this to be the reason why PWDs continue to be "unfairly discriminated against on a daily basis in employment places as a result of widespread ignorance, fear and stereotypes".

Given that proponents of the social model of disability envision "a future society in which all forms of social oppression will be removed" (Barton 1997: 233), they have put forward several suggestions for fulfilling this vision. There is consensus among these proponents that one effective way of addressing the discrimination faced by PWDs lies within the society itself, which they suggest should respond to by changing (Crous 2004). One important form of change which should take place is for the non-disabled to change their negative attitudes towards PWDs, because very often "the difficulties that disabled people face are caused more by society's attitude to their impairment than the impairment itself" (Chard & Couch 1998: 606).

It is this kind of change that will create an inclusive environment where individuals with impairments will "no longer experience discrimination and exclusion" on the basis of their disabilities (Riddell 2012: 8). In agreement with this social model of disability's societal-based response to disability requiring changing negative attitudes, Hiranandani (2005) suggests such change should also take the form of addressing institutional discrimination, inaccessible public buildings, unusable transport systems, segregated education, and the exclusion of PWDs in the labour market.

It could be argued it is the exclusion of PWDs from these important spaces which resulted in some proponents of the social model of disability joining forces and mobilising under the banner of "oppression". The concept of oppression was coined by Oliver (1986) to distinguish himself together with other like-minded PWDs from their non-disabled peers. Central to this concept is the way it "presents disability as the collective experience of oppression" (Vehmas & Watson 2014: 639), and this encourages those affected to find practical solutions to better their situation. In his 1987 paper, Abberley (1987), for instance, proposed the need to analyse the position of PWDs in Britain as a form of oppression by adopting a theory of oppression which he believed could effectively inform everyone's understanding of the lived experiences of PWDs in that country.

The mobilisation of disability activists and scholars under the banner of "oppression" is reflected in the language used in referring to challenges faced by PWDs in daily life. By using such terms as "our" the point is made that all are fighting the same struggle despite their diverse disabilities. In clarifying this, Oliver (1996: 22) insists that "[…] in our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people […]". Likewise, for Shakespeare (1992: 40), "the achievement of the disability movement has been to break the link between our bodies and our social situation and to focus on the real cause of disability i.e. discrimination and prejudice".

It could be argued that the social model of disability emerged not only to question the limitations of the medical model of disability, but also to further provide solutions accordingly. For instance,

by locating the source of the deficits within the individual, Engelbrecht (2006: 256) argues the medical model of disability approach "justifies social inequalities because of biological inequalities […]". Vlachou (2004: 7) has moreover criticised the medical model of disability's deficit-individualistic approach to needs for perpetuating discrimination. Likewise, while the medical model of disability privileged the views of experts or professionals at face value as legitimate, proponents of the social model of disability have attempted to criticise professionals' views which they find illegitimate and oppressive towards PWDs.

As noted by Fraser (1987), it is the medical model of disability's definition of the needs of PWDs in narrow medical terms which established the rationale for PWDs to fight against this professionals-dominated model. In a similar vein, Oliver (1996) has questioned the needs-based model in welfare systems which viewed disability as a welfare issue as only based on material distribution of disability grants in favour of a rights-based approach to disability. The major limitation of viewing disability as a welfare issue, is that it leads "to the isolation of disabled adults and children and their families; they have been separated from their communities and excluded from participating in society, thus entrenching the cycle of dependency and helplessness" (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012: 20). Oliver (1996: 65 see also Devlin & Pothier 2006) believes that the latter approach empowers PWDs, compared to the welfare system which has failed PWDs through "placing need at the centre of welfare provision".

Disadvantages of the social model of disability

From the perspectives of some disabled disability activists and academics, like Oliver (1996: 40), one of the major criticisms of the social model of disability is its failure to "connect with the experience of impairment". In other words, PWDs "have criticised the social model for its assumed denial of 'the pain of impairment', both physical and psychological" (Oliver 1996: 41). The social model of disability's denial of the pain of the impairment has been summarised by Vasey (1992: 43) when he argues that "if a person's physical pain is the reason they are unhappy[,] then there is nothing the disability movement can do about it". Shakespeare (1992)

suggests this regarding of a person's physical pain immaterial is a result of the social model of disability's focus on the root cause of disability only being discrimination, prejudice, or a combination of these. This illustrates the emphasis the social model of disability places on resolving social barriers of disability leads it to paying little or no attention on matters of personal restrictions of one's impairment (Oliver 1996).

In support of this view, French (1993), for example, draws on her lived experiences to elaborate on how the application of the social model of disability's principles cannot resolve some social restrictions imposed on her by her visual impairment. To substantiate this, French (1993: 17-18) "cites as examples her inability to recognise people and read or emit non-verbal cues in social interactions". Similarly, Morris (1991: 10) draws on her lived experiences to criticise the social model of disability's tendency of denying the experience of her body, insisting that her physical difference and "restrictions are entirely socially created". Morris (1991: 10) concludes her argument by suggesting that "while environmental barriers and social attitudes are a crucial part of our experience of disability - and do indeed disable us - to suggest that this is all there is to it is to deny the personal experience of physical or intellectual restrictions, of illness, of the fear of dying". Against this background, Mutanga (2019: 3) has cautioned against locating disability only in society, with the social model of disability potentially missing "other important variables, in particular one's individual health conditions".

Despite these criticisms levelled against the social model of disability, Barnes (2012) still reminds us that it would be unfair to discard or overlook the role of the social model's insights in providing a theoretical and practical framework with which to explore and address such concerns as disablism and the discrimination against SWDs in HEIs. Barnes (2012: 21) further argues that "to ignore these achievements is to usher in the demise of Disability Studies and its relevance to disabled people, their families and the population as a whole and the struggle for a fairer and just society". Likewise, Mutanga (2019: 3) has emphasised that "whether social modellists are correct or not is another question but it is important to acknowledge that it is wrong to conclude that social modellists do not care about impairments".

Application of the social model of disability in educational environments

While in the early phases of the inception of the social model of disability, its proponents tended to focus their attention mainly on the negative role of economic, social, political and cultural barriers in disabling people with impairments in societies (Oliver 1996; Priestley 1998; Priestley 2007). Recent research has however seen several of these proponents beginning to shift their attention to scrutinising and criticising the application of the tenets of the medical model of disability in specialised educational systems. For instance, commenting on the early development of the application of the social model of disability in education systems, particularly in Western societies, subsequently resulted in the abolishment of specialised educational systems in favour of the adoption of the concept of inclusive education. Simons & Masschelein (2005: 217) have argued that "during the 1980s and 1990s, segregation in education [was] put into question by the so-called inclusive schools movement, or inclusionists".[3]

For Vlachou (2004), the concept of inclusive education originated as a call upon states to think differently about education by challenging the status quo, which was the medical model of disability-influenced specialised education system. In challenging this status quo, the concept of inclusive education highlighted the need for the educating of leaners with disabilities together with their non-disabled peers "in the mainstream as opposed to specialist segregated" educational settings (Giffard-Lindsay 2007: 5 see also Engelbrecht & Green 2001; Pivik *et al.* 2002). These developments led to the 10 June 1994 Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education, held in Spain, which was attended by 300 participants representing 92 countries and 25 international organisations. The gathering led to the signing of the *Salamanca Statement* on inclusive education which stated that:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO 1994: ix).

3 Inclusionists could also be referred to as proponents of inclusive education so, for purposes of this thesis the terms inclusion and inclusive education will be used interchangeably.

Following the *Salamanca Statement*, "the practice of inclusive education has been widely embraced as an ideal model for education, both in South Africa and internationally" (Maher 2009). The *Salamanca Statement* has been commended for calling educational institutions to move away from the "specialist segregated provision" of education which exclude SWDs (Giffard-Lindsay 2007: 5). Farrell (2001) argues that the *Salamanca Statement* has been internationally significant in furthering the prospects for inclusive education. This was realised largely by the fact that unlike during the medical model of disability era where states where not obliged to take a proactive action towards the inclusion of PWDs, most states had now had obligations to ensure the equal access to mainstream education for PWDs without any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability. Due to the influence of the social model of disability, inclusive education began to be largely influenced by the human rights-based approach to education (Barton 1997). As argued by Nyangweso (2018: 1), this is because the paradigm shift from the medical model of disability to the social model of disability helped "to reclassify disability as a human rights issue under international law in recognition of moral universalist values". Furthermore, Nyangweso (2018) adds that the introduction of the social model of disability in the 1980s positively led to the United Nations acknowledging the rights of PWDs and the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. These developments "advanced the movement that lead to the establishment of major reforms including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the 1990s" (Nyangweso 2018: 1). Apart from that, the 1990s witnessed more than 40 States Parties of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child adopting disability discrimination legislations aimed at advancing the learners with disabilities' right to inclusive education (Megret 2008).

This radical paradigm shift illustrates how the outdated medical model of disability-influenced specialised educational system was replaced by the social model of disability-influenced inclusive educational system. Central to the latter approach is the way it enjoins people to think anew about education which was foundational to the banning of the segregatory "distinction between normal and abnormal pupils" perpetuated by the former system (Simons & Masschelein 2005: 218). In support of these developments, Oliver (1996) criticised the special education system for primarily functioning to exclude leaners with disabilities from both the mainstream

education process and wider social life. Likewise, Barton (1997: 232) criticised the specialised education system, particularly its heavy reliance on what he refers to as "powerful official and professionals" perspectives in the creation and maintenance of specialised educational systems which subsequently "contributed to a culture of exclusion".

Some have subsequently criticised specialised educational systems for promoting segregation, encouraging stereotypes, ignorance and suspicion of a reciprocal nature between learners with disabilities and their non-disabled peers (Morris 1990; Barnes 1991). In arguing for mainstream schools, Fidzani & Mthombeni (2002) further criticised special schools for historically isolating SWDs from their non-disabled student counterparts. Given the medical model of disability approach's limitations from the perspective of the social model of disability, it follows that proponents of the latter, like Ferguson (2008), have applauded countries such as Norway, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Italy as upholding best practices through abandoning the medical model of disability-influenced educational systems in favour of the social model of disability-influenced ones. This has taken the form of "hav[ing] affected large-scale reforms […] [which are] dismantling separate schooling in favour of more inclusive schooling for most of their students with special education needs. In these countries, 80–90% of identified students are in inclusive environments" (Ferguson 2008: 111). Inclusive educational systems which draw on the tenets of the social model of disability are seen as ideal because they try to ensure that, "wherever possible[,] the environment for teaching, learning and assessment should be designed so that disabled students do not face barriers and become disabled by their environment" (Research Briefing 2008: 3).

HEIs and the social model of disability

Researchers in disability and HE upholding the social model of disability have suggested how this approach seeks to address both the attitudinal and institutional barriers faced by SWDs. As suggested by Eleweke & Rodda (2002: 119), the university community has a responsibility to address attitudinal barriers through "respect[ing] […] differences […] [as this] helps break down barriers in attitude". This should take the form of "acceptance and positive societal attitudes towards disability [as an appropriate way to] help eliminate the ongoing exclusion of people with disabilities in the [HE] learning environment" (Tugli *et al.* 2013b: 357-363). Some suggest the need to introduce "measures to change attitudes and practices that stigmatise and marginalise people with disabilities" (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012: 9) as one of the effective ways of promoting and protecting the rights of PWDs in the HE environment. Those applying the social model of disability from the perspective of institutional barriers argue in favour of a radical transformation of HEIs' policies and practices.

It is important at this juncture then to clarify how this kind of transformation can practically be attained in the HE environment. Some proponents of the social model of disability, like Oliver & Barnes (1998), believe that oppressive institutional policies and practices are social in nature. They should therefore be dismantled as a matter of social justice in order to ensure the full participation of PWDs. The meaning of social justice, as described by Young (1990: 15), is "the elimination of institutionalised domination and oppression". Young (1990) argues that institutional conditions inhibit people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions. Therefore, it follows that an inclusive society is one which seeks to achieve justice and equity for its people (Hyder & Tissot 2013). Applying this reasoning in the HE context, du Plessis (2013: 76) argues that by challenging the violation of human rights and unfair discrimination, the concept of inclusion "seeks to ensure that social justice in education prevails".

To ensure that this form of social justice prevails, Lalvani (2013: 16) encourages the university community to move away from the MMoD and its oppressive tenets, and rather adopt the social

model of disability as this approach will enable institutions to "focus instead on institutional practices and policies that oppress and marginalise some students". Such a focus, as suggested by Youdell (2006), will enable the university community not only to fully understand the intersections of systems of oppression, but also to challenge the multiplicity of factors that disable certain groups of students by critiquing educational policies and institutional arrangements that privilege non-disabled students at the cost of SWDs. Access to education for SWDs, as argued by proponents of inclusive education, subsequently comes to be understood as a fundamental human rights issue and not an act of kindness as was historically the case under the medical model of disability framework.

One of the important tenets of inclusive education emphasises the "valuing [of] students' diverse capacities" (Johnson & Fox 2003: 10). It follows from this that the importance of this notion of diversity under inclusive education is the responsibility it places on HEIs to respond to the diversity of students in their locality appropriately by "working to change the structures, systems, policies, practices and cultures in schools and other institutions responsible for education" (Policy Paper 2011: 2 see also Essed 2013; Liasidou 2013; Priestley 1998; Riddell 1998; Rustemier 2002; McEwan & Butler 2007; Rieser 2009). Respect for diversity is important in this regard as doing so would prevent the potentially oppressive situation of HEIs having educational policies and institutional arrangements which only privilege non-disabled students at the expense of SWDs' in terms of full participation (Youdell 2006).

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

It is argued that ICF, developed by the World Health Organization (2001), is another influential model of disability. The World Health Organization attempted to provide a multi-perspective view on disability within the ICF through defining disability as "the variation of human functioning caused by one or a combination of […] the loss or abnormality of a body part (i.e. impairment)". The ICF further defines disability as "difficulties an individual may have in executing activities (i.e. activity limitations); and/or problems an individual may experience in

involvement in life situations (i.e. participation restrictions)" (World Health Organization 2001). The ICF therefore considers disability to be a combination of numerous factors, including individual, institutional and societal factors, that define the environment within which an impaired person lives (World Health Organization 2001). The ICF subsequently provides a holistic understanding of disability through what it refers to as the bio-psychosocial approach (World Health Organization 2001).

According to Mutanga (2019: 4), the rationale behind the development of the ICF was an attempt to "synthesise the medical and social models [in order] to classify the consequences of health conditions". Saleeby (2007) considers the ICF as the international standard framework in defining disability and health-related states. Mitra (2018) argues that the classification has been used for a variety of purposes to describe, explain and analyse PWDs' lived experiences. Central to the ICF is how it is classified into components such as "body functions and structures, activities and participation, and environmental factors" (Mutanga 2019: 4). Physiological functions and structures are included in the domains for the first component of activities, whereas the "body functions and structures component has activities (execution of a task /action by an individual) and participation (one's involvement in a life situation)" (Mutanga 2019: 4).

For purposes of the ICF model, "'activities' relate to individual actions, and participation relates more to relations with society" (Mutanga 2019: 4). As for the environmental factors component it includes such external influences such as relevant laws or policies and the impact these have on the individual with impairments (Mutanga 2019). Mutanga (2019: 4) argues further that these environmental "factors range from physical factors (such as climate, terrain or building design) to social factors (such as attitudes, institutions, and laws)". As noted by the World Health Organization (2001: 13), the ICF challenges the medicalisation of disability by noting that the presence of impairment, "does not necessarily indicate that a disease is present or that the individual should be regarded as sick". Thus, "this classification helps us to structure the lived experiences of health conditions" (Mutanga 2019: 4).

One of the advantages of the ICF, as argued by Schneider & Hartley (2006), is that it acknowledges and takes into consideration the role and impact of both internal personal factors and external environmental factors as crucial in the understanding of disability. To elaborate on this, Gathiram (2008: 147) argues that "internal personal factors focus on the dimensions of body function and structure […] [whereas] the external environment includes physical, social and attitudinal factors that impact on the individual's activities and participation in the environment in which the individual functions".

The ICF acknowledges, among other things, is its association of participation as the outcome of the inter-relationship between the threefold features of firstly, the person; secondly, the social and thirdly, the physical environments (Üstün *et al*. 2001). From a policy standpoint, this perspective is significant for proposing that interventions cannot only be undertaken at the social or medical levels to enhance the opportunities of individuals by removing disadvantages, but rather most importantly interventions should be undertaken "at different levels (personal, activities and environment)" (Mutanga 2019: 4). Regarding the possibility of the operationalisation of the ICF, Mutanga (2019: 5) argues that "the ICF is a multi-dimensional framework that has been adopted globally for health enumeration purposes; it is significant to our understanding of disability in that it acknowledges the interplay of different factors in the lives of people with disabilities".

Like any other models of disability, the ICF has some limitations, mostly as a result of its classification which maintains a vision of activities largely influenced by a bio-medical view, and still seeing biology as the determining factor (Söder 2009). Furthermore, the classification is a close-ended list of health-related attributes, which admittedly works well for its purpose of collecting health information globally (Mutanga 2019). Another limitation is that the ICF does not foreground people's choices and goals, which Mitra (2018) considers as equally important in the analysis and description of the lived experiences of PWDs. Mutanga (2019: 5) applies this reasoning in the South African context when he argues that the country's "high inequality, economic resources and availability of public services influence how people with disabilities and

their families cope with the consequences of impairment[,] and [that] not accounting for these factors will leave many issues unexplored".

The human rights model/approach

As Mutanga (2019) points out, the human rights model or approach[4] is another model of disability which continues to gain prominence among stakeholders internationally, especially since the adoption of the UNCRPD in 2006. Central to the human rights model is how it makes reference to initiatives that push for the idea that PWDs are not worthless in terms of moral worth, political equality or human rights (Basser 2011). The human rights approach, through the UNCRPD, "seeks to provide moral principles or values as foundations of disability policies" (Mutanga 2019: 5). One of the purposes of the UNCRPD, as espoused in Article 1 of this Convention, is "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (United Nations 2006). Human rights, including civil, political as well as economic, social and cultural rights, are some of the central rights encompassed in the human rights model (Degener 2017). Given the recent impact of the human rights model, "disability is now regarded in policy circles as not simply a medical issue but also a human rights concern" (Barnes 2012: 21).

[4] For purposes of the present thesis I will use the terms 'human rights model' and 'human rights approach' interchangeably.

Disadvantages of the human rights model/approach

Despite the human rights model being widely adopted in most disability policies internationally, some scholars have criticised it for failing to address the rights of PWDs holistically. Robeyns (2006), for instance, has criticised the human rights model for often sounding overtly rhetorical, thus paying minimal attention to ensure the practical implementation of the rights of PWDs. This is because most "human rights declarations are also formulated in terms of overall outcome targets (e.g., the right to employment), without specifying who is responsible for those rights being met, how success or failure will be measured, and what procedures will or should be undertaken to implement the relevant course of action" (Mutanga 2019: 6).

The other challenge of the human rights approach is the gap between policy and practice. Mutanga (2019: 5), for instance, has argued that "some governments have legally granted every child a right to education, but still many children with disabilities in these countries are out of school or might be enrolled but are not learning due to poor resource allocation and lack of assistive technologies". In such cases, this makes it difficult for such learners to benefit fully from education, as it "cannot confer opportunities for further education and valuable employment" (Mutanga 2019: 5). The growing number of children with disabilities being denied basic education opportunities in South Africa (Van Der Merwe 2017) indicates how the government is failing to implement the human rights approach practically as these children will be automatically denied of future opportunities to access tertiary education. In the Global South, especially in most post-colonial states, the human rights approach is often met with resistance (Eckel 2014). Eckel (2014) argues that given that the human rights approach is still in its infancy in most countries in the Global South, attempts to apply it has been viewed with scepticism by some political leaders who regard it as either an instrument of Western imperialism, neo-colonialism, or both. This illustrates how the human rights approach is not addressing disability-related contextual issues some of the countries in the Global South (including South Africa) is facing.

Advantages of the human rights model/approach

One of the advantages of the human rights approach is that it has made significant contributions to the field of DS. This is evidenced by Kroger (2009: 398) when he discusses the purpose of the field of DS as analysing "the oppression and exclusion of disabled people [,whilst] emphasis[ing] that disabled people need human rights and control over their own lives". The human rights approach has the potential of empowering PWDs, especially taking into consideration the manner in which it emphasises that "provisions necessary to meet the needs of people with impairments are demanded as a matter of right, rather than being handed out as charity to supposedly passive, grateful recipients" (Burchardt 2004: 736-737).

The human rights approach has also made positive contributions in relation to the inclusion of SWDs in mainstream educational institutions in South Africa and elsewhere. One notable example is the concept of cooperative learning which is rooted in the Western individualistic human rights discourse. Experiments in cooperative learning suggest that when put into practice in educational settings, these values can have powerful positive outcomes. Findings from several studies conducted in the US illustrate that cooperative learning has positive effects, including strengthening and encouraging positive social interaction among students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, thereby reducing racial stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice among these groups (Slavin & Cooper 1999: 648). Providing opportunities for black and white students to work together in cooperative learning teams creates an enabling environment for them to make more interracial friendships than would be the case for students in traditional classrooms (Hansell & Slavin 1981 see also Slavin & Cooper 1999). Cooperative learning-motivated group assignments are said to be effective in breaking down "racial barriers to friendship as students perceive their shared identity as cooperative group members" (Slavin & Hansell 1983: 93). Central to cooperative learning is the concept of "positive interdependence" which is one of the central requirements for an effectively structured cooperative lesson, uniting students in the knowledge that they "sink or swim together" (Johnson & Johnson 1994).

Although also rooted in the Western individualistic human rights discourse, the concept of universal design has also made positive contributions in the field of DS. In South Africa, for example, such disability policies as the *Guidelines for the creation of equitable opportunities for people with disabilities in South African Higher Education* has recommended HEIs to adopt the concept of universal design if they are to make their built environment more accessible to students with diverse disabilities as well as the non-disabled community (Howell 2015). Likewise, the same recommendation has also been made by recent studies on the inclusion of SWDs in South African universities (Ramaahlo *et al*. 2018; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017; Duma 2019). As will be shown in subsequent chapters, the present study will further seriously consider the concept of universal design and co-operative learning, specifically the role they can play in the social inclusion of SWDs in South African HEIs.

Other proponents have argued that treating the education of SWDs as a serious human rights issue has the potential to achieve inclusive institutions of HE where "no student should be an afterthought" (Higbee 2003: 1). Some proponents of inclusive education have commended the human rights approach for promoting SWDs' right to equally access education on a par with their non-disabled peers (Guthrie & Waldeck 2008).

Application of the human rights model/approach in educational environments

On a national level, despite South Africa having disability policies which are rooted in the human rights approach, Matshedisho (2007) has blamed the country's government for a lack of political commitment in assisting HEIs to provide disability support services. In their recent article, Mutanga *et al*. (2018) have emphasised that apart from the availability of disability policies, the government also needs to have genuine political will and commitment if it is to support HEIs to engender change in the lives of SWDs. Within the context of South African universities, SWDs themselves have also criticised the human rights approach through voicing their concerns about their universities' perpetuation of perceptions that accommodating SWDs is a favour, rather than a constitutional right (Dirk 2016 see also Macupe 2017).

Under the South African Constitution, PWDs who are citizens also have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and failure to do so amounts to unfair discrimination. Access to mainstream education is conceived as the fundamental constitutional right of every learner, "whether disabled or not" (DoE 2001: 11). However, in practice, the enactment of inclusive education-oriented policies and the provision of funding are "no guarantee of effective or even adequate implementation" (Duggan & Byrne 2013: 55). As Slee (2001: 114) notes, even in countries with well-established inclusive education policies, often the expectation is that the previously excluded are to be "included into an unchanged system". Thus, thereby calling into question the inclusion rhetoric of HEIs (Armstrong *et al.* 2011). This discrepancy between policy and practice has been noted by a number of South African studies (see, for example, Pretorius *et al*. 2011; Saloojee *et al.* 2006; Howell & Lazarus 2000; Matshedisho 2007; Crous 2004). The failure of South African HEIs to support SWDs to participate with success (Mutanga *et al*. 2018) illustrates that having a supportive disability policy framework alone is ineffective in realising the right to human dignity of PWDs.

Some South African scholars argue that the problem with the human rights approach partly lies in this country's failure to implement this approach properly, despite this approach having good intentions. Among such scholars are Lourens *et al*. (2016) who notes that since South Africa signed and ratified the UNCRPD, the country has been failing to honour its obligations under this Convention, as most HEIs have not guaranteed the full participation for many SWDs. Makiwane (2018: 788) argues that one of the reasons why the human rights approach is not being effectively implemented is "non-compliance with existing policies addressing issues of disabilities" on the part of some South African HEIs.

According to Mutanga (2019), achieving compliance does not currently seem to be easy under South Africa's human rights approach. This has been attributed to the negative impact of the lack of entrenching of disability policies and practices in HEIs, which is one of the reasons perpetuating challenges faced by SWDs (Mutanga 2019). At an institutional level, despite the availability of disability policies which are supportive of diversity, these institutions still fail to make their environments accessible to SWDs as this group continues to be socially isolated

within these institutions (Lourens & Swartz 2016a). Non-compliance with building regulations on the part of some HEIs has been raised as a matter of concern by some disability scholars. Most South African university campuses were not built to cater for SWDs (Tugli *et al*. 2013a), with most campuses not yet having done much to address this challenge. A similar issue was recently raised in the 2018 *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* which note that most South African HEIs are failing to enforce existing accessibility legislation, and therefore call for the need "to develop minimum norms and standards for universal application" on a national basis (DHET 2018: 30).

Franklin *et al*. (2018: 3) argue that although some African countries have laws which are grounded in the human rights approach, "these need to be implemented effectively" if they are to protect the rights of PWDs in a meaningful way. The available literature shows that South Africa is no exception, as the country continues to grapple with implementing most of its inclusive education policies grounded in a human rights approach. Central to the human rights approach to inclusive education is the obligation it places on universities to accommodate student diversity. Failure to do so is viewed as the perpetuation of inequalities within these institutions, and this violates human rights of SWDs (Read *et al*. 2003). As argued by Moja *et al*. (2015: vii), valuing and respecting diversity is important for students "to feel welcome, receive support and be included in the campuses on which they study". HEIs which respect and value diversity can further potentially eliminate discrimination and intolerance for all students irrespective of their race, gender, disability or any other differences (DHET 2018). Howell & Lazarus (2003) criticise South African HE disability policies for failing to accommodate a larger and more diverse population of SWDs. Hence, they caution South African HEIs from addressing access and participation challenges for SWDs through narrow and quick fix approaches which make students "fit into" an unchanging education system (Howell & Lazarus 2003). Against this background, Mutanga (2019: 2) suggests that "more needs to be done to attend to issues of student diversity and other challenges confronting students with disabilities in South African higher education".

Some scholars point to one of the deficiencies of the human rights approach is its narrow focus on mainly prioritising formal access to HEIs for SWDs without providing these students with appropriate support they require to succeed academically. In agreement with this view, Mutanga (2019: 9) argues that the difficulties facing some HEIs in providing adequate support services for SWDs "reflect some significant gaps between research, policy and practice". To elaborate on the ineffectiveness of this approach, Mutanga (2019: 9) argues that accessing HE "does not ultimately result in inclusion, full participation and success for students with disabilities". Rather, what is needed is "institutional effort, both wide in scope and systemic in nature" and the need for government and HEIs to continue honouring their duty to create inclusive environments for all SWDs if there HEIs are to improve the lives of these students (Mutanga 2019: 9). South African HEIs' emphasis on providing access does not necessarily mean that most of these institutions have made significant strides in this regard. Lourens *et al*. (2016) argue that the less than satisfactory number of SWDs entering HE is an undeniable consequence of how HEIs continue to neglect the disability rights of this group. Likewise, Disability Alliance (2017) note the numerous policies that support the inclusion of SWDs in South African HEIs have made little impact in increasing the numbers of SWDs accessing these institutions.

The United Nations (2006: 9) argues that raising awareness throughout society is important in "combat[ing] stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life". Despite the fact that the human rights approach regards the issues of raising awareness seriously, the failure of most South African HEIs to meet this obligation has resulted in most of these institutions facing difficulties in addressing the non-disabled university community's negative attitudes towards PWDs. This is evidenced by one of South Africa's disability policy documents which notes that "traditional attitudes and stereotyping of the abilities of learners still lead to exclusion and reinforcement of the notion that learners with disabilities do not have a future in higher education and training" (DHET 2018: 29).

Some South African studies have shown that even SWDs themselves have not been sensitised around their rights as provided in the country's disability policies. This is evidenced in Lourens

& Swartz's (2020: 328) study of students with visual impairments, which found that some of these participants "were often unaware of legislation regarding reasonable accommodations". This study further found that even lecturers did not seem to be aware of their legal obligations, evidenced by the fact that "the willingness to assist with reasonable accommodations was often made on an ad hoc basis and differed from one lecturer to the next" (Lourens & Swartz 2020: 328). Given the negative implication this has on the inclusion of SWDs, the DHET (2018: 48) recommends the need to build greater awareness of the needs of SWDs "alongside the capacity to address disability at all levels of post-school institutions, including lecturers, support staff and management" if the human rights approach is to address issues related to the negative attitudes towards SWDs effectively.

Although South Africa's recent disability policy framework has called for the country's Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system to mainstream the management of disability rights within these institutions (DHET 2018), in practice this call has not materialised as it is not supported by adequate allocation of resources and sound policies at institutional levels. This weakness on the part of the human rights approach has negatively resulted in South African HEIs expecting SWDs themselves to bear most of the responsibility if they are to be successfully included both academically and socially in their institutions. Seale *et al*. (2015) argue that SWDs in countries with supportive disability frameworks also commonly report that because of the lack of adequate institutional support, they have to work harder than their non-disabled peers if the former are to effectively manage both their disability and their studies. Mutanga (2016: 17) argues that South African universities are no exception, as some SWD participants in his study resorted to compensatory behaviour through "working harder than other students in pursuing [their] studies because disabled people have lesser chances of getting employed than non-disabled [people]". Mutanga (2016) further argued against this as leaving SWDs with no further option, but to adjust to this unjust and oppressive practice and thus suggested that HEIs should rather provide SWDs with equal opportunities to succeed.

Similarly, in their study of students with visual impairment at two South African universities, Lourens & Swartz (2020: 329) conclude that "despite seemingly sufficient university and

governmental policies that support the social model of disability, the weight to adjust to the environment still largely falls on the disabled students. The latter is in direct conflict with the ethos of inclusive education". Mutanga (2017a) further criticise how the right to inclusive education for SWDs is violated in some universities through the expectation of this group to "fit in" to existing oppressive structures, rather than the onus being placed on institutions to change in order to accommodate them. Similarly, Soudien & Baxen (2006: 161) criticise the South African HE disability policies for assimilating PWDs "into a dominant order that itself is not set up for critique". This illustrates that although South African disability policies draw on the human rights approach and have incorporated human rights principles in order to protect the rights of SWDs, the expectation on the part of some of these institutions to force SWDs into an unchanged HE system makes it difficult for these students to exercise or enjoy their right to quality education meaningfully.

The other limitation of the human rights approach is the general consensus among its advocates that achieving disability rights for SWDs within the HE is far from a reality. For instance, although Brunton & Gibson (2009) acknowledge the importance of having buildings, facilities and physical environments on campuses disability-user-friendly, they argue that removing all such barriers is impossible. Within the South African context this can best be explained by the majority of HEIs' foot-dragging approach in their attempts at achieving disability mainstreaming. Following the VSO's (2006: 7) definition, disability mainstreaming is ''about building disability into existing agendas, frameworks and processes, not adding on separate disability activities". According to Howell (2005: 25), achieving disability mainstreaming in South African HE further requires the action role of institutional leadership personnel, especially the university management, in honouring their responsibility of mainstreaming disability through "ensuring that disability issues are effectively integrated into all aspects of the institution's functioning". Despite university management forming a key stakeholder for achieving disability mainstreaming, they have not done much to achieve this goal. Howell (2005: 25 see also Mutanga 2019) has attributed this failure to the managements' tendency to relegate "anything related to disability to be assumed to be solely the responsibility of Disability Units". The failure to mainstream disability in South African HE disproportionately affects SWDs who

have to bear the consequences of social exclusion. This in evidenced by one University of Cape Town student activist, Busi Mkhumbuzi (cited in Hendricks 2016), who expressed her concerns as follows:

> When we say we need to make our universities more accessible to students we're including race, social status, disability and a host of things that comprise our identity. But I don't think we've seen a radical or a strong conversation about ableism or about disability […] That means we have not addressed the issue in totality.

Mkhumbuzi's statement highlights how important it is for disability issues to be mainstreamed in South African HE initiatives if SWDs are to participate in these institutions successfully. As Mutanga (2019) suggests, South Africa could potentially effectively implement its human rights approach if it were to follow some best practices examples from the UK and Australia, as these countries have formal national disability policy frameworks for HE in place. These issues highlight how the liberal human rights discourse that informs both HE and national disability policies in South Africa could also be said to have had little impact in improving the lives of SWDs on campuses.

Continual discrimination against SWDs within the inclusive education human rights discourse

Although the ultimate goal of inclusive education is for educational institutions to address the learning needs of all SWDs, in practice this continues to be a challenge in many countries' educational institutions (WHO & the World Bank 2011). This is a result of many SWDs who still do not have equal access to educational opportunities and who do not receive the appropriate support once enrolled in educational institutions (WHO & the World Bank 2011). This indicates how inclusive education has ushered in a new form of indirect discrimination and oppression against SWDs which is hindering the academic success of this group particularly through having policies which are not being practically implemented. As Rieser (2006) argues, oppression of SWDs stem from non-disabled people's deeply rooted social attitudes which manifest in how they treat PWDs with prejudice, fear and discrimination. Non-disabled people's negative

attitudes and stereotypes have been found to persist even in countries that regard the human rights approach to disability inclusion seriously (Rieser 2006).

According to Slee (2011), truly inclusive education has not been achieved in many countries. Many mainstream educational institutions do not support SWDs on the same level as non-disabled students (de Beco 2018). Scholars including de Beco (2018) have subsequently called for educational institutions to adopt the social model of disability in their policies and practices if they are to achieve truly inclusive education. In reality, however, this call seems hard to follow in many countries where the tendency is to fall back on the indirect application of a medicalised understanding of disabilities.

Riddell (1998: 220), in discussing the experiences of SWDs in Scotland, for example, argues that the dominant medical discourse of disability, combined with the growing marketisation of, and associated managerialism in, HE, has led to a situation where the approach to disability in HE is one that focuses "attention on the position of disabled students but (shies) away from approaches based on structural transformation". This approach sees "the problem as residing within the disabled student rather than the structure of higher education" (Riddell 1998: 219). Although inclusive education is the dominant education discourse in many countries, the idea is not endorsed by all concerned, and is approached in divergent ways (Lalvani 2013). In the South African context, Muthukrishna & Schoeman (2000: 334) argue that the continued influence of the assumptions of the medical model of disability reflected "confusion and serious contradictions" in terms of how disability is understood and what policies flow from this understanding.

Another barrier facing PWDs in many countries within this human rights approach is the lack of annually updated statistics on PWDs. Article 31 of the UNCRPD on Statistics and data collection obliges States Parties to "undertake to collect appropriate information, including statistical and research data, to enable them to formulate and implement policies to give effect to the present Convention" (United Nations 2006: 23). In Lebanon, for instance, the country's Central

Administration for Statistics (CAS) found that there are no annual statistics on the disabled population (including SWDs), and this has resulted in the question of HE dropouts remaining unaddressed (UNESCO 2013). Likewise, Kochung (2011) has criticised the Kenyan government for not having formal annual statistics on the number of SWDs accessing the county's HE. In India, as final example, the lack of timely and reliable data has been raised as a matter of concern, as this updated data is important to educational planning (The Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-2007). Understanding the number of PWDs and their circumstances can improve efforts to remove disabling barriers and provide services to allow this group's meaningful participation (WHO & the World Bank 2011). However, in reality, most signatories of the UNCRPD Convention are failing to honour this obligation.

Inclusive education as academic inclusion

Globally, most available studies on the experiences of SWDs in education have focused on how these participants are supported academically by their institutions (see, for instance, Fuller *et al*. 2004; Dowrick *et al*. 2005; Fuller *et al*. 2004; Bishop & Rhind 2011; Brett 2010; Hall & Tinklin 1998; Sachs & Schreuer 2011; Erten 2011; Hutcheon & Wolbring 2012; Powell *et al.* 2013; Moriña *et al*. 2013; Hadjikakou & Hartas 2008; Moswela & Mukhopadhyay 2011; Chataika 2007; Chataika 2010). In the context of HEIs globally, research into the situation of SWDs points to the continual under-representation of this group in comparison to their non-disabled peers (Gale & Parker 2013; Skill—National Bureau for Students with Disabilities 1997; Department for Business, Innovation & Skills 2014; Connor *et al*. 2005; Madriaga 2007; Konza 2008).A study conducted by Morrison *et al.* (2009) found that SWDs tend to be underrepresented, and that most do not perform at the expected levels because they feel pushed to the margins and disempowered.

Some have celebrated the notion of inclusive education for affording SWDs opportunities to learn in one classroom with their non-disabled peers (Obuye 2014; Mukhopadhyay *et al*. 2012; Sherrill 2004; Lalvani 2013). Proponents of inclusive education emphasise academic inclusion-oriented initiatives such as endeavouring to achieve a "universally designed classroom" (Johnson

& Fox 2003: 14). For Booth & Ainscow (2002: 35), "overcoming barriers to learning and development" should be the main focus of educational institutions. In the view of Dalton *et al.* (2012: 2), central to inclusive education is the "removal of barriers to learning". Lastly, Tee & Cowen (2012: 10) suggest the need for HEIs to provide "equal access to the full range of teaching and learning opportunities" for SWDs if this group is to succeed academically. The focus on academic inclusion has seen the prioritisation of "pragmatic areas of inclusive education implementation, such as curriculum access, assessment methods, measuring achievement, and the learning environment" (Giffard-Lindsay 2007: 1).

National and institutional responses to the academic needs of SWDs in South African HE

In the sections that follow I will be discussing the six "pillars of support for inclusive education". I borrow the concept of "pillars of support for inclusive education" from Loreman (2007: 22) and the six pillars discussed here are derived from a critical review of international as well as South African literature on central issues which could be said to affect, facilitate or inhibit inclusive education goals for this group. In particular, I show how these six "pillars of support for inclusive education", have and continue to take the form of academic-oriented inclusion, have been the focus of disability research in HE. These include: (1) disability funding to HEIs and how this has increased the enrolment numbers of SWDs; (2) teaching a flexible and accessible curriculum; (3) providing reasonable accommodations; (4) the availability of human resources or support and assistant personnel in the form of lecturers, faculty members, tutors, note takers and sign language interpreters; (5) the availability of assistive devices; and (6) physically accessible built environments.

Funding

The notion of social justice, as espoused by Rawls (1971), emphasises the distribution of material and non-material goods among members of a society. Within this distributive paradigm, social justice is defined "as the morally proper distribution of social benefits and burdens among society's members" (Young 1990: 15). Scholars have pointed to the important role of funding in the realisation of meaningful inclusive education and giving SWDs access to HEIs.

In discussing the importance of funding which prioritises SWDs and its influence in creating equal opportunities of access to HEIs, scholars like Sartz (2007: 625) draw on the notion of "education for equal citizenship". Under this notion of "education for equal citizenship":

> significant resources, support and attention must be channelled to the least advantaged students in our schools, universities, and society in order for our education institutions to bring the disadvantaged students to the level of those who were advantaged so that they could participate as equals in these institutions and their societies (Sartz 2007: 625).

This need to prioritise funding as a good practice of inclusive education was reaffirmed at the 1994 Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education where the international community was encouraged to:

> […] give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their educational systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individuals' differences and difficulties (UNESCO 1994: ix).

The rationale behind this emphasis on the prioritisation of funding SWDs in order to enrol in HEIs emanates primarily from the fact that these students have long been historically "marginalised or excluded from social activities, especially education" (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013: 149). This marginalisation and exclusion has been effected through legislation and policies which discriminated against them on the grounds of their disability. Research on funding of disability in HEIs has taken a dichotomous form, with developed countries, or the Global North, associated with having progressive policies and practices which enable them to meet best

practices criteria. This is evidenced by Mutanga (2019) who cites the UK and Australia as having some of the best practices in the Global North, as they have formal national disability policy frameworks for HE in place which obligate universities to provide disability funding for SWDs (or face legal implications in the event of failing to meet this obligation).

In South Africa, despite the fact that the this country's government has put forth numerous funding-oriented policies aimed at increasing access of SWDs to HE, it is notable that their implementation continues to be a challenge because of the unavailability of effective and reliable monitoring mechanisms to ensure that HEIs actually comply with funding requirements (Belyakov *et al*. 2009). Ongoing research also continues to conclude that funding for SWDs in HE continues not being a priority of government policy and expenditure (Ramaahlo *et al*. 2018; Mbuvha 2019; Chiwandire & Vincent 2019; Simui *et al*. 2019; Tudzi *et al*. 2017; FOTIM 2011). Pretorius *et al.* (2011) argue that serious resource constraints have negatively impacted on South African HEIs' ability to respond to service delivery demands.

Recent disability policies confirm that this situation has not improved. Similarly, the impact of resource constraints on the inclusion of SWDs in South African HE has also been noted by the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* (DHET 2018). This policy document has attributed this to how "the management, resourcing and funding for disability rights in PSET remains fragmented and separate from that of existing transformation and diversity programmes at institutional levels" (DHET 2018: 12). This makes it difficult for South African HEIs to prioritise disability inclusion initiatives. Mbuvha's (2019) study, which explored the kinds of support offered by the University of Venda Disability Unit, found that a lack of funds to support SWDs at this institution as one of the challenges negatively impacting this institution from fulfilling the human rights of SWDs. In their recent study, Ramaahlo *et al*. (2018: 367) identified the need for South African universities to ensure that "sufficient funding, budgeting processes and commitment from senior management in the allocation of funding be secured" if these institutions are to widen access and participation with success opportunities for diverse SWDs at these institutions. While funding is one important

"pillar of support for inclusive education", the other five pillars are central to the realisation of the success of SWDs in HEIs.

Flexible and Accessible Curricula

Some proponents of inclusive education have stressed the importance of both the availability and accessibility of a curriculum[5] which equally addresses the diverse needs of all students (including those with disabilities) in lecture theatres as another effective way of implementing inclusive education, resulting in the equal chance of success of SWDs. Scholars arguing for this approach draw heavily on the concept of diversity. Ohajunwa *et al*. (2015: 7), for instance, advocate for the "need to create learning spaces where diversity is valued" through accommodating all learners regardless of their abilities or disabilities in inclusive educational spaces. In order to achieve this in the view of Howell & Lazarus (2003), HEIs themselves should actively initiate campaigns aimed at promoting and embracing the value of diversity in [and outside] general classrooms. One way of embracing diversity is to have a flexible and accessible curriculum.

Despite this call, research in South Africa has shown that the reality on the ground with regards to how the curriculum is delivered in classrooms still exclude SWDs, and this can be regarded as a violation of an important pillar of inclusive education. For instance, scholars like Ohajunwa *et al.* (2014: 115) have stressed the need to include "disability as an issue of transformation and diversity in our HEIs". Given that curricula have the potential of creating "the most significant barrier to learning and exclusion for many learners," South Africa's *White Paper 6* states that "[n]ew curriculum and assessment initiatives will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs" (DoE 2001: 31-32). In addition, when delivering the curriculum, South Africa's *Green Paper* enjoins lecturers to adopt accessible teaching methodologies, as this

5 "Curriculum is understood in a broad sense. It includes what is taught, the medium of instruction, how the curriculum is organised and managed, the methods and processes used in teaching, the pace of teaching, the learning materials and equipment used, the nature of required fieldwork experiences, as well as how learning is assessed" (DoE 2001: 9).

will enhance disability awareness on their part as well as on the part of non-disabled students (DHET 2012).

Reasonable Accommodations

The UNCRPD obliges States Parties to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided to PWDs upon request as one way of realising inclusive education (United Nations 2006). Article 24 of UNCRPD in particular affirms the concept of reasonable accommodations and provides for states' responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations and appropriate support tailored to SWDs individuals' needs (United Nations 2006). The UNCRPD defines reasonable accommodations as necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments where needed in a particular case which should not however impose a disproportionate or undue burden (United Nations 2006). The rationale behind the provision of reasonable accommodations is "[…] to ensure persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others all human rights and fundamental freedoms" (United Nations 2006: 2).

As Eckes & Ochoa (2005: 7) point out, the increase in SWDs attending post-secondary education has resulted in more requests for accommodations. The provision of reasonable accommodations to SWDs is aimed at providing "a level playing field in higher education" (Wolanin & Steele 2004: 58 see also Ontario Human Rights Commission 2016). HEIs themselves have the responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations or academic accommodations to their enrolled SWDs upon request (Wolanin & Steele 2004; Eckes & Ochoa 2005) as part of ensuring the equal treatment of every student's educational needs as provided for in Article 24 of the UNCRPD. Failure to provide such accommodations timeously amounts to a denial of the rights of, and discrimination against, SWDs on the grounds of disability (Krishnan 2012).

Providing a level playing field to SWDs would enable these students "to be educated with non-disabled classmates to the maximum extent possible" (Sherrill 2004: 2). In South Africa, HEIs are obliged to provide academically related support services to students with diverse disabilities

(Matshedisho 2010). However, as the FOTIM (2011: 10) Report on SWDs in South African HEIs pointed out, the provision of reasonable accommodations "does not aim to detract from the importance of the role and responsibilities of students themselves in ensuring their success whilst studying at an HEI".

Personnel

When faculty members are ignorant of the legislative mandates pertaining to students with disabilities, accessibility to learning may be compromised (Katsiyannis *et al*. 2009). In order for HEIs to meet the requirement of providing SWDs with the full range of teaching and learning opportunities afforded to non-disabled students, they need to ensure the availability of a wide range of personnel to work with SWDs, so that they can participate equally in the process of teaching and learning (Howell 2005). These include lecturers, faculty members, and assistant personnel like tutors, note takers and sign language interpreters.

Lecturers are responsible for the education of learners and students including those with disabilities. As several disability scholars have stressed, the successful implementation of inclusive education is highly dependent upon the availability and active role of teachers in primary and secondary settings, as well as lecturers in post-secondary settings, who are disability sensitive and well-trained to teach SWDs. Moriña *et al*. (2013: 3) have enjoined countries transitioning from a special education system to an inclusive education system to begin by modifying their teaching and learning practices by making them "as inclusive as possible".

It is widely acknowledged that the provision of inclusive teaching and learning practices by lecturers contributes enormously to the success of SWDs. South Africa's DHET (2013: 7) has, for example, pointed out that "the key to improving success rates significantly…lies in strengthening learning and teaching across the system". In practice, some have suggested that

this could take the form of applying the inclusive education concept of differentiation[6] (Policy Paper 2011: 2). This approach has been endorsed as ideal for inclusive educational institutions if they want to achieve meaningful inclusive education for their SWDs.

In order to successfully include SWDs in an inclusive classroom, Mukhopadhyay *et al.* (2009: 51) have suggested the need on the part of lecturers to abandon old teaching practices and rather "develop a different set of skills and knowledge than traditionally required by the profession". By taking these teaching practices into account, lecturers will be fulfilling their obligations to provide reasonable accommodations to SWDs as outlined in *White Paper 6* and Article 24 of the UNCRPD (to which South Africa is a signatory).

In reality, however, research has shown that some lecturers hold negative attitudes towards their SWDs. Ndlovu & Walton (2016: 4) have, for instance, expressed concerns over lecturers' association of "negative perceptions of the capabilities of students, with disabilities and low expectations of their academic performance" as hindering the learning of SWDs. This has been confirmed in transformation-oriented research in HEIs which has revealed that some lecturers are not willing to make changes to the curriculum to enable access for formerly disadvantaged social groups (DoE 2008). Against this background, Hlalele & Alexander (2012) have suggested the need for conscientising such lecturers as a way of promoting tolerant attitudes for embracing the concept of inclusion.

Several studies (Mutanga 2019; Chiwandire 2019) have criticised South African lecturers who hold negative attitudes towards SWDs for imposing academic success barriers for these students. The Department of Education has raised concerns about the lack of appropriate curricula which addresses the diverse learning needs of SWDs as a major challenge for SWD's succeeding academically in South African HEIs (DoE 1998). This was also raised as a matter of concern by

6 "Differentiation means teachers understanding the educational needs of their students and adopting different instructional strategies for different students, thus providing students with a range of options for learning and demonstrating their learning" (Policy Paper 2011: 2).

SWDs who participated in Matshedisho's (2007) study which found that their lecturers were resistant to the use of alternative accessible teaching methods which could maximise the participation of SWDs in the classroom setting.

Likewise, Mutanga & Walker's (2017: 4) study, which sampled lecturers from two universities, also found that there was a lack of understanding of diversity on the part of these lecturers, which led them to exclude SWDs "in teaching and learning activities, and consequently to their failure at universities". Although Ndlovu & Walton (2016: 4) highlight the importance of "coordinated support of the academics and Disability Unit staff in South African HEIs" as a way of achieving the inclusion of SWDs, all these studies show that South Africa has a long way to go in achieving this because of the lack of willingness or cooperation on the part of lecturers. By refusing to address the educational needs of SWDs, these lecturers are portraying SWDs as having "pathologies requiring rectification so as to conform to a specific anatomical or psychiatric norm" (Amin 2013: 40). To address this challenge, Sachs & Schreuer (2011) suggest that HEIs have a responsibility of breaking non-disabled students and lecturers' attitudes, as this is the prerequisite for achieving social inclusion and equal opportunities for SWDs.

In contrast, some South African studies conducted from the 2000 onwards note a growing interest on the part of some lecturers (from predominantly minority backgrounds) to take proactive measures in delivering a curriculum that is inclusive of the learning needs of SWDs. For instance, SWDs sampled in Matshedisho's (2010) study spoke positively about some of their lecturers for making efforts to respond to academic needs of SWDs through providing alternative styles of teaching that are SWD-sensitive. The same holds true for SWDs sampled in Swart & Greyling's (2011) study which aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of how these students experienced participation at their university. This study found that students in the Humanities and Social Sciences experienced more curriculum support and adaptations from their lecturers than students in the Natural Sciences and Economic and Business Sciences (Swart & Greyling 2011).

Likewise, one study, which explored the perceptions of academic staff members at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal towards accommodating SWDs in a Civil Engineering Undergraduate Programme, reported similar findings (Mayat & Amosun 2011). This study found that a number of participants "expressed the willingness to admit and accommodate students with disabilities in the undergraduate civil engineering programme" (Mayat & Amosun 2011: 58). This was further evidenced by the participants' willingness to make appropriate adjustments at the level of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Similarly, a 2015 study of academic staff members conducted by Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya (2015: 208) at one South African university found that the minority of these participants displayed positive attitudes towards supporting SWDs.

Other staff members, such as assistants and/or tutors, are equally important in the provision of academic support services to SWDs (Sherrill 2004). For Lambe (2011), it is important that the assistant staff members working with SWDs hold positive attitudes towards SWDs, as this will help them provide meaningful academic support for all SWDs. In a UK case study, O'Çonnor & Robinson (1999) highlighted the need on the part of university tutors to have expertise in working with SWDs, as it was found that the persistence of exclusionary practices and attitudes in HEIs was exacerbated by tutors without such expertise or awareness.

HEIs which enrol students who identify as Deaf and hard-of-hearing are required to employ support staff, like "note takers […] [so] that students can focus on the speaker, the interpreter, and other visual cues without the distraction of taking notes simultaneously" (Brett 2010: 6). The US's A-DL clearly mandates HEIs to provide reasonable accommodations to deaf and hard-of-hearing students in the form of a "sign language interpreter or note-takers" (IDEA Regulations 2004). However, HEIs in developed countries like the UK (Eleweke & Rodda 2002) are currently facing the challenge of a shortage of sign language interpreters. A similar challenge is also experienced by HEIs in developing countries like Kenya (Kochung 2011).

In developing countries, some argue that the absence of support staff poses a major threat to the effective implementation of inclusive education in these countries' HEIs, and in some cases "most students with disabilities who could gain admission 'are on their own' as they receive no special support to help them on their courses" (Eleweke & Rodda 2002: 115-116). In some Indian HEIs, such as Adarsh College in Chamarajpet, Bengaluru University and Delhi University, the absence of sign language interpreters has forced some deaf students to pay out of pocket for lessons with private interpreters at exorbitant rates (Krishnan 2012). On the other hand, some countries have been able to maintain good practices in the wake of these challenges. Among them is Australia which has responded positively to the increasing enrolment levels of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in its HEIs by employing larger numbers of interpreters (Knuckey *et al.* 2001).

Assistive Technology/Devices

Thomas (2012: 58-59) makes the point that the mere accessibility of facilities does not guarantee the fulfilment of inclusive education, nor the success of SWDs, unless such facilities "are equipped with [assistive technology] systems to meet the needs of the person with disabilities […]". According to Goddard (2004: 2), "assistive or adaptive technology (AT) involves a device or a computer-based accommodation that helps an individual with special needs to work around or compensate for a disability and enhancing individual ability". Koulikourdi (2008: 387) writes that assistive technologies "refer to products, devices or equipment that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities".

The availability of assistive technologies used in libraries, Disability Units' computer laboratories and lecture theatres for the use of SWDs is an important "pillar of support for inclusive education". Berkeley *et al.* (2007: 12) have highlighted the obligation on the part of HEIs' DUSMs "to be well aware of the needs of the students and find solutions to keep pace with emerging technologies". Ensuring the availability of the latest assistive technology has been associated with enabling SWDs' "full participation" (WHO & the World Bank 2011; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2011). As for Koulikourd (2008: 387),

ensuring the availability of the latest assistive technology is central in the "equalisation of opportunities" for SWDs in the HE environment.

Johnson & Fox (2003: 12-15) argue in favour of the expansion of assistive technologies as they believe that they create "opportunities for building inclusive classrooms" for SWDs. Despite this, the unavailability of assistive devices has been identified as a significant barrier to academic success facing SWDs in South African HEIs. Numerous South African studies (Lourens & Swartz 2015; Lourens & Swartz 2016a; Lourens 2015; Matshedisho 2007) have argued that students with visual impairments are denied equal educational opportunities because of HEIs' failures to provide assistive technology, reading material in alternative accessible formats, such as computers with screen readers or Braille books. Disabled People South Africa and Lawyers for Human Rights launched the Disability Rights Charter of South Africa and have been instrumental in lobbying the state to guarantee SWDs' right to mainstream education with appropriate assistive technology (Matshedisho 2007).

One study of SWDs at the University of Venda found that the absence of assistive devices[7] at this institution violated inclusive education, as this denied the participants' access to full participation at this institution (Tugli *et al.* 2013b see also Mokiwa & Phasha 2012). In a study by Seyama (2009), the author sampled nine students with visual impairments to understand whether or not their university's Disability Unit information system met their needs. This study found that "barriers experienced by the students were the result of the lack of incorporating the needs of the visually impaired students into the design of the institution's information systems" (Seyama 2009: iv-v see also Seyama *et al*. 2014).

[7] Assistive device is "a device assists users in accomplishing day-to-day functions. For example: a wheelchair, walker, cane" (Canadian Human Rights Commission 2006: 5).

Built environment

In arguing for accessible built environments, Howell & Lazarus (2003: 68) suggest that "addressing physical barriers that limit mobility and thus access to institutional services for some disabled students, especially physically disabled and blind students", is tantamount to the notion of "respect for diversity". A badly designed built environment will exclude PWDs from participating in mainstream society (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012). In the context of HEIs', Wolanin & Steele (2004: 53) point to "curbs and stairs that cannot be navigated by wheelchairs or mounted by the physically frail; [unavailability of] tactile maps for the blind, and no TTY[8] phones for the Deaf" as some of the common physical barriers which exclude SWDs on campuses. Proponents of inclusive education continue to highlight the need for a physically accessible built environment for SWDs in HEIs. According to the 2011 *World Report on Disability*, the built environment debate is rooted in the principle of accessibility which "describes the degree to which an environment, service, or product allows access by as many people as possible, in particular people with disabilities" (WHO & the World Bank 2011: 303). The principle of accessibility may be mandated in law or treaty, and then specified in detail according to international or national regulations, standards, or codes, which may be compulsory or voluntary (WHO & the World Bank 2011).

Central to the built environment debates is the emphasis placed on both the concept of "universal design" which Mitchell (2010: 13 see also Burgstahler 2013) defines as "the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for subsequent adaptation or specialised design". Mitchell (2010: 13) further argues that the concept of "universal design ha[s] its origins in architecture and engineering, and has been increasingly emphasised in education, where it is usually referred to as Universal Design for Learning (UDL)". Also central to the built environment debates is the concept of "inclusive design" which according to Chard & Couch (1998: 607) "includes design[ing] features that will benefit as many people within our society as possible and means understanding the design needs of a wide cross

8 Teletype device allows Deaf people to type their messages instead of speaking, often abbreviated as TTY.

section of society—wheelchair users, those with visual or hearing impairments, those with learning difficulties and so on". In the UK, HEIs have been enjoined to employ the concept of inclusive design when designing or modifying their built environment, because this concept "enhances the quality of life for everyone who uses the built environment" (Chard & Couch 1998: 607). From this, it follows that both the concept of universal design and inclusive design support a more accessible and inclusive built environment.

Also central to the accessibility of the built environment debate is the emphasis placed on the accessibility of public spaces, like campus library facilities (Thomas 2012), which should be accessible for SWDs as another way of achieving inclusive education. This is particularly important because accessible library facilities, Riddell (1998: 211) points out, are "crucial to the successful completion of a course". In a study by Baron *et al*. (1996), the experiences of SWDs training to be social workers at the Stirling University in Scotland were explored. A significant number of participants in that study expressed concerns about the difficulties they encountered in terms of accessing the campus facilities, including library facilities (Baron *et al*. 1996). Some countries' A-DLs, like the ADA in the US and the DDA in the UK, have formulated specific national policies which prioritise the financing of libraries and learning centres (Pillai 2012). Regarding the accessibility of library facilities in the US, Federal laws places on emphasis on ensuring the "removal of architectural barriers such by providing curb cuts and ramps [in order to make] higher education more inclusive for students with disabilities" (Wolanin & Steele 2004: xi).

For Hyder & Tissot (2013: 2), "libraries are often at the forefront of inclusive practice, typically involving a variety of measures to ensure public access for all users, including those with physical and sensory disabilities". Other than in Disability Unit facilities, most assistive technologies, particularly computer based assistive aids and devices used by SWDs, are housed in HEIs' library facilities (Gareema & Shailendra 2014). It is therefore important to remove physical barriers to these facilities in order to make them accessible for SWDs. Due to this association of meaningful inclusive education with accessibility to library facilities for SWDs, some Indian scholars stress the need for libraries in educational institutions to "develop policy

for people with disabilities and make [their] premises accessible by building ramps and rails" (Pillai 2012: 17).

Due to recent obligations imposed by various international human rights instruments like the UNCRPD, regulatory frameworks and international building instruments, many countries have either enacted or modified their building legislation and policies in order to accommodate SWDs equally. South Africa's national building regulation is called the *National or South African Building Regulations of 1986,* amended in 2008 to become the *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act,* with the provisions to the accessibility to the built environment in part "S"[9] (Watermeyer 2015). The National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa endorses the principle of accessibility as "a precondition for the participation of people with disabilities in society as well as for living independently" (NCPPDSA 2015: 1). As is the case in other countries, some South African HEIs have been criticised for not complying with the current revised building regulations. Whilst new and old buildings and facilities must now meet the requirements of South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act*, these regulations are not sufficiently enforced and many new buildings built on campuses since 1986 remain inaccessible, particularly to wheelchair users, as additions and adaptations to the built environment is regarded as a costly measure (Howell & Lazarus 2003 see also FOTIM 2011).

Two recent cases of admission being denied to SWDs by public universities on the grounds inappropriate facilities are a case in point. In November 2013, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) denied admission to three visually impaired students (*News24* 2013). In January 2015, a wheelchair user's application was turned down by Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) on the grounds that the university was not physically accessible for wheelchair users (Monama 2015). In both cases funding was not the issue, but rather the inaccessibility of the built environment, thus calling into question the idea that the availability of

9 Act 103 of 1977. Central to the amended 2008 version "Part S, which deals with facilities for disabled people (or persons) is one section that had changed radically" (South African National Standards 10400-S 2011: 25-26 see also Watermeyer 2015).

funding guarantees SWDs access to HE. Therefore, this also violates the obligation imposed by the *White Paper 6* upon all HEIs "to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for physically disabled learners" (DoE 2001: 31).

Several South African studies have illustrated that the inaccessibility of the built environment impacted negatively on the inclusion of students with physical disabilities in South African HEIs (Howell & Lazarus 2003; FOTIM 2011; Ntombela 2013; Buthelezi 2014; Engelbrecht & de Beer 2014; Maotoana 2014; Mantsha 2016; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). All these studies found that students with physical disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, where the most affected in terms of navigating the campus spaces and educational buildings as a result of the physical inaccessibility of their universities' built environments. Where efforts have been made by these universities, these buildings have only been adapted to meet the minimum requirements in compliance with the *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act,* and which does not therefore provide full access (Fitchett 2015). In the words of Ndlovu & Walton (2016: 6), this inaccessibility of buildings in HEIs indicates that "society continues to believe that it is the person with a disability who is responsible for arranging access to the physical environment".

Academic inclusion and disability research in South African HE

The role of lecturers

Within the literature on the academic inclusion of SWDs, there is emphasis on the role that could be played by lecturers in ensuring the academic success of SWDs. Given the growing number of these students, several scholars emphasise the need for HEIs to train their lecturers to best serve the academic needs of this group. For instance, for dyslexic students to succeed academically, their lecturers may have to be aware of their learning needs and challenges and need to be patient when dealing with the former in the classroom setting (Ryder & Norwich 2019). Lecturers have also been encouraged to be willing to provide direct and intensive instruction as required when teaching dyslexic students (Lyon *et al*. 2001). One of the ways of doing this is through strengthening academic programming for (students with learning disabilities) SWLDs, as well as

through paying more attention to "adequate reading and writing skills (modified with the proper accommodations when needed and justified)" (Janiga & Costenbader 2002: 469). HEIs have an obligation to fully understand the diverse academic needs of SWLDs enrolled in their institutions and integrate these into their transition plans (Levinson & Ohler 1998).

Mutanga (2017a) has noted that for South African HEIs to achieve genuine inclusion, there need to be positive attitudes towards diversity on the part of lecturers as this will create a conducive environment for SWDs to flourish in their university academic endeavours. Researchers agree that upon gaining access to HEIs, the progress and participation of SWDs in academic courses is negatively affected by negative attitudes of lecturers (Leyser *et al*. 2000; Campbell *et al*. 2003; Moriña 2017; Soorenian 2013; Riddell *et al*. 2005; Hadjikakou *et al*. 2010). This literature confirms the view of Hadjikakou *et al*. (2010) that the academic progress of SWDs in HE is affected by the attitudes of faculty members and their willingness to provide accommodations.

The existing literature thus points to the role of lecturers as important stakeholders who can either be enabling or disabling in the facilitation of the academic inclusion of SWDs. Where lecturers hold negative attitudes towards SWDs they play a disabling role in relation to the academic success of SWDs. This because such lecturers are less inclined to design and teach a curriculum which addresses the specific needs of students with diverse disabilities (Hadjikakou *et al*. 2010). Lecturers' negative attitudes towards SWDs are also prevalent in countries with long established A-DL (Hartley 2012). It is evident from this that the availability of supportive legislation does not necessarily translate into positive attitudes on the part of lecturers in HEIs (Beilke & Yssel 1999).

Much of the knowledge about lecturers' practices in relation to supporting the academic inclusion of SWDs come from qualitative studies with SWDs as well as with lecturers. Some South African studies of SWDs have reported how these students are facing various forms of exclusion by their lecturers. This was confirmed, for example, in Ndlovu & Walton's (2016: 4) South African study of SWDs which concluded that lecturers' reluctance to support SWDs often

emanated from their "negative perceptions of the capabilities of students with disabilities and low expectations of their academic performance".

Research has suggested that lecturers' perceptions and experiences ought to be studied because their negative attitudes will influence the academic success or failure of the SWDs (Rao 2004). Chiwandire's (2017) study explored the joint experiences of lecturers and SWDs at Rhodes University from an academic inclusion standpoint. In her doctoral dissertation, Lyner-Cleophas (2016) also jointly sampled lecturers and SWDs at Stellenbosch University. The study sought to understand how staff members experienced the inclusion and exclusion of SWDs at this institution (Lyner-Cleophas 2016). The research finds that the academic success of SWDs depends heavily on the willingness of lecturers to teach in ways that include these students (Ndlovu & Walton 2016). In the South African HE context, studies of lecturers (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015; Mutanga & Walker 2017; Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015; Mayat & Amosun 2011; Mutanga 2019; Howell 2005) suggest that lecturers are intentionally dodging their responsibility to support SWDs by constantly referring SWDs to Disability Units.

Given how lecturers' negative attitudes affect the academic inclusion of SWDs, awareness raising initiatives targeting lecturers have been suggested as the best solution. For instance, several researchers have proposed the need to sensitise or educate lecturers about disability and individual differences in general and how students with diverse disabilities ought to be educated and supported academically in mainstream classroom settings (Fichten *et al*. 1997). Most proponents of disability awareness raising initiatives, predominantly write from an academic inclusion standpoint and hold that sensitising lecturers on issues of disability has beneficial outcomes for SWDs (Jameel 2011). These proponents argue that doing so will enable lecturers to be able to appropriately meet the specific educational needs of SWDs (Gibson 2012).

Numerous studies have been conducted in order to explore the impact of providing disability training aimed at changing lecturers' attitudes. Murray *et al*. (2009) conducted a survey of faculty members at US universities which examined the relationship between disability-focused

training and attitudes towards SWDs. This survey found that faculty members who had previously attended disability-related workshops, training and courses reported the most positive attitudes compared to those who did not receive such workshops or training (Murray *et al*. 2009). Likewise, a qualitative study of South African lecturers also indicated that participants who attended sensitisation workshops on how to support SWDs were more receptive to delivering disability friendly curricula in comparison to those who did not (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015). Although in most HEIs, these sensitisation workshops are often conducted by DUSMs, other authors, however, suggest that these workshops would have a more positive impact if they were to be led by SWDs themselves (Erten 2011).

The voice of SWDs in research

Given the underrepresentation of SWDs in HEIs, these students are more likely to face challenges in exercising their right to equal access and participation in the learning process. This has prompted an emphasis on research, which aims at giving SWDs a voice to share their experiences and challenges, so that their HEIs can find ways of addressing these concerns. For example, Oliver (1996) has been critical of how research about disability issues has alienated PWDs by failing to involve them or reflect their perspective on the whole research process. Scholars have argued that the lack of a voice among PWDs is related to a myriad of "attitudinal and institutional barriers" faced by PWDs when encountering "entities such as employers, businesses, and public agencies" (Silverstein 2000: 1695).

Within educational settings, similar concerns have been raised and this has resulted in calls to give SWDs a voice — calls which have influenced researchers who have taken on board the criticism that these students' voices ought not to be absent from discourses in the domains of HE scholarship, research, and practice (Kraus 2008). Despite the passage of A-DLs in many countries, SWDs themselves are still frequently denied opportunities to be heard (Fuller *et al*. 2004 see also Hurst 1996). Research that takes seriously the perspectives of SWDs is central in institutions assessing these students' educational needs and being able to respond appropriately (Gibson 2012; Kioko & Makoelle 2014).

Much of the existing literature which aims to give SWDs a voice has focused on the question of academic inclusion. Studies which explore the experiences of SWDs in HE, particularly those focusing on how these students experience academic inclusion, have been conducted in countries like the UK (Chard & Couch 1998; Goode 2007; Riddell 1998; Riddell & Weedon 2014; Bishop & Rhind 2011; Kioko & Makoelle 2014; Fuller *et al*. 2004; Jacklin *et al*. 2007; Hopkins 2011; Gibson 2012; Madriaga *et al*. 2011; Kendall 2016); the US (Trammell 2006; Trammell 2009; Denhart 2008); Canada (Erten 2011; Duquette 2000; Hutcheon & Wolbring 2012; McKenzie 2015); Australia (Brett 2010; Hughes *et al*. 2015); Scotland (Hall & Tinklin 1998; Tinklin & Hall 1999; Riddell *et al*. 2010); Ireland (Shevlin *et al*. 2004); Israel (Sachs & Schreuer 2011); Norway (Brandt 2011; Almog 2011); Cyprus (Hadjikakou & Hartas 2008; Hadjikakou *et al*. 2010); Spain (Moriña *et al*. 2013); India (Jameel 2011); Botswana (Moswela & Mukhopadhyay 2011); Uganda (Kiyimba 1997) and Zimbabwe (Chataika 2007; Chataika 2010; Mutswanga & Chataika 2016).

There is a consensus in the literature (see, for instance, Fuller *et al*. 2004; Kioko & Makoelle 2014; Vickerman & Blundell 2010; Hughes *et al*. 2015; Research Briefing 2008) from different settings that SWDs should be given a voice, but to date this has mainly been discussed in relation to issues of academic inclusion. The rationale for this focus on academic inclusion matters is that these researchers are mainly concerned with ensuring that HEIs are as inclusive as possible, so that SWDs can succeed academically. Academic success in HE still takes the traditional approach form where it is mainly measured in terms of students with good grades being able to successfully graduate (Hall & Sandler 1982). The positive outcome of graduating with good grades is that it paves the way for graduate SWDs to successfully transition into the mainstream labour market and not only be able to contribute to the economy, but also be able to escape poverty, thus improving their quality of life (Fuller *et al*. 2004; Hutcheon & Wolbring 2012; Riddell *et al.* 2005; Graf *et al*. 2004).

In the policy research realm, scholars contend that the discrimination against SWDs in HEIs stems from the fact that their needs are not given due consideration right from the outset of the designing of disability policies and processes. Scholars who hold this view take the disability

movement slogan seriously: “Nothing about us without us” (Kidney & McDonald 2014: 1014). This means that SWDs should be consulted on issues related to their welfare. In addition, SWDs should also “be actively involved in planning, creating or changing all aspects of our society” (Chard & Couch 1998: 605). Within the HE context, several studies have indicated that the continual underrepresentation and marginalisation of SWDs stems primarily from these institutions’ reluctance to consult with SWDs when developing and implementing disability policy guidelines and practices (Moswela & Mukhopadhyay 2011; Vickerman & Blundell 2010; Green 2007).

It is common for studies to recommend the importance of involving SWDs in the development of disability policy guidelines (see, for example, Moswela & Mukhopadhyay 2011). While there is a plethora of literature recommending the need to consult with SWDs, in reality, however, universities seldom consult with SWDs. This reinforces the continual underrepresentation of SWDs in the HE environment (Malakpa 1997). Hurst (1996) enjoins HEIs to consult proactively with SWDs and hear their opinions and lived experiences. Doing so is important if these institutions are to gain a full understanding of these students’ educational needs or potential difficulties and barriers faced by them (Tinklin *et al*. 2004). It is widely acknowledged that achieving positive support for SWDs requires more than just legislative change (MacLean & Gannon 1997), because in practice legislation alone often fails SWDs.

Legislation must be backed by active consultation with SWDs, if we are to work towards a fairer HE (Barnes 2005; Butterwick & Benjamin 2006). Also, SWDs themselves are best positioned to identify barriers hindering their full participation and then advise their institutions’ relevant stakeholders on how they can come up with appropriate practical solutions, which can effectively address these challenges. As Hopkins (2011: 711) argues, these students’ insider perspectives, if taken seriously, can result in “possible improvements to policy and practice in higher education” with regard to academic inclusion matters. Apart from giving SWDs a voice, with regards to the process of disability policy implementation, scholars like Kochung (2014) assert that providing SWDs with opportunities to be represented in various student organisations and university managements could be a fruitful avenue to getting their academic concerns heard.

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is "the ability to communicate one's needs and wants and to make decisions about the supports necessary to achieve them" (Stodden 2000: 36). In the context of disability research self-advocacy can take the form of giving PWDs a voice, listening to their needs to take control of their lives, and growing their confidence and belief in their abilities (Inclusion International 2016). Self-advocacy has its roots in the disability rights movement (Hartley 2012). The disability rights movement aimed to conscientise PWDs to know and exercise their rights to participate fully in mainstream society (Inclusion International 2016). Central to self-advocacy is that it enables individuals with disabilities to "learn how to advocate on their own behalf rather than letting others advocate for them" (Chan *et al*. 1981: 199).

Within the HE context, there is an abundance of literature which suggests that SWDs need to acquire self-advocacy skills if they are to lobby their HEIs to create a welcoming environment for them to succeed academically. This is evidenced by many commentators who are in agreement that self-advocacy skills are critical in facilitating the transition to, and persistence of SWDs in post-secondary education (Adams & Proctor 2010; Daly-Cano *et al*. 2015; Getzel & Thoma 2008; Hadley 2006; Thoma & Wehmeyer 2005; Webster 2004; Lamb 2004; Janiga & Costenbader 2002; Vaccaro *et al*. 2015). The reason for this is that through developing self-advocacy skills students will be in an enabling position to overcome the academic barriers they are facing in HEIs as they will be expected to deal with these challenges independently (Stuntzner & Hartley 2015; Janiga & Costenbader 2002; Daly-Cano *et al*. 2015; Test *et al*. 2005; Hadley 2006).

Literature points to the fact that SWDs who have acquired self-advocacy skills stand better chances of succeeding academically in comparison to their peers without self-advocacy skills and that having self-advocacy skills makes the transition from high school to college more manageable (Vacarro *et al*. 2015; Janiga & Costenbader 2002). Vaccaro *et al*. (2015: 670) conducted a study of eight college first-year SWDs, which examined how these students developed a sense of belonging as they transitioned into their first year in the post-secondary

environment, and the study found that "self-advocacy skills on the part of some participants positively resulted in them developing a sense of belonging".

Many barriers still exist even though there is a plethora of literature on the need for SWDs to self-advocate for themselves in HE. For instance, what makes learning to self-advocate a challenging and complex process for many SWDs is that often these students "are not afforded access to information on how to advocate for themselves, and as a result, many must struggle to figure out if, when, and how to self-advocate" (Stuntzner & Hartley 2015: 2). Although many scholars highlight the need for SWDs to acquire self-advocacy skills, especially in their first academic year, in reality, the ability to engage in self-advocacy takes many years to develop (Janiga & Costenbader 2002).

Bryan & Myers (2006) propose that those SWDs who transition into university and who already have, or who quickly acquire self-advocacy skills, need to also teach their disabled peers how to follow suit. Best practices exemplars with regard to having higher numbers of SWDs with self-advocacy skills come mainly from Global North countries. In the Netherlands, for instance, SWDs with self-advocacy skills have challenged their HEIs' tendency to make *ad hoc* adjustments by frequently fighting for their right to be recognised (Katsui 2009). On the contrary, countries in the Global South are still lagging behind as there are not many SWDs in a position to self-advocate for their rights on these campuses. In the South African context, researchers on disability inclusion in HE (see, for instance, Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015; Swart & Greyling 2011) have enjoined SWDs to learn more about, and strengthen, their self-advocacy skills if they are to effectively communicate their academic needs, create awareness and demand academic-oriented support.

Disability Unit Staff Members

Disability Units are central to the mainstreaming and inclusion of SWDs at most South African HEIs (FOTIM 2011). However, while significant attention has been paid in the extant HE and disability literature on the need to include the perspectives of PWDs in research on the subject, the voices of Disability Unit personnel continue to be largely occluded in the literature on the inclusion of SWDs in South Africa and elsewhere. There has been an emphasis on listening to the voice of SWDs as the only way to understand the complexity of their experiences as they navigate HE (Oman 2017). There has also been a focus on lecturers on the grounds that their attitudes and their willingness to provide reasonable accommodations significantly affects the academic success of SWDs (Wolman *et al*. 2004). Relevant and important as this literature may be, it has resulted in the silencing of the voices of other personnel who are equally important in the provision of day-to-day support for SWDs. In the South African HE context, DUSMs, are also known as disability coordinators, "disability support personnel" (Trammell 2009: 106). In other contexts, DUSMs are also referred to as disability-service officers (Rigler 2013). Scholars have noted the need to prioritise alternative voices when doing disability research. Chard & Couch (1998: 608-609), for instance, have cautioned that "disabled people do not have all the answers either, advice needs to come from a balanced group". Following Seale (2017: 155), part of this balanced group is "disability support staff [who] have also been marginalised in both practice and research" in favour of SWDs and lecturers as research participants.

There is a paucity of literature on DUSMs and the few texts that are available focus on the important role these staff members play in supporting SWDs in their HE journeys. Most of the literature that touches on these personnel has to do with their role in facilitating the removal of learning barriers which hinder SWDs' academic inclusion and ability to succeed in HE. The literature notes that Disability Units in university settings play crucial roles in terms of providing academic accommodations for SWDs, educating professors or lecturers on how to effectively teach SWDs, and encouraging SWDs to become self-advocates (Dowrick *et al*. 2005). South African scholars have primarily associated the role of Disability Units with the provision of "academically related support services for disabled students. Common services are Braille, tape-

recorded readings, sign language interpreters, alternative assessments, and assistive technology such as text to voice converters" (Matshedisho 2010: 731). On South African campuses DUSMs are charged with such responsibilities as playing an advocacy role and liaising with various university departments on how to best address the academic needs of SWDs (Howell 2005).

Concerning teaching SWDs self-advocacy skills, in Janiga & Costenbader's (2002) study of disability coordinators, these participants expressed concerns over how SWLDs at the post-secondary level had inadequate self-advocacy skills and how this was likely to negatively impact on their academic success. Given the problem of disability stigma, some commentators have enjoined DUSMs to focus their attention on facilitating the provision of reasonable accommodations (Wolanin & Steele 2004). Other commentators have also called DUSMs to also focus attention on initiating programmes aimed specifically at reducing disability-related stigma if educational institutions are to be welcoming spaces for SWDs (Trammell 2009). Emphasising the importance of DUSMs in the successful participation of SWDs in HE, SWDs sampled in Erten's (2011: 110) study confirmed that they always "needed assistance from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) to act as a liaison in approaching course instructors". The same applies to Matshedisho's (2010: 731) study of SWDs, where he noted the importance of some South African Disability Units in providing such academic oriented support as "communicating the needs of disabled students to faculty, campus advocacy and helping disabled students with their daily campus challenges".

The role of DUSMs has also been noted in the South African literature which documents their critical role in fostering the integration of disability awareness campus-wide, especially in relation to issues of teaching and learning, as well fostering a holistic approach to disability inclusion (Howell 2015). In addition to that, some South African Disability Units have been praised for playing an important a role in ensuring positive outcomes and a successful learning experience for SWDs (FOTIM 2011). Matshedisho (2007) is of the opinion that DUSMs play an important role in providing direct and indirect support to SWDs. Direct support includes, for example, "the provision of assistive devices, services and assistance with administrative procedures", while indirect support refers, for example, to occasions when "Disability Unit staff

train lecturers, and work collaboratively with them in teaching students with different categories of disabilities" (Matshedisho 2007: 687). Not only do DUSMs play an important role in helping SWDs to address their academic needs, they also assist with non-academic aspects such as "securing residences and adjusting to the university environment" (Matshedisho 2010: 732).

DUSMs are thus in an enabling position to effect positive change in the lives of SWDs and these staff members are expected to take a leading role in proactively promoting the inclusion of SWDs, particularly in South African HEIs (FOTIM 2011). South Africa's former Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Blade Nzimande, at the 2010 Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA)[10] symposium, stated that (cited in Pretorius *et al.* 2011: 2):

> [F]or far too long, disability issues have surfaced in our national and institutional policy documents and plans without meaningful action being taken to address the challenges which exist [therefore] Disability Units at the HEIs can and should play an important role in ensuring fair and equitable policies and practices for SWDs.

Despite this call, most studies, up to date, exploring the experiences of DUSMs have been conducted in the Global North, for instance, Madaus *et al*. (2010) conducted a survey of 183 post-secondary disability service providers throughout the US in order to understand the experiences of SWLDs transitioning from high school to post-secondary education. Likewise, Janiga & Costenbader (2002) also surveyed disability coordinators or DUSMs in 74 colleges and universities in US's New York State in order to evaluate the types of services and effectiveness of transition plans and to determine how well these addressed the learning needs of SWLDs. In this study, particular attention was paid to eliciting the participants' perceptions of how well the SWLDs they served, had been prepared by the transition services they had received in high

[10] Established in 2007, the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA) is an advocacy and rights-based non-profit organisation (NPO) representing the collective voice of disability services in higher and further education institutions in South Africa. It is recognised and endorsed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and is accepted as a community of practice by Higher Education South Africa (HESA).

schools (Janiga & Costenbader 2002). Participants in this study reported little satisfaction with the transition services provided to SWLDs (Janiga & Costenbader 2002).

In 2013, Rigler (2013) conducted a qualitative study of disability coordinators jointly with SWDs in order to explore the retention rate of college SWDs, and the factors that encourage this group to successfully persist to graduation in four-year public universities in the southeast region of the US. In Scotland, Hall & Tinklin (1998) surveyed disability coordinators in Scottish universities and colleges in order to gain insights into how they support SWDs in their learning process. In the UK context, a recent study by Koca-Atabey (2017) investigated the system designed to support SWDs from the perspective of university disability coordinators. The study was particularly interested in probing such issues as the support structure within the university and departmental responses to student needs (Koca-Atabey 2017).

While the importance of the role of Disability Units and their personnel has been foregrounded in this literature, to date what we know about Disability Units stems mainly from the experiences of SWDs. In other words, the limited available knowledge about DUSMs up to now has been generated from the perspectives of SWDs and these studies' findings show that most of these participants are appreciative of the support they were given by their DUSMs. For instance, the female SWDs at one Canadian university sampled in Erten's (2011) study acknowledged the positive role played by their Disability Unit — referred to in that study as the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Central to these participants' views was their appreciation of the OSD in acting as an important support mechanism in facilitating their learning needs (Erten 2011). Furthermore, these participants found the support services provided by the OSD very helpful, especially those disability coordinators who played a mediating role between the faculty and these students (Erten 2011). Likewise, research in the UK has shown that SWDs have appreciated the support services they were offered by their Disability Units (Research Briefing 2008). Hall & Tinklin's (1998) study of SWDs' experiences of Scottish HEIs found that most of the participants were happy with the academic support provided to them by their disability coordinators and these students felt that as a result of this support, they had the same opportunities as other students to succeed.

In his study Matshedisho (2010: 731-732) sampled South African students with diverse disabilities using self-administered questionnaires and found that participants spoke highly of the centrality of their university's Disability Unit in their academic and social life: "25 per cent of students who said that they enjoyed their first day at university also reported that they had the support of their disability units in terms of orientation and feeling welcomed". As such, they attributed their smooth adjustment to the university to their Disability Unit (Matshedisho 2010). However, this study further indicted that "the 75 per cent of students who felt uncomfortable on their first day at university also reported that they did not have the support of a disability unit" (Matshedisho 2010: 731-732). South African studies show that some SWDs, particularly blind students, have criticised their DUSMs for a delay in making study materials available in accessible formats (Lourens 2015; Van Der Merwe 2017). Another South African study on this matter is that of Naidoo (2010), that explored the perceptions and experiences of six SWDs at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College campus regarding this university's Disability Unit. In that study the author was mainly interested in gaining an in-depth understanding of the facilities and services offered by this specific Disability Unit and whether or not its functioning was effective in meeting the daily learning needs of SWDs (Naidoo 2010).

Within South African literature it has been suggested that Disability Units are central to the country's HEIs being able to address issues of access, retention and participation of SWDs (FOTIM 2011). As noted by Howell (2015), Disability Units on campuses must play a key role in influencing the teaching and learning processes if they are to foster a holistic approach to disability inclusion. Unfair treatment and exclusion of SWDs admitted at South African HEIs has, and continues to be, associated with denying these students equal educational opportunities (Mutanga 2017a).

Most of the emerging literature about the role of South African Disability Units has taken a comparative form – contrasting Disability Units based at historically white institutions (HWIs) with those based at historically black institutions (HBIs). This literature has noted that Disability

Units in the former have more financial and human resources for enrolling and supporting students with diverse disabilities compared to the latter ones which do not have adequate funding, thus negatively affecting the academic success of SWDs (Chiwandire & Vincent 2016; Van Der Merwe 2017; Mutanga 2015). This was also raised as a matter of concern in the *White paper for post-school education and training: Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system,* which noted that "there is less funding for and resourcing of disability units at historically black institutions compared to historically white institutions" (DHET 2013: 46). This has its roots in the legacy of apartheid which has resulted in HBIs continuing to face severe financial, human, infrastructure and other resource constraints (Badat 2015).

While the importance of Disability Units is acknowledged in the South African literature, South African studies have to date largely focused on the experiences of lecturers and SWDs and not on DUSMs themselves. An exception is FOTIM's (2011) exploratory study which sampled both DUSMs and SWDs. In that study face to face interviews were conducted with the Heads of the Disability Units and their staff members during researchers' visits to seven campus sites in order to describe and analyse the role and function of Disability Units. SWDs from 15 campuses were also interviewed (FOTIM 2011). Likewise, in his 2015 doctoral qualitative study based on two South African HEIs, Mutanga (2015) sampled three DUSMs and 14 SWDs from various disability categories as well as four lecturers in order to understand disability and the experiences of disabled students concerning issues of academic inclusion.

Few studies focus specifically on DUSMs and most of the available studies have sampled this cadre mainly on issues of academic inclusion and not social inclusion. To date, Ntombela & Soobrayen's (2013) study is the only South African study which has solely explored the experiences of DUSMs — and that study focused on the issue of academic inclusion. Specifically, the study explored the nature of access challenges faced by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood campus's students with visual disabilities with the participants being two DUSMs (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013). The study found that although access has improved for SWDs at this institution, there are still systemic barriers that limit the participation of students with visual disabilities in academic programmes, and concludes that improved access

requires partnership between government and HE institutions to monitor and support systemic transformation (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013).

Conclusion

According to Tugli *et al*. (2013a), the lack of necessary access and support services in South African HEIs has resulted in SWDs being excluded socially and academically. South African literature on disability in HE has begun calling for the social inclusion of SWDs to be taken equally as seriously as the academic inclusion needs of this group, if these institutions are to create a holistic and welcoming environment for SWDs. As this literature review has shown, South African HEIs (as well as those elsewhere) still have a long way to go to achieve this goal. This is because SWDs and lecturers have and continue to be the centre of attention for many authors researching the situation of SWDs in HEIs. Moreover, attention is mainly on academic inclusion, thus excluding the social aspects of inclusion. While the abundance of qualitative phenomenological studies exploring both the experiences of SWDs and lecturers are to be welcomed, this has resulted in omitting other important voices such as those of DUSMs who are important in facilitating both the academic and social inclusion of SWDs. Hence, the present study aims at addressing this gap in the literature by sampling DUSMs from HEIs from various of South Africa's nine provinces on the subject of social inclusion. In this way, the study adds perspectives from a little researched group of participants — namely DUSMs — as well as focusing on an under-researched aspect of inclusion, specifically social inclusion. The thesis argues, moreover, as the following chapter explains, that a paradigm shift is required in how inclusion and disability are approached in South Africa's HEIs — a shift away from Western individualist norms which create disabling ableist environments and towards the inculcations of the values of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu,* which foreground human dignity, and the value of the "whole person", regardless of their individual characteristics to the life of the community.

In conclusion, it is important to shed light on how a literature review helps one to make sense of, or provides one with, the necessary insights into the conceptual and contextual concerns of the study. In particular, this chapter has highlighted the relegation of issues regarding social

inclusion as a support mechanism for SWDs in most HEIs internationally and those in South Africa. This has been attributed to the fact that most HEIs tend to focus on supporting SWDs from an academic inclusion standpoint at the cost of social inclusion. Hence, the present study hopes to fill this gap by investigating the issues related to the social inclusion of SWDs as it hopes that doing so will generate useful findings which can add new knowledge to debates around the inclusion of SWDs in HE in the South African context and perhaps, internationally.

Chapter 3: The social inclusion of SWDs in South African HE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss, in greater detail, South Africa's HE disability policy framework, as well as issues of social inclusion in relation to SWDs, specifically in this country's HEIs. The first section of the chapter presents a discussion of how the South African disability policy framework adopted and endorses the dominant academically-oriented inclusion approach as the best way of accommodating SWDs, and I present the rationale behind such an approach. I then propose a move away from this dominant academically-oriented inclusion approach. This directional shift subsequently lays the foundation for my thesis, which argues for the need for South African HEIs to focus on meeting the social needs of SWDs as well. The second section of this chapter provides an in-depth discussion of issues of social inclusion in the contexts of South African HEIs, specifically in relation to SWDs in these institutions. This discussion begins by defining the concept of social inclusion through drawing on recent South African disability policy frameworks, particularly on how these frameworks define this concept, and the corresponding obligations they place on HEIs in addressing the social inclusion needs of SWDs. The discussion goes on to draw on a review of literature on disability inclusion in South African HE that discusses several issues that either facilitate or hinder the social inclusion of SWDs at these institutions. Some of these issues which will be discussed in greater detail include those related to the role of co-curricular/extracurricular activities; inclusive campus residence culture; physical comfortability and accessibility of residence buildings; friendships and social interactions between SWDs and non-disabled students; the role of DUSMs in facilitating the social inclusion of SWDs; campus student engagement, especially disability activism, and, finally, the promotion of the health and well-being of SWDs. Lastly, I will conclude this section by discussing the rationale for the study, especially how the study hopes to fill in the gap regarding the current dearth of literature investigating the question of social inclusion. I also discuss how, by focusing on social inclusion, this thesis hopes to generate findings which could potentially contribute new knowledge to the field of DS in the South African HE context.

Disability policy framework and practices in South African HE

In South Africa, following the country's first democratic election in 1994, the policy context changed rapidly in support of increasing and broadening access to university study as one aspect of a strong focus on the redress of past inequalities (Cloete 2002). This commitment to equity and access was reflected in policy documents of the time (DoE 1997; Ministry of Education 2001). It also continues to be emphasised in more recent policymaking (DoE 2012; National Planning Commission 2011). The changing policy environment has translated into many visible changes in the sector (Wilson-Strydom 2015).

The post-apartheid ANC government's early policymakers developed several HE policies aimed at "putting in place appropriate redress strategies for the past inequities of the apartheid era" (Mapesela & Hay 2005: 12 see also Akoojee & Nkomo 2007; Wilson-Strydom 2015). In short, these policies were aimed at achieving radical transformation of South Africa's HE environment (Badat 2010; Mapesela & Hay 2005; Roebken 2008). Transformation thus became a shorthand term to encapsulate a variety of initiatives aimed at "removing barriers and providing access to higher education for Black students, disadvantaged groups, and women" (Belyakov *et al.* 2009: 1).

South Africa's post-1994 HE disability policies (see, for example, the 1997 *White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation*; the 1997 *White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy*; the 1997 *Higher Education Act*; the 2001 *National Plan for Higher Education*; the 2001 *Education White Paper 6, Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* and the 2018 *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System*) draw from the country's Constitution in their emphasis on the need to address the disadvantages that PWDs experienced in the past and continue to experience, and the need to prioritise funding of HE opportunities for SWDs in the present. The new Constitution's Section 29(1)(a) guarantees everyone (including PWDs) the right to education and prohibits the state from unfairly discriminating "directly or indirectly against anyone on the grounds of disability" (Section 9(3) among other grounds). *Education White Paper 3* called for

the establishment of a new funding mechanism to achieve the principles of equity and redress through the abolishment of all forms of discrimination, including disability through empowerment measures, "including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for individuals and institutions" (DoE 1997: 7-8).

Likewise, the 1996 *Green Paper* proposed the implementation of "funding mechanisms that will embody the principles of affordability, sustainability and shared costs, as well as those of equity, redress, development, democratisation, effectiveness and efficiency" (DoE 1996: 6). The *National Plan for Higher Education* thus calls on HEIs, through their institutional plans and strategies, to commit themselves to increase access for people with special education needs (Ministry of Education 2001). Scholars (see, for example, Mapesela & Hay 2005: 112) have applauded these policies as "the best in the world, meeting internationally acclaimed standards". Some have argued this has resulted in South African universities becoming "one of the emerging educational destinations in Southern Africa as well as globally" (Lee & Sehoole 2015: 828). The *White Paper 3* and the Soudien Report (DoE 2008) in particular highlighted the immediate need on the part of HEIs to transform their spaces. It is argued that such transformation is important if these institutions are "to promote a sense of belonging and comfort for various individuals who come into contact with these institutions" (Munyuki 2015: 129).

What these policies have in common is their emphasis on "equality in the distribution of financial resources" (Harber 1998: 571) as a key component of successful HE transformation in the form of widening access to HEIs for previously disadvantaged students (see Pandor 2005). In 1996 the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) — a student loan scheme to fund needy but capable students in HE was established (Cele & Menon 2006; Carrim & Wangenge-Ouma 2012). NSFAS caters for SWDs with a NSFAS bursary scheme tailored to giving non-means tested financial support to SWDs to study at one of the country's 23 public HEIs (National Student Financial Aid Scheme 2012). Through the NSFAS scheme the government "intended to open opportunities in higher and further education and training and provide the necessary additional teaching and learning (curriculum) support for students to overcome any

barriers to learning which have resulted from their disability" (National Student Financial Aid Scheme 2012: 3).

The introduction of the NSFAS scheme has translated into many visible changes in the sector as evidenced by the increase in the number of SWDs enrolling in HEIs (Wilson-Strydom 2015). In the 2011 academic year alone, government earmarked R76.8 million in order "to increase the funding available to students with disabilities and learners with special needs" (*University World News* 2011). According to the information recorded in the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), this allocation of R76.8 million subsequently saw an increase in the "number of enrolled students with disabilities from 5 856 in 2011 to 7 110 in 2013" (Hammond 2015). Through NSFAS, R45.5 million in bursaries went to 1 368 SWDs in 2012, and R69.9 million benefited 1 383 SWDs in 2014 (Hammond 2015).

South African HEIs have attempted to achieve the goal of "access with participation", which means ensuring that students (particularly those from poor socio-economic backgrounds) are not only granted entrance and acceptance at a HE institution, but are also provided with the required support to the completion of their studies (Belyakov *et al*. 2008). The South African government's prioritising of increasing student access to HEIs in the early 1990s was influenced by responding to "the global international calls for greater access evidenced in the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, which, in its preamble, called for 'equality of access'" (UNESCO 1998).

To achieve this, greater emphasis was placed on "equality in the distribution of financial resources" (Harber 1998: 571). Doing so is seen as a key component of successful HE transformation (Pandor 2005). NSFAS aimed at "ensuring that access to higher education is facilitated by offering loans to disadvantaged students provided that students meet the entrance criteria of institutions" (Cele & Menon 2006: 43). In 2017, the former Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, noted that "since its inception as the Tertiary

Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) in 1991, NSFAS has awarded about R72 billion in loans and bursaries" (Minister Nzimande cited in Ndlendele 2017).

The availability of NSFAS funding played an important role in overcoming past inequities by increasing the number of disadvantaged black students accessing HEIs (Pityana 2006). For example, Cooper & Subotzky's (2001 see also Pityana 2006) research concluded that South Africa has experienced a "revolution" in the increase in proportion of black students in HE. The ratio of black students in total university enrolment increased from 32 per cent in 1990 to 60 per cent in 2000, while in technikons enrolments rose from 32 per cent to 72 per cent over the same period (Cooper & Subotzky 2001). Thus, by 2000, there was a majority of African students both in universities (60%) and technikons (72%) (Cooper & Subotzky 2001). These demographic changes must be amongst the most remarkable in the world during the 1990s (Cloete 2002).

Through its new *National Plan for Higher Education*, the state put pressure on institutions to swell the HE participation rate from 1% to 20%, because South Africa needs a larger pool of high-skill labour to promote development (Ministry of Education 2001). Between 1999 and 2003, first entry students at South Africa's 21 public universities and 15 technikons increased from about 131 000 to about 182 000 with total headcount students increasing by about 180 000 (i.e. by 25%) from 540 000 to 718 000 (DoE 2005).

Wilson-Strydom (2011: 407) has warned that these statistics should not tempt one to assume that the South African HE sector "is performing well in terms of both increasing and broadening university access and that social justice gains have been made". In practice, research has indicated that many South African HEIs have failed to achieve the 1997 *White Paper 3* objectives as they subsequently experienced challenges in retaining most previously disadvantaged students because of "student dropout, low throughput, and low graduation rates" (Cele & Meno 2006: 38). This shows that HEIs were struggling to meet the objectives of the 1997 *White Paper 3* which enjoined institutions to ensure that equity of access is "complemented

by a concern for equity of outcomes. Increased access must not lead to a 'revolving door' syndrome for students, with high failure and dropout rates" (DoE 1997: 22).

As the South Africa's Department of Education has admitted, "the government lost approximately R 4,5 million (half of the actual subsidy paid) in subsidy paid to HEIs because of high dropout rates between 2000 and 2003" (Cele & Meno 2006: 38). Some "30 per cent of students enrolled at the beginning of year 2000 had dropped out by the end of the year and a further 20 per cent by the end of 2002. Out of the 50 per cent of students remaining in the system, less than half graduated in record time" (Cele & Meno 2006: 38). In 2006, and in subsequent years, research found that on average, about 25 percent of students, mainly from low income households, were excluded annually from HEIs on academic and financial grounds (Koen *et al.* 2006).

Likewise, the 2007 Student Pathways study by the Human Sciences Research Council found that, on average, only 15% of South African students finish their degrees in the allotted time (Macgregor 2007). As for the majority of students, the study found that "a shocking 40% of South African students drop out of university in their first year". Many of these are poor, black, and first-generation students from low-income, less educated families who are the most likely to drop out because of financial difficulties (Macgregor 2007). While many of these are NSFAS recipients, this had little impact on their success rates as "loans and bursaries do not cover the full costs of study, leaving poor students struggling to meet living and other expenses" (Macgregor 2007). In 2010, similar trends were also witnessed, and a "45 % dropout rate among higher education students in South Africa" was attributed to inadequate human resources, like lecturers and faculty numbers at universities whose numbers remained static in contrast with increasing numbers of students enrolled in these institutions (DoE 2010). This results in large classes and inadequate venues (Machika 2013).

While the availability of the enabling legislative policies and NSFAS scheme's financial support has witnessed the "growing student numbers and improved access to higher education, especially

for disadvantaged black students as a key to overcoming past inequities" (Pityana 2006), the above statistics illustrate that the academic success of these students continues to be a serious challenge. While the increasing percentage of black students in HEIs is not unwelcome, these statistics "hide institutions' inability to interrogate transformation itself", thus calling into question South Africa's HE transformation process which is often narrowly reduced to questions of equity as a result of the country's colonial and Apartheid history (Lange 2014: 4).

The low success output reality is a concern also raised by Koen *et al*. (2006: 405) who have questioned the role of South African HEIs for "hav[ing] become 'sponges' that take in excess students at the behest of politicians". This has set the stage for huge disappointment, not only on the part of the HE sector, but also of students who are NSFAS recipients themselves and who enter HEIs "with high expectations of success based on their matriculation results but then become despondent as they experience academic failure" (Machika 2013: 92). This in turn denies them future employment opportunities as "having a degree has increasingly become a requirement not only for entering the professions, but also for many service- and technology-oriented jobs" (Belyakov *et al*. 2008: 5).

These national concerns have necessitated a radical shift from the notion of "access with participation" to the notion of "access with success", which holds that in addition to the need to provide entry to HE, there is a need to "monitor and enable student success" (Belyakov *et al*. 2008: 1 see also Harber 1998). Wilson-Strydom (2011: 407), taking a capabilities approach to achieving social inclusion for historically disadvantaged students, has argued that universities are focusing only on increasing the access of students without creating opportunities for such students to achieve academically, and as such are fostering "a new form of social exclusion". Similarly, Akoojee & Nkomo (2007: 385-386) have criticised South Africa's widening participation strategies as failing to guarantee success of the targeted groups, specifically women and black students.

Against this backdrop, the adoption of the notion of "access with success" influenced the formulation of South Africa's *National Plan for Higher Education*, which cites the principle of "access with success" as central in achieving "equity as a form of social inclusion", requiring not only fair opportunities to enter HE but also to succeed in them (Ministry of Education 2001). This idea was taken up by the DHET which described its vision in 2013 as being one of "a differentiated and fully inclusive post-school system that allows all South Africans to access and succeed in relevant post-school education and training" (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2013).

Many South African scholars have attributed the high dropout rates to the early 1990 widening access initiatives which propelled the massive enrolment of underprepared students (National Planning Commission 2011). Democratising HE saw the enrolment of many disadvantaged students who had passed through an inadequate schooling system and who struggled to obtain the necessary financial resources and academic skills to succeed in HE (Koen *et al*. 2006; Knapper 2003). As noted by Cele & Menon (2006: 40), failure on the part of HEIs "to strike a balance between equity of access and equity of outcomes consequently lead to the continued exclusion of historically marginalised groups from participating in the broader economic and social spheres of life". In light of these challenges, universities were enjoined to establish academic development programmes aimed at supporting underprepared students (National Planning Commission 2011). The University of South Africa (UNISA), for example, earmarked "nearly R50 million (US$7.5 million) to establish a comprehensive network of tutors and academic support personnel across the country, in an effort to decrease drop-out and failure rates" (Macgregor 2007).

Other HEIs focused on the inadequacy of NSFAS loans and "called on government to raise student loans and bursaries to relieve the financial pressures on needy students" (Macgregor 2007). Some scholars have noted that quality learning in HE is the way to achieve improved success rates (Gidley *et al.* 2010; Moriña *et al*. 2013). Other scholars have attributed the high dropout rates to a lack of empirical evidence of the situation of students in HEIs, particularly their daily campus needs. In support of this view, Subotzky & Prinsloo (2011) have expressed concerns over South African HEIs' limited knowledge of their students, which makes it difficult

for these institutions to make effective planning interventions to develop an understanding of students and their needs.

These scholars have pointed out that student success is the "responsibility of both the student and the institution; therefore, both institutional and student commitment to students' success is necessary" (Machika 2013: 91 see also Engstrom & Tinto 2008). HEIs should therefore play an active role in employing strategies which can make HEIs a conducive environment for their students to succeed as the success of this group is not coincidental (Engstrom & Tinto 2008). Machika (2013) argues that HEIs need to be fully aware of students' needs and of their own responsibilities for achieving academic success. One way in which HEIs can gain this knowledge is to invite students to "share their views and perspectives about their needs" (Fielding 2001: 125). This view saw a burgeoning of research examining the experiences and needs of previously disadvantaged students in South African HEIs in order to come to a more nuanced understanding of what would or will enhance their access, equal participation, retention, and success (Koen *et al*. 2006; Vincent & Chiwandire 2013; Vincent & Idahosa 2014; Munyuki 2015; Hlatshwayo 2015). Given that approximately "30 per cent of the students who enter the South African higher education system annually drop out during their first year of studies" (Machika 2013: 93), many of these studies have focused on students in their first year of study. In 2010, for instance, Van Wyk *et al.* (2010: 1042) sampled first-year students in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State (UFS) on their views and experiences regarding transformation in their faculty. Likewise, Machika (2013) conducted a study of first-year students in the Faculty of Management at a distance learning institution to explore these students' learner support needs in order to improve their academic success.

In 2015, former Higher Education Minister Nzimande reiterated that the DHET "was committed to expanding access and success in institutions of higher learning for students who have special needs" (*SA News* 2015). Given that the increase in student enrolment rates have coincided with increased dropout rates, the *White paper for post-school education and training* highlighted the urgent need for HEIs to focus their attention on prioritising the improvement of the performance, access, success and throughput rates, particularly "for those groups whose race, gender and

disability status had previously disadvantaged them" (DHET 2013: 7). While the Minister's remarks did on this occasion include reference to SWDs, the access and participation dialogue has to date largely relegated the needs and experiences of SWDs to the margins. Lange (2014: 4) confirmed this by calling into question the narrow conceptualisation of transformation which excludes SWDs in South African HEIs as follows:

> […] transformation has been reduced to the numbers, percentages and ratios of black and white people and, to a lesser extent, men and women involved in or accepted into institutions, professions, positions, education, etc. Very few, if any, other variables like class, sexual orientation, and disability made it into the statistical cut, and the overall orientation of institutions and policies tends to fall under the radar of a more nuanced sense of transformation.

Research shows that South African HEIs have embarked on a variety of "campus diversity initiatives as part of their teaching, research, student service, or outreach programmes" (Cross 2004: 408). Informed by the context and the history of apartheid, the focus of many South African campus diversity initiatives have often been focused on addressing racism and racial, class and gender exclusion (Shrivastava & Shrivastava 2014). For Mafumo (2011: 1554), for example, social justice in HE is defined as equitably meeting "the needs of all students irrespective of their race, sex, or financial background".

The focus on the non-disabled in campus transformation, justice and diversity initiatives, fails to regard what Crenshaw (1989) prominently referred to as the intersectionality of forms of oppression seriously. Research indicates that South African black SWDs in HEIs are the most marginalised of all groups, suggesting the need for social justice and inclusion initiatives to be particularly attentive to their needs and experiences (Howell 2005; Lyner-Cleophas 2016).

Liasidou (2013: 301) analysed how the intersection of disability "with other sources of social disadvantage linked to race, gender and social class" disadvantages SWDs, particularly women in HEIs. The findings of this study show that female SWDs experience compounded and overlapping forms of oppression which affects the group members' lives and educational

trajectories in comparison to their male counterparts because of disabling education policies and practice (Liasidou 2013). Hence, the study recommended the importance of "educational professionals and policymakers understand[ing], develop[ing] and implement[ing] a social justice framework in dealing with difference and diversity" (Liasidou 2013: 301). In South Africa, research finds that female students with disabilities are more disadvantaged than their male counterparts, and are overlooked in gender equality and redress efforts which tend to focus only on black non-disabled female students (Lorenzo 2003; Office of the Deputy President 1997). The 2013 *White Paper on Post-school Education and Training* has called upon HEIs to urgently address the "plight of women with disabilities and disabled students from poor families, throughput rates of disabled students" (DHET 2013: 46-47).

In 2012, SWDs accounted for only 0.6% of total HE enrolments in South Africa, and yet reportedly represent 3.5% of the 20-29 years of age group (Salmi & Bassett 2012). As Deputy Minister Manana admitted in July 2015, "at the moment, the proportion of disabled students is roughly estimated to be less than 1% of the total student population in the post-secondary education and training (PSET) sector — which is a far cry of the Department's target" (DHET 2015). As spelled out in the *White paper for post-school education and training,* these challenges have necessitated the DHET (2013: 7) to "develop a strategic policy framework to guide the improvement of access to and success in post-school education and training for PWDs".

One of the ways of adequately meeting the needs of SWDs, as suggested by Ohajunwa *et al.* (2014: 115), is to include "disability as an issue of transformation". This necessity, for Ntombela (2013), emanates from the minority status of this group in South African HEIs. It is for this reason that Ntombela (2013) has emphasised the need for these institutions transform holistically through also prioritising the needs of SWDs. Likewise, the Soudien Report has also pointed to "a respect for minorities", particularly SWDs, as one of the important characteristics of a genuinely transformed HEI (DoE 2008: 36). Failure to mainstream disability is tantamount to excluding SWDs in the "ongoing institutional transformation" of South African HEIs (DoE 2008: 36; Ntombela 2013; Ohajunwa *et al.* 2014; Ndlovu & Walton 2016).

South African literature has thus questioned HEIs' diversity initiatives for excluding SWDs and has argued for the broadening of the conceptualisation of diversity to address "disability as an issue of diversity in our HEIs" (Ohajunwa *et al*. 2014: 115 see also DoE 2008). The need for addressing disability as an issue of diversity has its roots in the philosophy of inclusive education, which has at its heart the principle of "valuing students' diverse capacities" (Johnson & Fox 2003: 10). While acknowledging the importance of multiple marginalised identities — gender, nationality, race, home language, social background and level of education achievement — there is a need to recognise and celebrate diversity arising from disability equally (Mittler 2000). It is argued that HEIs can recognise and celebrate diversity through acknowledging that SWDs "add to the diversity on campus" (Hartman 1993: 9). Having recognised that these institutions should then take proactive measures to integrate SWDs "into mainstream education, with the intention not of accommodating them, but of supporting their different educational needs and educating society that diversity is a positive influence in the pool of different talents and contributions to society" (Matshedisho 2010: 733).

According to UNESCO (2009: 126), respecting diversity arising from disability is central in offering quality education for all as well as "eliminating all forms of discrimination". Such respect for diversity could also be central in eliminating discrimination which associate disabilities with inabilities (Matshedisho 2010). Therefore, it follows that universities which respect diversity which arises from disability are likely to foster a sense of belonging among their SWDs (Moriña *et al*. 2013), thereby causing these learners to feel safe, capable and accepted, which enhances their overall learning experience (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski 2009). Those arguing from an institutional standpoint believe that for HEIs to respond to diversity arising from disability effectively, they need to work to change their oppressive "structures, systems, policies, practices and cultures" in these HEIs (Policy Paper 2011: 2). Such oppressive systems have been criticised for only privileging non-disabled students at the expense of the full participation of SWDs (Youdell 2006).

A student with a disability from a lower socio-economic background has higher chances of not enrolling in an HEI compared to a non-disabled student. Research in South Africa has indicated

that both attitudinal and institutional discrimination has disproportionately excluded black SWDs who continue to be the most vulnerable to exclusion from the HE system (DoE 1998; DoE 2001). This is evidenced by the continued low success and throughput rates on the part of this group in universities where high dropout rates of SWDs at the end of their first year is well documented (Mpofu & Wilson 2004; DHET 2012; Badat 2015; DHET 2013; Magongo & Motimele 2011).

Despite numerous policy interventions, SWDs continue to experience discrimination in the PSET sector in South Africa, particularly with regards to issues of access and institutional practices that have failed to consider both their learning and support needs (DHET 2015). Council on Higher Education (CHE) audit reports continue to point to inequalities in the HE environment perpetuated by universities' failures to create spaces that are non-discriminatory for SWDs (Lange 2012).

Ndlovu & Walton (2016: 3) have argued that "discrimination and exclusion are effected by institutional practices that work to the benefit of students without disabilities". Despite national attempts at policies that include PWDs, HE still manages disability support in a fragmented way, as if it is separate from existing transformation and diversity programmes (DHET 2013). Transformation-oriented policies which should be improving the position of SWDs pay little attention to this group (*News24* 2014). To achieve meaningful transformation for SWDs, South African HEIs need to adopt a systemic approach to inclusion which includes support staff, management and lecturers in the process of disability inclusion (Lyner-Cleophas *et al*. 2014). Given that there has not been any formal policy aimed at addressing the inclusion of SWDs in the South Africa's PSET system, the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* was implemented in 2018 to "guide the improvement of access to and success" of this group within this system (DHET 2018: i). It is therefore hoped that "through the implementation of this strategic policy framework, transformation and redress with regard to full inclusion, integration and equality for persons with disabilities in the post-school education and training system, will be accelerated" (DHET 2018: i).

Vickerman & Blundell (2010: 22) attribute this to HEIs' failure to "[...] sufficiently adopting positive strategies to consult disabled students when implementing policies and practices to break down barriers to study". South African HEIs are failing in this regard as their diversity, social justice and transformation initiatives seem to target only the non-disabled students as research participants at the cost of SWDs. Many scholars have voiced their concerns regarding this as compromising meaningful transformation (Ntombela 2013; Ohajunwa *et al.* 2014; Ndlovu & Walton 2016). It has been suggested that the best way of achieving transformation for SWDs is to actively involve them in transformation initiatives and processes (Office of the Deputy President 1997). One way of addressing transformation through including SWDs would be through "conducting research into disability in HEIs" (DHET 2013: 7). In conducting this kind of research, as suggested by Gidley *et al.* (2010: 90), SWDs' "individual goals and needs that are impeded by a disability to engage in activities, regardless the disability type", can be identified. Gidley *et al.* (2010: 90) recommends this approach as one which is in line with the objectives of the philosophy of inclusive education.

It has been argued that the South African government is not sufficiently committed to assisting HEIs to provide disability support services to SWDs (Matshedisho 2007). Numerous South African scholars have expressed concerns about the lack of a national disability policy which provides for the standardisation of disability inclusion in the country's HEIs (Mutanga 2017b; Dale-Jones 2014). This has resulted in *White Paper 6* becoming the only point of reference for many HEIs, although this policy was originally implemented to address disability inclusion in the country's basic and secondary schools. Dale-Jones (2014 see also Mutanga 2013) has criticised the South African government for failing to promulgate the inclusive education policy in *White Paper 6* "into an Act, [which] has weakened its use as a reference in law". This lack of political will manifests itself in how SWDs continue to be treated as a homogenous group, which points, as Mutanga *et al*. (2018) argues, to a failure to understand that SWDs have varied and unique needs which cannot be addressed with one-size-fits-all approaches.

In South Africa, in line with the dominant approach internationally, efforts at inclusion have focused on changes in the classroom environment itself (Moriña *et al*. 2013). And, as has been

the case elsewhere, inclusion has incorporated attention to curriculum (see, for instance, Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015; Howell & Lazarus 2003; Hlalele & Alexander 2012). In some studies, attention has been paid on the role of lecturers (see, for instance, Mayat & Amosun 2011; Mutanga & Walker 2014; Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015). Other studies have placed attention on the importance of assistive devices (see, for instance, Matshedisho 2007; Tugli *et al*. 2013b). Other scholars have highlighted the importance of the physical accessibility of the built environment (Howell & Lazarus 2003). Proponents of the physical accessibility of the built environment have paid attention particularly to classrooms and lecture theatres (see, for instance, Bishop & Rhind 2011).

Other proponents of the physical accessibility of the built environment have also paid particular attention to libraries (see, for instance, FOTIM 2011; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). The focus has been on addressing the *academic* needs of SWDs at the cost of aspects of *social* inclusion. Research findings for the most part provide academic inclusion-based recommendations, for example, encouraging lecturers to adopt flexible universal teaching practices which meet the educational needs of SWDs (see, for instance, Giffard-Lindsay 2007). In South African literature, this focus on academic inclusion (see, for instance, Crous 2004; Nkoane 2006; Matshedisho 2007; Matshedisho 2010; Magongwa 2008; Swart & Greyling 2011; Ramakuela & Maluleke 2011; Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013; Tugli *et al*. 2013b; Mutanga 2013; Mutanga & Walker 2015; Lourens 2015; Howell 2005; Mutanga 2017a; Mutanga & Walker 2017) persists despite the fact that some of the participants in these same studies raise concerns about issues of social exclusion in their everyday campus life experience.

Although access to HEIs is being granted to some SWDs in South African HEIs, it should be noted that this has mainly taken the form of a "selective inclusion", or what Naaz (2012: 27) has referred to as an "impairment-based approach" to the inclusion of SWDs whereby specific disability types are being prioritised over others. This narrow approach negatively contradicts inclusive education's goal of achieving "social equity" (Peters *et al*. 2005: 142). In order to achieve social equity, HEIs need "to be responsive to all students", regardless of their disability or ability (Peters *et al*. 2005: 142). Some South African literature indicates that students with

hearing impairments, particularly Deaf students, are also one of the groups facing exclusion based on their disability type (see, for instance, DHET 2015; Howell 2005; FOTIM 2011; Mazoue 2011; Magongwa 2008; Magongwa 2010; Moloi & Motaung 2014; Nomoyi 2016; Chiwandire & Vincent 2019). This results from HEIs shying away from potentially having to incur extra costs of hiring sign language interpreters, because "NSFAS guidelines do not fund human support (scribes, sign-language interpreters and note takers etc.) all of which are indicated for certain disabilities" (Mantsha 2016: 53). Bell (2014) argues that barriers facing students with hearing impairments in accessing information and communication, in the classroom, on campus and in their residences show how they are underrepresented. This is because South African HEIs tend to offer more support to students with mobility and visual impairments (Bell *et al*. 2016).

The rationale behind this "impairment-based approach" stems from the marketised framing of these students as difficult to accommodate because they need "too much" specialist assistance (Singal 2005: 6). In the case of students with hearing impairments, this specialist assistance comes in the form of "various types of teaching and learning support, such as preferential seating, extra writing time, hearing augmentation devices (such as hearing loops) and note-takers" (Bell *et al*. 2016: 2). Although all these supportive mechanisms are central for overcoming barriers to information access for both students with hearing impairments and students with visual impairments, the costs associated are cited by HEIs as a reason for not enrolling or supporting such students.

The human rights approach to the provision of inclusive education has in the South African context failed to achieve participation in equal educational opportunities. In order to empower SWDs, inclusive education should go beyond the mere placement of this group in a general education classroom to focusing more attention to transforming "the philosophy, values, and practices of entire educational systems" (Artiles *et al*. 2006: 260). However, in reality, most HEIs have responded to this through the conventional dominant academic inclusion approach by preventing the discrimination of SWDs on the basis of disability through funding their access to HEIs and trying to provide them with all required academic-based support services (Neal 1982).

This has been questioned by proponents who rather view transformed HEIs as those which endeavour to achieve full inclusive education through not only supporting their SWDs academically, but also socially (Baron *et al*. 1996). Likewise, South African scholars like Mutanga (2017 cited in Van Der Merwe 2017) criticises the mere physical access and the presence of SWDs in HEIs as narrow conceptualisations of inclusive education in favour of proper inclusion which implies multidimensional support that is not only academic, but also social and financial as well, and which has to be supported by policies.

The support of SWDs from a social inclusion standpoint has been a recurring theme in South Africa's DHET's millennium policy framework. For instance, the 2014 *Draft Social Inclusion Policy Framework for Public Higher Education and Training Institutions* provided a framework which "set norms and standards for the treatment of students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of university or college life, including academic life, culture, sport and accommodation" (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2014). In 2016, the *Policy Framework for the Realisation of Social Inclusion in the Post-School Education and Training System* was published to create a policy framework aimed at assisting HEIs to create an enabling environment for social inclusion to be implemented as a priority (DHET 2016). Most recently, in 2018, the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* noted that the principle of social inclusion is important in supporting the approach of mainstreaming disability issues within South African HEIs, therefore actively eradicating discrimination against PWDs in the HE system (DHET 2018).

HEIs can only claim to have achieved social inclusion if their SWDs feel they fully belong to their institutions (Moriña *et al*. 2013). A sense of belonging is central to enabling SWDs to form reciprocal friendships with their non-disabled peers which is important in enhancing their quality of life (Hall 2010b see also Crane 2002; Lemay 2006). Within HE settings, it has been argued that the advent of capitalism has weakened the human rights approach to inclusive education from meaningfully achieving the rights of SWDs. For instance, in Australia the decline in government support for education from the late nineties into the new millennium has led to a massive rise in the for-profit education industry which has influenced the way in which

universities set their funding priorities (Kenway *et al*. 1993). This has resulted in "an ideological shift towards higher education as a private rather than a public good" (Meek 2000: 24).

Walton & Lloyd (2012: 63) have cautioned that the fact that "…South Africa comes relatively late to inclusive education" should not tempt policy makers to draw exclusively from the international experience, because "inclusive education is not a universally agreed upon concept, with nuances of meanings across and within countries". They argue that more attention should be paid to South Africa's unique and "different policy frameworks and contextual realities" (Walton & Lloyd 2012: 63) as a starting point to widen the inclusion of SWDs in HE meaningfully. In the present thesis, *Ubuntu* is offered as a context-relevant lens through which to understand the responsibilities of HEIs and all those who populate them when it comes to creating inclusive educational environments. *Ubuntu* "places a significant emphasis on the 'wholeness of all being'" (Setiloane 1998: 75). *Ubuntu* can play an important role as an action-guiding principle for how HEIs can prevent utilising approaches which socially exclude SWDs. Furthermore, *Ubuntu* will also help the non-disabled community to best respond to the needs of SWDs.

From academic to social inclusion in South African HE

In South Africa, in the current context, some scholars justify the continued exclusion of South African SWDs in HEIs. Khumalo (cited in Van Der Merwe 2017), for instance, contends that, "we cannot expect society to change overnight […] [nor can we] expect communities to change immediately, even though we recognise that of course there has to be change". Others have proposed the need for HEIs to prioritise less costly initiatives, such as providing reading materials in accessible formats which might not holistically address the needs of students with diverse disabilities (Mutanga *et al*. 2018). In contrast, in the present thesis, I argue for a paradigm shift in understanding inclusive education. I argue for an approach that is informed by the context, rather than simply adopting dominant Western norms. As Slee (2014: 217) contends, "a single, universal, or generally accepted version simply does not exist; both ideologically and operationally inclusive schooling is contested and passed off in many guises". As Elder & Foley

(2015: 773) stresses in their paper, which explores emerging and evolving critical approaches to inclusive education development work in Kenya, disability is "a dynamic process inherently tied to social contexts".

In taking an *Ubuntu* approach to the social inclusion of SWDs in South African HE, the present thesis asks whether an individual rights-based approach to inclusive education — even if backed by adequate support for SWDs (Ainscow *et al*. 2000; Rouse 2010) — is adequate. The study suggests that the human rights approach informed by Western individualism is partly a barrier to achieving meaningful inclusive education. The values of self-sufficiency, individual achievement and competitiveness that underlie Western individualism cast PWDs as lacking in some shape or form (Oliver 1999 see also Goodley 2011; Russell & Malhotra 2002).

As a wide body of research shows (see, for instance, Carter & Silver 2006; Barnes 2006; Convertino *et al*. 2009; De Filippo 2004; Hyde *et al*. 2009; Jambor & Elliot 2005; Richardson *et al.* 2004; Richardson *et al.* 2010; Stinson *et al.* 2009; Traynor *et al.* 2003; Shevlin *et al*. 2004), creating inclusive educational institutions is not about academic inclusion alone. To elaborate on some of these international studies, Trammell's (2006) study in the US found that students who self-disclosed their disability placed themselves at greater risk of being stigmatised or subjected to negative stereotypes associated with disability and inappropriate judgments by their non-disabled peers. Likewise, a significant number of SWDs who participated in Roer-Strier's (2002) study reported feelings of depression as a result of social isolation and rejection within educational environments, and this resulted in some of them dropping out of university. From these findings, Roer-Strier (2002) concluded that these forms of social exclusion make HEIs stressful environments for SWDs. In the Canadian context, one online survey study of 1,174 college and university SWDs in Ontario found that nearly two-thirds of a total of 72.9% female SWDs and half of male SWDs participants had experienced various kinds of negative social interactions during their post-secondary studies (Tremblay *et al.* 2008). Likewise, SWDs sampled in one Irish university study reported a sense of social isolation (Shevlin *et al*. 2004).

Research in the UK indicates that HEIs' sole focus on academic inclusion has resulted in most of these institutions failing to take measures to include their SWDs socially as well (Holloway 2001; Borland & James 1999; Collett 2010; BBC 2009). International SWDs sampled in Soorenian's (2013) study on their experiences in British universities, identified their exclusion from HEIs' social life as among the key barriers to their full participation in HE. Similar trends have also been witnessed in New Zealand. A study of Deaf and hard-of-hearing students attending New Zealand HEIs by Powell *et al.* (2013) found that many disability coordinators, and their respective institutions, tended to focus only on students' academic inclusion at the cost of students' social inclusion in an intentional way. This is in spite of the fact that "although university is mainly concerned with furthering one's academic career, a large part of university life is about gaining new social experiences" (Collett 2010: 2).

The predominant focus on academic inclusion both in the existing literature and policy frameworks has led to social aspects of inclusion being "overlooked in research efforts, despite their potential usefulness for maximising students' higher education experiences" (Bishop & Rhind 2011: 33). The present study attempts to look beyond the usual focus on academic inclusion and the physical placement of SWDs in general classrooms — important as such initiatives have been — to identifying and removing the *social barriers* which are encountered by PWDs in their daily lives. Social barriers which are prevalent in HEIs include issues of prejudice (Shakespeare 1992; Hall 2010b). In addition to that, attitudinal barriers are also prevalent in HEIs (Jameel 2011; Vitello & Mithaug 1998). Research also shows that stereotypes are also prevalent in HEIs (Swart & Greyling 2011).

There seems to be general consensus in the literature that friendships and peer acceptance between SWDs and non-disabled students is said to be central to the academic success of SWDs in the university environment (Baker *et al*. 2012). However, this general consensus has been disputed by some SWDs who have reported the multiple ways in which they are socially marginalised by their non-disabled peers on the grounds of their disability (Soorenian 2013). In some HEIs a student with a disability "is often not seen as 'normal' compared to peers in the classroom or other campus

settings, whether it be, for example, because of assistive devices used during class or an alternate test location" (Kraglund-Gauthier *et al*. 2014: 4).

Likewise, it has been argued that within HE, "the idea of disability as stigma", as described by Goffman (1990), still persists. One of the negative consequences of this form of stigma is that disability is made into a shameful marker of physical or mental imperfection and is consequently an unattractive identity for many people to accept (Riddell & Weedon 2014). This has resulted in SWDs having "lower positions of status than their non-disabled peers, and this pattern of rejection holds both in general or special classes" (Wood 1998: 152). This pattern of rejection in turn increases the vulnerability of SWDs to becoming victims of taunting, teasing and/or bullying (Martlew & Hodson 1991). Against this background, some HEIs have attempted to mediate this situation by planning various structured activities designed at promoting social inclusion and friendship development, as well as supporting non-disabled students to have positive attitudes in welcoming SWDs (Kraglund-Gauthier *et al*. 2014).

Creating a conducive environment for SWDs to be included socially in mainstream educational institutions is said to be beneficial for this group (Hodge *et al*. 2017). This has resulted in the literature calling upon educational institutions to take social inclusion seriously as an important right for SWDs (WHO & the World Bank 2011). This is thanks to South African DHET's millennium policy framework, which has called upon HEIs to start proactively supporting SWDs from a social inclusion standpoint as a way of giving SWDs a sense of belonging on campuses (Parliamentary Monitoring Group 2014; DHET 2016; DHET 2018). The current conceptualisation of social inclusion is narrow in the sense that it is defined in terms of reciprocal friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers in the regular classroom setting.

An unstated assumption is that educating these students together will automatically create a conducive environment for relationship and friendship formation and sustenance. According to this assumption, placing SWDs and their non-disabled students in the same classroom will inevitably result in the former interacting "socially with many different people making them better prepared to

take their places in society when schooling is completed" (Nyoni *et al*. 2011: 279). As South Africa's Department of Education and Science (DoES) has argued, inclusive education will result in SWDs experiencing "a reduced sense of isolation and being subjected to less negative labeling" and the development of new friendships (DoES 2007: 39). It is thus often taken for granted that SWDs in mainstream educational institutions have more opportunities to interact with their peers without disabilities and thereby create a larger network of friends in comparison to SWDs in special educational institutions (Shokoohi-Yekta & Hendrickson 2010). This conventional argument has been disconfirmed by the findings from research voicing the experiences of SWDs in South African HEIs, and this will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, which focuses on issues of social inclusion of SWDs in this country's HE context.

Given that the provision of disability-related services alone is not enough to promote and protect the rights of PWDs, the present study argues that a paradigm shift is required in our understanding of values and relationships in order to change attitudes and practices that stigmatise and marginalise PWDs. Some South African disability policies have noted that HEIs have the responsibility to prevent the social exclusion of SWDs (DHET 2018). Social exclusion is defined by Magumbate & Nyoni (2013: 4) as the process of systematically blocking certain individuals "from rights, opportunities and resources available to others". This could include being blocked from such opportunities as employment, education, decent incomes, housing and health (Social Exclusion Unit 2004 see also Rankin 2005). Denying certain individuals' voices to be heard in decision-making processes is another form of social exclusion as this denies those individuals the opportunity to exercise their rights as full citizens (Family and Community Development Committee 2014). Central to the understanding of social inclusion is the concept of participation (Bornman & Rose 2009). Mugumbate & Nyoni (2013: 7) have defined the concept of participation as the equal involvement of all people, including PWDs, "in all processes affecting their lives".

On an international level, several scholars have called upon HEIs to remove all barriers that hinder the full participation of SWDs in order to create an enabling environment for these students to be included socially (McEwan & Butler 2007; Burchadt *et al.* 2002). This form of social inclusion

should not only address issues of equal access to HEIs for SWDs (European Commission 2005), but also equal opportunities to participate with success once these students are enrolled in these educational institutions. In order to achieve this, there is a need for institutional reforms (O'Brien & Penna 2008). Such institutional reforms should take the form of "restructuring the culture, policies and practices in schools [as well as in HEIs] so that they can respond to the diversity of students in their locality" (Save the Children 2008: 9). Removal of such barriers has been one of the major policy goals for many developed countries. Both the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe have, for instance, commissioned its Member States to conduct studies of social exclusion informed by its specific interest in human rights (Duffy 1995). In addition to that, the new millennium saw the combating of social exclusion being mainstreamed in many EU countries (O'Brien & Penna 2008).

Addressing social exclusion for SWDs in HEIs is important in ensuring that these students can access quality education which will enable them to succeed and subsequently earn viable qualifications for the labour market. Meekosha (2008) points to education as one of the important universal needs of PWDs as it enables them to attain qualifications needed to gain dignified employment opportunities. Belyakov *et al*. (2008: 5) focus on this when they argue that "having a degree has increasingly become a requirement not only for entering the professions, but also for many service-and technology-oriented jobs". Thus, excluding deserving youth with disabilities from HE automatically denies them of future possibilities of employment (Agarwal 2012). This has long term economic disadvantages which are "more limiting than the actual disability itself" (Hedrick *et al*. 2012: 161). This clearly shows that having an academic qualification helps facilitate the smooth transition of SWDs into the labour market which then enables these students to live meaningful lives as equal citizens who can also play a part in the mainstream economy (Cele & Menon 2006).

From the above, it follows that unlike academic exclusion, the concept of social inclusion is often constructed as "a good in itself". This is because social inclusion "embraces the democratic values of liberty, equality and human rights and recognises and accommodates diversity thereby respecting the right of all members of the community" (Engelbrecht & Green 2001: 30).

Drawing on the social model of disability, Joseph & Thiraviyan (2012) argue that promoting social inclusion for PWDs is central to achieving political reforms, rather than merely making the built environment accessible for them. Political reforms which meaningfully achieve social inclusion for SWDs are those which take place at an institutional level (O'Brien & Penna 2008). This could be through tackling institutional discriminatory practices against SWDs on the grounds of disability (Mutanga 2019).

Research has shown that making HEIs more inclusive through tackling institutional discriminations will remain a reality which is much easier said than done. This is because several proponents (see, for instance, Allan 2008; Mintz 2009; Slee 2001; Slee & Allan 2001) all agree that the project of social inclusion requires all involved to engage not only in identifying barriers facing SWDs, but also in challenging the sites of exclusion within educational systems. This makes working to change the discriminatory structures, systems, policies, practices and cultures in educational institutions a necessity for achieving inclusive education which broadly emphasises the need to respond to the learning needs of a diversity of students (Policy Paper 2011). Reducing the exclusion of SWDs in cultures of HEIs will subsequently result in increasing the equal participation of SWDs in these institutions (Booth & Ainscow 1998).

As has been illustrated above, the focus in the academic literature continues to be on the narrow educational, rather than wider social, needs of SWDs (Holloway 2001; Collett 2010). While academic support services are provided, there remains a complex layer of social barriers that SWDs face in HE, and SWDs continue to be marginalised and excluded from social activities on many South African campuses (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013 see also Magongwa 2008). The focus on academic inclusion leaves under-researched the social isolation that prevents SWDs from reaching their full potential at university (Lunsford & Bargerhuff 2006 see also Jameel 2011). HEIs globally, including in South Africa, use a human rights approach, both from a policy and practice standpoint in responding to the academic needs of SWDs. It is against this backdrop that this thesis seeks to propose an alternative by focusing on the social aspects of the inclusion of SWDs on South African campuses. Grounded in the philosophy of *Ubuntu,* with its concern for the "whole person", the thesis argues that the needs of SWDs need to be addressed

holistically based on the inculcation of values that are relevant to the context, rather than on the current individualist human rights approach to inclusive education.

Defining social inclusion in the South African HE context

According to Moriña (2017: 3), inclusive education "is an educational philosophy and practice that aims to improve the learning and active participation of all the students in a common educational context". This active participation, as argued by most proponents of inclusive education, ought to occur in the classroom setting, an environment which these proponents believe can further organically lead to social inclusion, especially through the formation of friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. Although this conventional academic inclusion-oriented approach continues to dominate inclusive education debates internationally, including in South Africa, recent South African disability policies have begun to call for HEIs to strike a balance between the academic needs of SWDs and their social needs.

One of the South African HE policy documents which defines social inclusion is the 2016 DHET's *Policy Framework for the Realisation of Social Inclusion in the Post-School Education and Training System*. Under this policy document, social inclusion is defined as "a universal human right and aims at embracing all people irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, language, age, geography, HIV and AIDS status, citizenship, values or medical standing. It is about giving equal access and opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance" (DHET 2016: 46). Central to this definition is how the South African disability policy framework views social inclusion as an important universal right which ought to be respected by universities. For this reason, recent South African disability policies, have called for all the country's PSET institutions to make concerted efforts to ensure the effective implementation of social inclusion (DHET 2018). Apart from that, this policy document has also called on HEIs to "provide a monitoring instrument to the DHET to ensure that the social inclusion priorities of the DHET are taken into account" at all these institutions (DHET 2018: 42). It is hoped that having such monitoring mechanisms in place may result in PSET institutions ensuring that "social

inclusion-related policies and legislation in institutions are developed, implemented and monitored" (DHET 2018: 42).

Central to social inclusion is how it aims to promote "a sense of belonging: feeling respected and valued; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that the disabled person can best fully participate in society with no restrictions or limitation" (DHET 2018: 20-21). Also central to the issues of social inclusion in South African HEIs is the concept of "social integration", which refers to the "students' general feelings of belonging (identity as a student of this specific university and a member of a specific residence), the importance of friendship and on a broader level the campus culture and climate" (Swart & Greyling 2011: 94). Recent South African literature has encouraged HEIs to promote the social integration of students, especially taking into consideration that it is "a conditioning context" for students to succeed in universities (Xulu-Gama 2019: 22).

In the context of South African HE, the "key consideration that underpins all these principles is 'social inclusion' that supports the approach of mainstreaming disability issues within the context of the PSET system; therefore actively eradicating discrimination against people with disabilities in the PSET system and in society is mandatory" (DHET 2018: 21). Mutanga (2019: 5) has recently argued that although the provision of academic inclusion-oriented support to SWDs in the form of "pedagogy, teaching, examination and assessment" is important, he finds the mere provision of such support as inadequate in achieving the success of SWDs. Arguing from a social justice standpoint, Mutanga (2019: 5) instead advocates for HEIs to take a holistic approach which requires these institutions to attend to all aspects (including social inclusion) which are important for the success of SWDs. In particular, first year students are said to be the ones who need both academic and social support most if they are to be retained in universities (Bitzer 2009). This view is confirmed by Tinto's (1975) theory of student integration which supports the idea that students have to have a reasonable level of integration, both socially and academically, at university as both aspects enable students to lead a balanced and successful life.

Cheausuwantavee & Cheausuwantavee (2012) have argued that HEIs should put appropriate support systems in place for teaching and learning, as these are crucial in equalising educational opportunities for SWDs. This conventional dominant approach of only associating the support of SWDs with academic support, which only focuses on "teaching and learning in the classroom" (Swart & Greyling 2011: 99), has recently been challenged by South African disability scholars as ineffective, for it overlooks issues of HEIs' social integration of SWDs into university life. On an international level, some studies into the experiences of SWDs (Fuller *et al*. 2004; Jacklin *et al*. 2006) indicate that upon granting access to this group, HEIs should not only focus on these students' quality of learning, but their social experiences as well. This is to ensure that participation for SWDs in the PSET system "is not limited to being physically present in a lecture hall, […] [but also] to have coffee with friends, to participate at campus social and cultural events, and really take part in the college experience" (Kochhar-Bryant *et al*. 2003: 3). This holistic approach to addressing the needs of SWDs is echoed in the South African literature.

Drawing on the findings of their study data, Mutanga & Walker (2015: 515) found that the conventional academic inclusion approach as practically outdated. They therefore recommend the need for HEIs to "move beyond evaluating educational outcomes based only on student graduation rates and exam performance", as this enables institutions to measure the gap between the social, lived experiences of SWDs, and what they value in HE (Mutanga & Walker 2015: 515). For instance, Mutanga (2018) suggests South African HEIs should move away from a narrow understanding of access in terms of only gaining entry into HE, towards participation in teaching and learning. Mutanga (2018: 239) also emphasises the need for universities to regard the inclusion of SWDs broadly in terms of students' equitable participation "in all spheres of higher education, including in social activities" if this country is to realise inclusive and just HE.

Co-curricular or extracurricular activities

Some existing literature on disability in HE points to the importance of co-curriculum or extracurricular activities as an essential part of understanding the university experience of the inclusion of SWDs holistically. In their study, Tinklin *et al*. (2004), for instance, recommended the need for HEIs to promote extra-curricular activities, as these are important in improving social networking and healthy integration among SWDs and their non-disabled peers within HEIs. In the South African context, Swart & Greyling's (2011) study found that the provision of extra-curricular activities created opportunities for SWDs to become active members of the university community. As for Mutanga (2016: 173), involvement in extra-curricular activities is beneficial for creating "opportunities for informal learning" which is central in widening social networks both amongst SWDs and between them and their non-disabled peers. Mutanga & Walker (2015) are of the view that, apart from fostering curriculum and pedagogical practices which celebrate differences and commonalities, South African HEIs should pay more attention to fostering extra-curricular activities. These authors' reasoning is that extra-curricular activities may create opportunities to secure social relations and social networks for SWDs (Mutanga & Walker 2015).

From a disability policy standpoint, the 2015 *Guidelines for the creation of equitable opportunities for people with disabilities in South African Higher Education* has enjoined HEIs to create equitable opportunities for SWDs in all areas of university life, including the social life of the university (Howell 2015). Mutanga (2016) argues that in order for SWDs to be able to lead a meaningful social life on university campuses, it is important for these institutions to have social facilities which are accessible to students with diverse disabilities. Central to the presence of social facilities is that they provide a conducive environment not only for SWDs to enhance social networking through mingling with their non-disabled counterparts, but also in building an understanding of each other's life experiences (Mutanga 2015). However, Mutanga (2016) found the lack of SWDs not belonging to any social group worrisome, as it reduces SWDs' opportunities for informal learning. Extracurricular activities which foster social inclusion should not only be limited to outdoor sports, but also indoor sports from which SWDs could benefit.

Tugli (2015), for instance, recommends the DHET support all HEIs with funding tailored for promoting extra-curricular activities, including indoor activities for all categories of disabilities. Given this, Lourens & Swartz (2016a: 249) recommend DUSMs inform "visually impaired students of accessible social activities on campus, such as chess, choir and so on". In what follows, I discuss the importance of the involvement of SWDs in sport as one of the ways in which South African HEIs can effectively achieve social inclusion for this group.

Participation in sport for SWDs

As far as the participation in sport for SWDs in South African HE is concerned, some of the country's disability policies regard the participation of SWDs in sport seriously as one of the important aspects of social inclusion. The *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training,* for instance, recognises the rights of PWDs, and therefore calls upon HEIs to develop a strategic disability policy framework (DHET 2013). This disability policy framework should be aimed at integrating both SWDs and "staff with disabilities in all aspects of university or college life, including academic life, culture, sport and accommodation" within these institutions (DHET 2013: xv). Likewise, as noted by the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System*, the South African PSET system should also aim to remove barriers related to recreational areas, including sporting facilities, if these institutions are to achieve meaningful social inclusion for SWDs (DHET 2018).

One important aspect that the South African government emphasises, is sport, through enacting various policies to address the sporting and recreational needs of SWDs in HEIs in an effort to increase the social inclusion of this group. These measures are included in legislation, such as the 1997 *White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy*; the 2011 *White Paper on Sport and Recreation*; the 2012 *Green Paper for Post-School Education Training*; the 2014 Draft Social *Inclusion Policy Framework for Public Higher Education and Training Institutions*; the 2015 *White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the 2015 *Guidelines for the creation of equitable opportunities for people with disabilities in South African Higher*

Education. All these policies oblige universities to provide conducive environments for the equal participation of SWDs in sports and recreational activities (SARAs).

Article 6 of the *South African Disability Human Rights Charter*, moreover, provides that "disabled people shall have the right to engage in sport and recreational activities and resources, such as sports facilities and financial assistance, as well as opportunities for participation, shall be made available to support this initiative". Despite the supportive and enabling policy framework in place, research indicates that SWDs have low participation opportunities in comparison to their non-disabled peers in SARAs on South African campuses (see, for instance, Wright 2007; Roux & Burnett 2010; FOTIM 2011; Tugli *et al*. 2013b; Mgulwa & Young 2014; Tugli 2015; Mantsha 2016). The challenges faced by most South African HEIs in providing sport participation opportunities for SWDs has partly been attributed to the fact that some of these universities tend to focus more on addressing the academic, rather than the social inclusion, needs of SWDs. For instance, Mantsha's (2016 see also Tugli 2015) study of SWDs at the University of Venda found that a lack of appropriately educated staff members hampered this institution's capability to prioritise disability sport for these institutions' SWDs. Likewise, Mgulwa & Young's (2014) study of sports administrators at the University of the Western Cape found that this institution was failing to support the participation of its SWDs in SARAs at all levels. This was partly attributed to the fact that most of this institution's budget was allocated to academic development, neglecting the development of recreational activities (Mgulwa & Young 2014).

In the context of the University of Venda, a study of SWDs by Tugli (2015) found that extracurricular issues such as sport participation were grossly relegated and considered a secondary matter for SWDs at this institution. In his doctoral dissertation of SWDs at the University of Venda and UFS, Mutanga (2016) found that the latter university was not doing enough to foster social capital formation for SWDs through sport participation opportunities. To elaborate on this, Mutanga (2016: 174) cited one of the SWDs participants from the University of Venda who expressed his frustrations as follows: "There are no sporting facilities for us [disabled students,] and we feel the pain especially when our non-disabled friends tell us that

they have been to other places like Durban for sport". This quote highlights how passionate this student is about sport participation, and illustrates the meaning he attributes to it.

In her recent study which explored the kinds of support offered by the University of Venda Disability Unit, Mbuvha (2019) found that participation of SWDs in different sporting activities was decreasing at this institution because of its emphasis in focusing on curricular and assessment practices upon granting SWDs access. Mbuvha (2019: 64) also found that "the reason behind this might be lack of staff members who are knowledgeable about different sporting activities that students with disabilities can participate in". This limited SWDs' "effective utilisation of the fitness and recreational resources and programmes which are otherwise available to students" (Mbuvha 2019: 64). This scholar therefore recommended the need for physical therapists and graduate assistants to aid students to develop and implement personal exercise programmes aimed at SWDs were this institution to widen sport participation opportunities for this group (Mbuvha 2019).

In the context of Rhodes University, recent research has criticised this institution's failure to promote the participation of its SWDs in sport, because of a lack of adapted sporting facilities and coaches with expertise in disability sport (Israel 2017; Collins 2019). Collins (2019: 8) therefore recommends the need for Rhodes University to benchmark and collaborate with such best practices exemplified by the UFS and the University of Johannesburg, as these are among some of the "South African universities which are more advanced than other universities in terms of their sport on offer for SWDs".

Given this importance of sport participation for SWDs in South African universities, Makiwane (2018: 993) recommends "the participation of students with disabilities in competitive as well as leisure sport should be facilitated and monitored to enable them to enjoy a full and balanced life". Likewise, Mbuvha (2019: 63-64) suggests that sport participation opportunities should also be made available to all SWDs, including those with severe physical disabilities, because through participation in different sporting codes this group is also "afforded an opportunity to

maximise their functional potential, relieve stress and increase their tolerance relative to the rigorous demands of campus life through the milieu of adaptive exercises". Chiwandire & Vincent (2017) also recommend that the provision of recreational activities, particularly SARAs, are essential, as these entitle SWDs to participate fully in all aspects of university life. From most of these studies it is evident that participation has a positive impact on the social integration of SWDs. South African universities which deny SWDs this opportunity, disadvantages this group.

Inclusive campus residence culture

International studies have shown how living in residences has helped SWDs succeed in their studies. For example, one international student, sampled in Soorenian's (2013) study on the experiences of international students in British universities was particularly pleased with being allocated accommodation on campus, as this made both her academic and social life convenient. A similar argument has also been evident in the South African literature, with other scholars calling for the country's universities to foster an inclusive residence culture if they are to create a welcoming environment for all students, including those with disabilities. An inclusive residence culture, following Godshall (2000), is one which promotes community, interaction, collegiality, and communication among students. According to Duma (2019: 76), a campus residence could be said to foster an inclusive culture if it creates "a home away from home" for students. This is because by transitioning into university, campus residences often become a new temporal home for many students who have to leave their family homes. It is therefore important for such spaces to exhibit a homely environment which give a "sense of place" for all students (Clemons *et al*. 2004: 5). In order to achieve this, universities should provide high-quality student housing and services if they are to influence students' behavioural intentions and personal attainments positively (Najib *et al*. 2015). In what follows, I discuss the literature on issues of residence life, specifically in relation to SWDs, in order to ascertain whether or not South African residences could be said to be providing such high-quality student housing and services, as this playing an important role in facilitating the social inclusion of SWDs.

Social positive outcomes of living in residences

There is an abundance of literature documenting the social benefits of living in residences for students in general. Tolman (2017: 532), for instance, emphasises the importance of living in residence as important for all students, for it does not only shape their behaviours, but their academic success hinges on it, because "[…] at the heart of this residential experience are social interactions and the feeling of belonging to the campus community". For most students, campus residences are one of the spaces where they meet, engage and get to know other students from diverse backgrounds (Tinto 2014). The wide range of programmes and activities in some South African campus residences are central in providing a conducive environment for SWDs to be integrated socially and holistically. This is evidenced by the Council on Higher Education (CHE 2010: 108-109) which noted that very often "residences are also places of intense social activities organised around committees of various kinds dealing with rag, inter-residence socials, community outreach, team building, leadership training, sports, music and culture, entertainment, spiritual life, and so on". Hence, it could be argued that these programmes and activities are central in fostering an enabling environment for meaningful social inclusion to occur between both SWDs and their non-disabled peers.

Further, by living in residences, SWDs are afforded equal opportunities to contest for, and be elected in, House Committee leadership structures, positions which are important in enhancing one's leadership skills at university as well as in the future transitioning to the labour market (Xulu-Gama 2019; Swartz 2010). Amongst other responsibilities, those elected to be House Committee leaders are often tasked with organising creative programmes, both in consultation with students, and in response to their social and academic needs, and such programmes should be inclusive of academic and social activities (Xulu-Gama 2019).

Some studies have taken a comparative approach by highlighting the advantages of living in residences for SWDs in comparison to their non-disabled peers who live off-campus. Some of these studies point out that one of the advantages of living in residences for SWDs is that this group often gets first preference to choose the residence and rooms they like, depending on the

availability of accessible rooms, especially in the case of students with physical disabilities. In some universities, such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal, relevant authorities ensure that students with certain disabilities, especially physical disabilities, get first preference in terms of the allocation of individual rooms at residence (Naidoo 2005). The same applies to the University of Venda which ensures that the allocation of student accommodation rooms at this institution always give SWDs a first preference (Tugli *et al*. 2013b). The same holds true at Rhodes University, where the process of allocation of rooms in residence prioritises students with physical disabilities or specific health problems, subject to them meeting relevant deadlines (such as Minimum Initial Payment (MIP) payment) (Stein 2015). Apart from social benefits, living in residence has academic benefits for most SWDs, and this will be discussed below in greater detail.

Positive academic benefits of living in residences

On an international level, studies have confirmed the enduring special beneficial outcomes of living in campus residences for SWDs in comparison to those who live off-campus (Radder & Han 2009). From an academic benefit standpoint, some scholars (Najib *et al*. 2011; Godshall 2000) have argued that living in campus residence expands the intellectual capacities and achievements of educational objectives by students. Duma (2019: 76) argues that most South African HEIs prefer to allocate student campus accommodation for SWDs not only for safety reasons, but also "for easier access to central facilities such as libraries and lecture rooms". Given this, it follows that SWDs who get allocated rooms in campus residences are not only more likely to benefit academically from being conveniently located to libraries and lecture theatres, but living in residences can also facilitate the social inclusion between members of this group and their non-disabled peers. Clemons *et al*. (2004) in particular argues that student housing plays a vital role in the social and academic success of students. Research in South Africa has also confirmed that some students living on university campus residences might have greater chances at succeeding both socially and academically in comparison to their student peers living in off-campus accommodation (Xulu-Gama 2019). Xulu-Gama (2019: 16) further argues that South African universities which create a conducive environment stimulating the

academic success of students, including those with disabilities, are those institutions which create what this scholar refers to as “a living and learning environment for students’ success”.

South African universities have long been called to embark on initiatives of building a living and learning student environment on campus residences (Van Zyl 2016; DHET 2011). Advocates of the living and learning campus environment (see, for instance, Pansiri & Sinkamba 2017; Tinto 2014) argue that the traditional view of the university learning process, which merely focuses on the relationship and interaction between the lecturer and students in the classroom setting, is becoming inadequate in facilitating the holistic social inclusion of students on campus life. Under this traditional view, student success is often understood and defined mainly through the acquisition of classroom knowledge (Hamrick *et al*. 2002). This view is often endorsed by the academic inclusion approach to inclusive education which seems to dominate in South African HEIs. Scholars critiquing this traditional view calls for the implementation of programmes aimed at student success to be extended beyond the classroom, particularly in campus residences, through the implementation of the living and learning environment for students (Pansiri & Sinkamba 2017; Tinto 2014).

Within South African campus residences, some mentors are playing an important role in facilitating achieving the goals of living and learning within these spaces. For instance, Swart & Greyling (2011: 95) found that some first-year SWDs benefited immensely from mentors in terms of practical and emotional support, “especially for showing them around campus or going with them to meet lecturers”. This therefore makes living in residences beneficial for some SWDs, as they have access to mentors whom first-year students specifically can consult when they need clarifications about their academic work or need guidance in social matters. Claiborne *et al*. (2011: 520) found that most of the students with visual impairments who participated in this study “viewed mentoring as a key element in social inclusion, but it was mentoring with a strong sense of reciprocity rather than hierarchical support”. Hence, SWDs living in residences are more likely to succeed academically if they take advantage of these opportunities.

In particular, findings from international research demonstrates that students living in residences display greater chances of graduation than their peers in off-campus housing (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005). This has also been confirmed by recent research in South Africa, such Xulu-Gama's (2019) qualitative study, which used ethnography and participant observation as data collection methods to observe the day-to-day experiences and activities of students living at one South African university. The study focused attention "on the key issues of student housing in relation to their conditions for success, survival strategies and family relationships" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 18). The study found that students benefited "from an extra set of people (staff members and senior students or peers) who look out for their academic and social needs" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 16).

The Durban University of Technology has the Strategic Plan, 2015-2019 (DUT 2015) in place which aims at addressing how this institution "should actively work on building sustainable student communities of living and learning so that students can succeed" (Xulu-Gama 2019). This has widened opportunities of succeeding socially and academically for students at DUT. This is particularly true for those residence students who take advantage of utilising "additional resources and conducive environment which are offered by the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life working in collaboration with various departments of the university, as a way of building a living and learning environment for students' success" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 16).

Likewise, Stellenbosch University has been promoting a living and learning campus residence environment since its adoption of the Residential Education (ResEd) paradigm, and it "has been acting on [the] imperative to utilise residential spaces for educational purposes for the past 11 years" (Groenewald & Fourie-Malherbe 2019: 4). Regarding its historical context, Residential Education (ResEd) has been widely adopted at several of Stellenbosch University's residences as a holistic approach towards intentionally promoting not only student learning, but also student success (Blimling 2015). Groenewald & Fourie-Malherbe (2019) attribute the success of Residential Education (ResEd) at Stellenbosch University to the role of residence Heads who work tirelessly to promote student success through facilitating the provision of additional academic support in residences. In one Tanzanian study on the factors that enabled access and

participation for educational success of women with disabilities, Tuomi *et al*. (2015) reports that peer networking and study groups are significant factors contributing to success through enabling participants to live and study with non-disabled students.

Physical comfortability and the accessibility of residence buildings

Numerous studies exploring the lives of students in residences (Abdullahi *et al*. 2017; Kim & Lee 2016) have shown that students' performance is highly dependent on the physical and non-physical facilities that their institutions provide. In particular, studies conducted in Nigeria (Ajayi *et al*. 2015), Hong Kong (Gilson & Dymond 2010) and Malaysia (Najib *et al*. 2012) have all illustrated that appropriate residence accommodation does impacts positively on the well-being of students on these campuses. Abdullahi *et al*. (2017) argue that many institutions which fail to meet residence accommodation obligations have witnessed their students being affected by poor academic performance and high attrition rates. In South Africa, concerns have been raised on the failure of most universities in establishing residences that accommodate the various needs of SWDs (Mugume & Luescher 2015). In some cases, universities have turned to public–private partnerships for assistance, although these initiatives have not been without setbacks as these private partners do not always have funds to donate to these institutions (Mugume & Luescher 2015). The other challenge faced by South African universities in providing suitable accommodation for SWDs is the absence of appropriately designed, maintained and managed residences (Duma 2019). Other studies have shown that both the lack of finances as well as the unavailability of adequate land on campuses have been major challenges hindering most universities to achieve their goal of providing suitable accommodation for a diverse student body (Mugume & Luescher 2015).

Given that most buildings were built prior to 1994, when the new South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act* had not come into force yet, this makes most, if not all, of them not easily accessible to SWDs, especially to wheelchair users (Mbuvha 2019 see also Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). Duma's (2019) qualitative study of seven SWDs at one South African university found that the inaccessibility of residence buildings negatively

impacted on the academic performance of these students resulting from high levels of stress of having to cope within this inhibiting environment. Attempts to make the residences at this institution more accessible towards SWDs especially wheelchair user students have not materialised as of yet, with the institution citing the adaptation of outdated buildings and residences in line with the new building regulations as a costly and highly challenging exercise (Duma 2019 see also Chiwandire & Vincent 2017).

Although the practice of giving SWDs first preference might sound like a good idea, in some universities, even if SWDs are given this first preference, they still have limited choice, particularly in choosing their preferred residences. The University of Venda provides a case in point, as indicated in Mutanga's (2018) study. In his study, Mutanga (2018) found that student housing allocation processes which separates wheelchair users from the rest of the students as not only perpetuating social exclusion, but also impeding social injustice, as choices are made for them, rather than with them, regarding appropriate residence. Again, at the University of Venda, Mbuvha (2019: 59-60) found that "not all residences are accessible and that leaves students with disabilities with limited choices in terms of where to stay". This sheds light on how a student's disability disadvantages them in terms of fully exercising a choice regarding being allocated a desired residence as a first preference. Although Mutanga & Walker (2015) argue that the presence of an accessible HE built environment is important as it allows ease of access to residences, this has not been the case in most of the country's campus residences. Hence, these studies have shown that meaningful social inclusion of SWDs is being hindered by inaccessible residences, and in what follows I discuss how the inaccessibility of residences' interior spaces also poses a barrier, especially for wheelchair users.

Physical comfortability within residence spaces

Apart from the "sense of place", it is also central for campus residences' interior spaces to provide what Clemons *et al*. (2004: 2) refer to as "physical comfort" for its dwellers, particularly for SWDs whose disabilities might pose barriers in navigating residence spaces. Clemons *et al*. (2004: 2) have further argued that physical comfort in campus residences should also guarantee

quality interior spaces, and this "can include those items that give an individual a perception of control over the space and enhance the function of an event or activity". Such items, as has been explored in a growing body of literature, include adequate and suitable facilities for SWDs in university residences (Ajayi *et al*. 2015). Given this, students' satisfaction with student housing is a critical factor which can potentially determine the retention and success of students in the campus environment (Clemons *et al*. 2004). In Duma's (2019) study, for instance, wheelchair user participants raised concerns about inaccessible bathing, kitchen and laundry facilities as posing a challenge to their daily lives in their residences. The same holds true at Rhodes University, where it was reported that despite the institution's modification of three of its residences in 2015 to be more accessible to students with physical disabilities, wheelchair users living in these residences still find them ill-designed in one way or another (Stein 2015). For instance, one Rhodes University wheelchair user complained about how, in spite of a wheelchair-friendly bathroom, doors are too narrow, thus forcing her "to hop in and out of the chair to get in and out" (Stein 2015). Another Rhodes University student with a disability (from another residence) raised the concern that her residence has a wheelchair ramp which is too steep for actual wheelchair users (Stein 2015). In addition, this student argued that her residence only had a "single modified toilet and baths which would be difficult to manoeuvre in" (Stein 2015).

The situation of SWDs in campus residences was explored by the 2011 *Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities* which found that there is a severe shortage of adapted accommodation in universities for this group (DHET 2011). In this report, some campuses (such as University of Limpopo (UL) Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA), Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Mowbray and Wellington, Durban University of Technology (DUT) Midlands, North West University (NWU) Vaal Triangle and UFS QwaQwa) were reported as not having residences suitable for students who require wheelchair accessible buildings, rooms and bathroom facilities (DHET 2011). Additionally, Central University of Technology (CUT) was found to "have one accessible bathroom, but a step has been built across the entrance to the bathroom, apparently to keep water from leaking out" (DHET 2011: 55). This report also noted that students who are accommodated in well-manged residences with good facilities tended to

perform better academically in comparison to their peers who live off-campus or in residences with poor infrastructure. As such, this report recommended the need for future research to investigate the impact residence life has for students (DHET 2011).

Although students with physical disabilities are mainly concerned about the physical accessibility of buildings, those with visual impairments have called upon their residence Heads or managers to take the issue of the provision of communal hygienic sanitary facilities within residences seriously. In other African countries, this is evidenced by a Zambian study which explored the lived experiences of students with visual impairments at the University of Zambia (Simui *et al*. 2019). In this study, two participants complained about how they were "much more affected by the poor hygiene levels in communal sanitary facilities around campus, a situation they described as 'pathetic' and requiring urgent attention" (Simui *et al*. 2019: 51). Likewise, in their study which explored the challenges of serving SWDs by the University of Venda's Disability Unit, Tugli *et al*. (2013a: 354) found that "issues of safety and sanitation in the institution were ranked very low" and participants raised concerns about how this could pose a health threat to the lives of SWDs. Similar issues were raised in Akintunde's (2011) study which investigated the knowledge of, attitudes towards and practices relating to environmental and personal hygiene issues of students at the University of Venda. This study found that poor sanitation and hygienic practices could place students' health at risk (Akintunde 2011). These studies illustrate the importance for residences to ensure that bathroom facilities are kept hygienic at all times; if they are to promote good health and hygiene practices amongst students in residences, this could prevent students from getting sick and subsequently have their academic progress impacted negatively.

Other facilities which enhance the physical comfortability of SWDs, particularly wheelchair users, on campus include accessible common rooms in residences (Chiwandire 2017 see also Timmerman & Mulvihill 2015) and numerous accessible cafeterias (Duma 2019; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). The 2012 Ministerial Committee responsible for the investigation of the extent of the problems arising from the unsatisfactory state of student residences at some South African universities found that students accommodated in suitable and well-managed residences with

good facilities perform better in comparison to their counterparts who live off-campus or in residences with a poor infrastructure (DHET 2015). Physical comfortability has however been denied to South African students who live in overcrowded residences with no or less maintenance of the infrastructure (Jansen *et al*. 2009; Groenewald & Fourie-Malherbe 2019). Physical comfortability has also been denied to students who live in residences with acute shortages of beds (DHET 2011). This lack of adequate student housing has resulted in dissatisfaction, especially among black students from low socio-economic backgrounds who have expressed their grievances through campus protests (Koen *et al*. 2006). "[O]vercrowding, the quality of food, infrequent building maintenance and repairs and the general quality of residences" continue to be major concerns raised through protests (Koen *et al*. 2006: 410). Against this background, the CHE (2016) recommends the need for South African HEIs to focus their attention on improving student housing if they are to support quality student, including for those with disabilities.

Inaccessible residences can be a disabling barrier to the formation of social relations and social networks between members of this group and their non-disabled peers. This is evidenced by one wheelchair user sampled in Mutanga & Walker's (2015) study who raised concerns about the availability of only two wheelchair accessible residences as it seems to reinforce the isolation of wheelchair user students from socialising with the rest of the student body. In the context of the University of the Free State, Mutanga's (2015) study found that wheelchair users voiced their concerns about their institution's exclusionary decision to accommodate them to senior residences, which does not participate in induction programmes, thereby denying them the opportunity for social inclusion. Mutanga (2018: 235) further reported on the UFS's discriminatory institutional arrangement which denied a visually impaired student campus accommodation on the grounds that "most rooms are shared and that [their] guide dog would 'inconvenience' other students". This subsequently deprived the student of the opportunity to expand their social networks within the residence, as they had to live in off-campus accommodation.

Challenges facing SWDs living in residences

Despite the abundance of literature discussing the positive academic benefits of living on campus residences, it is worth noting that living in residences is not without its challenges. One of the DHET's (2015) studies into the experiences of students living in residences in various South African universities found that malnutrition was one of the serious concerns facing some students, and this has a negative impact on their learning experience. Apart from the DHET's (2015) study, there also numerous other studies (De Klerk *et al*. 2017; Manik 2015) which report on students facing hunger at universities, and this includes those living on campus and in off-campus accommodation. In a study of students living in a South African residence, Xulu-Gama (2019) found that numerous students facing hunger raise this issue, or their roommates would raise it on their behalf, to residence wardens or other relevant university authorities. From this, Xulu-Gama (2019: 22) concluded that "hungry students are one big challenge that the universities possibly will not be able to prevent because of the varied family backgrounds from which South African universities continue to receive students". As for SWDs, one of the SWDs sampled in Duma's study (2019) complained of the provision of regular balanced meals in their residence dining hall, and how this resulted in them taking the risk of cooking their preferred meals in their room although doing so is against residence policy.

Although most students living in residences highlight the importance of social networks and friendships in helping them to have a smooth integration to university life, both socially and academically, peer pressure on students has, in some cases, resulted in unintended consequences, such as drug abuse. This was evidenced in Xulu-Gama's (2019: 20) study where one of the student participants commented on his lived experience in residence as follows: "a friend is somebody who actually feeds you, not only with food when you are hungry, but also with drugs when you are in need of intoxication". Furthermore, in this study, several students admitted to being addicted to various substances, such as dagga and codeine, offered different explanations about how or why they ended up being addicted to these substances (Xulu-Gama 2019). Some students attributed the use of these substances as a coping mechanism "to deal with the harsh home environments that continue to confront them even when they are in university residence" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 20). Xulu-Gama's (2019: 20) study also found that in the midst of such

academic pressure “friendships are very highly valued by students because friends do not judge each other in situations where families would be inclined to reprimand them for their choices”.

Other studies have pointed to the existence of abusive relationships between SWDs and non-disabled peers and such relationships disproportionately affect the former. In particular, Kasiram & Subrayen’s (2013) study has found that some students with visual impairments, especially those living in residences, spoke about how some of their residence mates would sometimes abuse their power by insisting on payment when they helped the former. In particular, some female students with visual impairments spoke about how they would sometimes be victims of sexual abuse because of their powerless position, and this is one of the examples of how gender intersects with disability, race and gender in South African HEIs (Kasiram & Subrayen 2013). The bullying of SWDs by their non-disabled peers both in residences and on campus is one of the challenges facing the former, as evidenced in a study of students with visual impairments studying at a Zambian university (Simui *et al*. 2019). One of the participants in this study complained about being bullied by her sighted peers “countless times within the university grounds without any recourse to intervention” and the authors partly attributed this to lack of institutional inclusive policy at this institution (Simui *et al*. 2019: 47).

The provision of helpers as a form of reasonable accommodation plays an important role to students whose severe disabilities impact on their full independence to do household chores, among other daily activities on their own, but most South African universities are failing to provide SWDs with such services. The challenges this pose on SWDs has been elaborated by a South African disability activist who argued that without the helpers’ necessary support, SWDs are left with no option but to try and balance academic struggles with the burden of having to cook, clean, and iron and this has left some of these students vulnerable to depression, drug abuse and wanting to dropping out of their courses entirely (Khumalo cited in Van Der Merwe 2017). Rather than devise effective solutions aimed at addressing the daily needs of SWDs, the University of Venda has provided partial solutions, such as providing training to improve their knowledge and skills independently from students who need assistance in the performance of activities of daily living (Mbuvha 2019).

Some studies have found that in the absence of helpers, some non-disabled students have taken advantage of this absence to abuse their disabled peers in residence, by demanding the former pay them for any form of help they might offer them. For instance, Duma's (2019: 78) study found that this practice has exposed vulnerable SWDs "to exploitation such as being made to pay for assistance given by other students. More disturbingly, in some instances their assistance extended to the demand for sexual favours". From these studies, it can be deduced that helpers play an important role in helping SWDs, especially those with severe disabilities, to have more time not only to concentrate on their studies, but to socialise.

Other South African studies have noted that the lack of residence wardens, who have limited knowledge of the needs of SWDs, can pose a challenge to the full inclusion of this group. Matshedisho's (2010), for instance, found that residential staff are often insensitive to the needs of SWDs, and therefore recommends residential staff acquire competency skills if they are to address the welfare of SWDs living in residences effectively. Likewise, Duma's (2019: 78) recent study found out "that residence managers frequently lack understanding of the social consequences of being disabled, which distorts their perception of persons with disabilities". From this, it could be argued that universities should not only pay attention on sensitising lecturers on the needs of SWDs, but also residence wardens, as they are the ones who interact with SWDs more often in these residences.

Friendship and social interaction

As argued by Tinto (1975), universities which make the effort to integrate their students socially effectively within their system can potentially increase the chances of academic integration and success of such students. Some South African studies on the experiences of students, including those with disabilities, have confirmed Tinto's (1975) line of reasoning. For instance, Xulu-Gama's (2019: 20) study found that "having a good circle of friends (as defined by students) at university is interpreted as an indication of some degree of social integration into the university

system". It has also been argued that students who live in campus residences tend to make more friends than their peers who live in off-campus accommodation. This is evidenced when Xulu-Gama (2019: 20) argues that for students in residences, their friends are not limited to those with whom they study, or who come from the same geographical origins, especially the rural areas, but they also benefit from friendships which "are mostly along the lines of roommates, floor or residence mates". Hence, all these sets of friends are important as they are often "in a position to assist academically and socially" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 20). Duma's (2019: 82) study found that it is through making friends which enables some SWDs living in residences to create supportive social networks which often helped "them to buffer their stressors and enabled them to navigate difficult conditions in their respective residence".

As for Mutanga & Walker (2015: 509), "having a network of friendships from varied backgrounds and being given the opportunities to create friendships within the university" was also valued by SWDs who participated in both authors' study. The phase of transitioning from high school to university may pose a challenge for some SWDs. Given this, some students sampled in Mutanga's (2019) study appreciated the importance of support they received from their disabled and non-disabled friends on campus during this process. Likewise, most SWDs sampled in Matshedisho's (2010) study attributed their success to their supportive friendships they made during their induction period. In their exploratory study involving four SWDs, who were all elite sport participants from the University of Johannesburg, Roux & Burnett (2010) found that these participants stressed the importance of social networks and social relations they made with their non-disabled peers on campus in helping them navigate the various challenges they faced.

The importance of friendships for SWDs has also been confirmed by international studies. For instance, study of SWDs in Scotland and England's HEIs by Tinklin *et al*. (2004) found that these participants reported on how they found their friends very helpful not only for socialising purposes, but also for assisting them in their studies. In the context of Croatia, Babic & Dowling's (2015) study found that social support from friends is important if SWDs are to participate with success in the HE system. Other studies also found that social support from

friends also played a crucial role for the success in HE for SWDs, as it increases their sense of security, belonging and self-esteem (Couzens *et al*. 2015).

For some students, including those with disabilities, having friends helped them to overcome some of the challenges which they could not have overcame on their own. In Xulu-Gama's (2019: 20) study, for instance, student participants appreciated "the supportive and mutual relationships they have with their fellow students, who are also their friends and with whom they live together in residence". Some of these participants even claimed that they found their friends in residence more important than their families, with one of the students arguing that: "a friend is a person who knows and understands you better than your family" (Xulu-Gama 2019: 20). From this, one could argue that some students in South African campus residences have what Hagenauer & Volet (2014) refer to as "high-quality relationships": relationships which have a positive impact not only in terms of motivation and social competence, but in terms of one's general well-being.

Duma's (2019) study, which explored how SWDs understood and made meaning of their experiences in a South African university residence, also found that for some SWDs having friends in residence helped them to cope with some of the challenges they encountered, and ended the fear and anxieties of transitioning into the HE environment. Sixty-two per cent of the of SWDs who participated in Matshedisho's (2010) study reported that they participated in student social life both on and off-campus during Orientation Week, and most of them attributed their participation to encouragement from their friends. In Duma's (2019) study, some SWDs who did not have helpers in their residences appreciated their generous non-disabled roommates as invaluable sources of support, as these peers helped them with doing laundry whilst supporting their emotional and academic well-being.

Some South African studies have shown that good and understanding roommates can contribute to comfortability within residences. In particular, this could be achieved when roommates are living "in harmony and mutual respect and that they should accept each other as members of a

'family'" (Duma 2019: 76). This was confirmed by SWDs sampled in Duma's (2019) study who reported having positive relationships with their roommates, and this made them feel socially included in these residences. Apart from the important role played by friendships in facilitating the social inclusion of SWDs, in some studies into the experiences of SWDs, a number of the participants also appreciated the supportive role of their family members, especially their parents, for providing emotional support to them during difficult times in their studies (see, for instance, Phatoli *et al*. 2015; Mutanga 2019; Mutanga 2015).

Social rejection of students with visible disabilities

Abbott & McConkey (2006: 276) brings our attention to the fact that for SWDs, "accessing universities does not automatically guarantee social contact with non-disabled people. Even so, it has become apparent that physical presence within a community does not guarantee greater social inclusion". This view challenges the dominant academic inclusion approach which seems to assume that educating SWDs and their non-disabled peers together in a regular classroom setting automatically results in friendships between members of these groups being formed and sustained. In South Africa there is burgeoning literature on disability inclusion in HE which confirms Abbott & McConkey's (2006) view, and most of this literature discusses the social exclusion that SWDs, both those with visible and invisible disabilities, are still being subjected to by their non-disabled peers, which in some cases may hinder the possibility of friendship formation between these students.

As regards persons with visible disabilities, like certain physical disabilities, their differentness often raises suspicions and fears on the part of their non-disabled peers, and this often results in the latter not wanting to socialise, nor be associated with, the former. Goode (2007) argues that when a disability is visible it is easier to be stigmatised by non-disabled people and become "extravisible" in a negative way. This is evidenced by Colman (1971: 907-908) when she argues that those with visible disabilities, such as physical disabilities, "tend to be rejected as friendship choices" by their non-disabled peers. The same holds true in the South African HE context where the discrimination of some students stem directly from the visibility of their disabilities. In

Lourens & Swartz's (2016b: 211) study of students with visual impairments, they found that the discrimination of these participants by their non-disabled peers stemmed directly from the visibility of their disability, which was "thought to embody negative aspects of human character and experience" by their non-disabled peers. Lourens & Swartz (2016b: 211) further argue that persons with visible disabilities are more likely not to have their personhood recognised as their bodies have been, "and continues to be, the stuff of freak shows and entertainments". Hence, this negatively impacts on their social inclusion in the mainstream society, including in HEIs.

Another group which has been discriminated against on the grounds of the visibility of their disability in South African HE, are students with albinism. In general, in many African countries, research has found that "a lack of understanding surrounding albinism and the visible difference in the appearance of persons with albinism" has fuelled myths and superstitions against this group (Franklin *et al*. 2018: 4-5). Franklin *et al.* (2018: 4-5) further argues that this has led to "stigmatisation, rejection, a lack of acceptance, perceptions of difference and limited social integration [of persons with albinism]. Their visible difference is so stark that they are in effect viewed as white people within a black community". This stigmatisation of persons with albinism based on their visible differences has also been reported in a study which explored the beliefs and practices regarding albinism among 5 students with albinism and 10 students without albinism at one South African university (Phatoli *et al*. 2015).

In this study, one of the students with albinism expressed concerns of their first encounters with strangers, as they tended to stare at her, thereby making her feel uncomfortable (Phatoli *et al*. 2015). In addition, this participant also spoke of how non-disabled students on campus also talk about students with albinism behind their back, making negative remarks, such as that this person does not know that their "father is not black but is a white person and that is why" they look the way they do (Phatoli *et al*. 2015: 6). Similarly, the other participants with albinism felt that their non-disabled peers do not treat them the same as a "normal" person because of racial stereotyping, saying "things like maybe [their] father is not really [their] father, or maybe [their] mother had an affair with a white man" (Phatoli *et al*. 2015: 5).

Thus, both participants' narratives illustrate the continuation of traditional African negative beliefs about albinism in many African countries, where the "the fault for the birth of a baby with albinism is often deemed to lie with the mother and an assumption of infidelity is a common belief related to albinism" (Lund 2001: 3). In order for students with albinism to cope within a discriminatory university environment which isolates and socially excludes them, they often find themselves having to adjust to their non-disabled peers' expectations if the former are to be seen as "normal" by the latter (Phatoli *et al*. 2015). For instance, being seen as outcast by non-disabled peers has resulted some students with albinism putting pressure on themselves to prove that they were "normal persons", and that they could do things and achieve things as well as their peers without albinism (Phatoli *et al*. 2015). This is evident when one of the participants argued that "it has been extremely difficult to live with albinism. I always have to prove myself, work extra hard and put in more effort into everything so that people can see me as 'normal"' (Phatoli *et al*. 2015: 5). All these examples show how SWDs in South African HEIs and elsewhere, following Shakespeare & Watson (2001: 9), "have internalised the oppression victimising them".

One of the student participants with albinism sampled in a study of students with visual impairments at a Zambian university reported how numerous sighted students have not only bullied them based on their albinism, but also gave them demeaning and offensive labels (Simui *et al*. 2019). Other studies have found that in some HEIs students with visual impairments are being subjected to emotional, physical and even sexual abuse from their sighted peers both in residences and on campus. Kasiram & Subrayen's (2013) study of students with visual impairments at the University of KwaZulu-Natal which some of the participants reported incidents of being frequently being insulted and assaulted by peers. The misconceptions that non-disabled people have towards PWDs can be a barrier to their meaningful social inclusion. In Kajee's (2010) study, one of the blind student participants complained about how every time they would go out for coffee with friends, the waiters or waitresses will always ask their sighted friends as to what they themselves would want to order. This particular participant found this

frustrating, annoying and disempowering as it reinforced the ableist assumption that blind people cannot talk for themselves (Kajee 2010).

Hughes (2004) argues that the misrecognition faced by persons with visible disabilities has in some circumstances forced them to come to terms with the uncomfortable realisation that their bodies do not belong to, or are alien in, this world which is obsessed with ableism. Davis (2006) argues that from the perspective of non-disabled people, it is the "differentness" of PWDs' bodies which leads them to be stigmatised and discriminated against by non-disabled people. This is particularly true of some of the students with visual impairments sampled in Lourens & Swartz's (2016b) study. In this study, some of SWDs participants complained about how their differentness, their being a "misfit", when around non-disabled peers imposed barriers through experiencing difficulties in accessing friendship groups, as some non-disabled peers had the perception that their disability was shameful, leading to these participants having feelings of inferiority (Lourens & Swartz 2016b). Because of these challenges of social rejection, the findings from Lourens & Swartz's (2016b) study of students with visual impairments at two South African universities point to students finding comfort in befriending each other because of similar conditions and experiences, and they ended up doing both social and academic activities together as a coping mechanism. Emphasising on the importance of such friendships among students with visual impairments, Hatlen (2004) argues that this kind of socialisation gives blind students confidence and self-determination.

The other group which also faces social exclusion in the South African HE is students with hearing impairments, particularly Deaf students. Bell (2014), for instance, found out that one of the barriers facing Deaf students is the underrepresentation of this group, together with access to information and communication about campus events. A student with a hearing impairment sampled in Swart & Greyling (2011) expressed concerns about how peers would always make jokes and gossip about them, laughing with the knowledge that they could not hear the jokes and gossip. A University of Cape Town student, Jessica Bothma (cited in Hendricks 2016), who wears a hearing aid, elaborates on peer social rejection challenges she faces on campus as follows: "lots of people freak out when they hear we're Deaf. They just say never mind and walk

away. No, you wanted to speak to us, so make an effort. Be patient with us because we cannot hear you". This shows how some non-disabled students do not even want to make an effort to relate to Deaf students under the assumption that the communication barriers between members of the two groups are absolute.

Social rejection of students with invisible disabilities

Following Wolanin & Steele's (2004: 36 see also Gulli 2016) definition, invisible disabilities are disabilities which are not readily apparent including, low vision, poor hearing, emotional disturbance, chronic illness, and specific learning disabilities ranging from dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to autism spectrum disorder. Other examples include chronic diseases such as Crohn's, as well as mental health conditions like depression and anxiety (Gulli 2016). Elaborating on the different experiences between persons with visible, and those with invisible disabilities, Davis (2005: 154-155) argues that "those whose disabilities are invisible may also have to convince other people that they really are disabled, not seeking some special—unfair—advantage: thus, what they must do is meet a burden of proof". Given this, they have to endure the disappointing and frustrating process of having to face "a double bind: either they forgo the assistance or accommodation they need—and thus suffer the consequences of attempting to do things they may not be able to do safely by themselves—or they endure the discomfort of subjecting themselves to strangers' interrogations" (Davis 2005: 154-155). Likewise, some of the South African literature on both the academic and social inclusion of students with invisible disabilities have shown how most of these students experience disappointment and frustration when their peers, including close friends, sometimes corner them in order to have them prove that they are bona fide disabled, because of the invisibility of their disabilities.

Students with invisible disabilities always find this disappointing and frustrating. For instance, Chiwandire's (2017) study on the experiences of SWDs at Rhodes University found that although students with invisible disabilities did not necessarily struggle with forming friendships with non-disabled peers, they raised concerns about their current friendships being non-

reciprocal, as their friends always blame them for "faking" their disabilities. Similarly, in his study, Mutanga (2018) reported how the invisible nature of some students' disabilities presented challenges when they confront non-disabled students who assume that disability has to be seen. In particular, some of the partially sighted students sampled in Naidoo's (2010) study on SWDs' perceptions and experiences of the Disability Unit at one of the University of KwaZulu-Natal's campuses faced similar challenges: participants complained about how some sighted students would say that partially sighted students could see (Naidoo 2010).

As Rieser (2006) cautions, myths and beliefs that assign characteristics to PWDs is sometimes unrelated to the reality of their daily lives. These stereotypes of disabilities elicit pity, fear and humiliating attitudes towards PWDs who are often viewed by non-disabled people as different, faulty and needing to be treated and made as "normal" as possible (Rieser 2006). Davis (2006) argues that from the perspective of non-disabled people, it is the "differentness" of PWDs' bodies which leads them to be stigmatised and discriminated against by non-disabled peers. The discrimination of SWDs on the grounds of their assumed differentness has been confirmed by some South African studies. In their study, Lourens & Swartz (2016b) found the differentness of students with visual impairments in the eyes of their sighted peers had a negative impact on the formation of friendships between members of these two groups. In the study some participants with visual impairments did not feel easily accepted by their sighted peers, and this subsequently made it difficult for the latter to welcome the former into a friendship group (Lourens & Swartz 2016b). In addition, the study found that in order to be accepted by their sighted peers, some students with visual impairments spoke about how they had to endure the difficulties of going an extra mile in certain circumstances in order to achieve some level of sameness with their sighted peers (Lourens & Swartz 2016b). This is evidenced by one of the participants who argued that "I had to work hard to get their acceptance and to earn their trust and to, you know, to sort of get their interest" (Lourens & Swartz 2016b: 248). It could be argued that the findings from this study indicate how acceptance between students with visible disabilities and their non-disabled peers does not happen organically.

In their study, Abbott & McConkey (2006: 279) explored the barriers to social inclusion through the perspectives of a sample of people with intellectual disabilities, the "participants commented on how they had been singled out due to their disability, or had been ignored". South African disability policy frameworks like the *White Paper 6* takes the issue of the acceptance of SWDs in mainstream educational institutions seriously. This is evidenced when this policy notes that "inclusive education seeks to foster acceptance of all learners in a manner that learning needs are equally and equitably provided for the full participation of vulnerable people as well" (DoE 2001). Studies in South African HE have suggested how "acceptance and positive societal attitudes towards disability can also help eliminate the ongoing exclusion of people with disabilities in the learning environment" (Tugli *et al*. 2013b: 363).

As reported by some of the SWDs in Swart & Greyling's (2011) study, acceptance for SWDs is denied when their non-disabled peers associate the formers' disabilities with inability, and this misconception results in them being stigmatised. A participant in Swart & Greyling's (2011: 98) study elaborated on this as follows: "there just is that connotation that if you are disabled you are dumb. If you are blind, you are dumb. If you are Deaf you are dumb, if you are in a wheelchair you are dumb". This study concluded by pointing out that stereotypes and attitudes on the part of the non-disabled continue to marginalise SWDs in mainstream South African HEIs (Swart & Greyling 2011 see also Matshedisho 2010). Ramakuela & Maluleke's (2011) study, which explored the views of SWDs regarding their social and learning experiences at a South African HEI, reported that there was an atmosphere of intolerance and resentment by the whole non-disabled university community towards SWDs, with the majority (80%) reporting feelings of rejection by their fellow non-disabled learners, staff and the institution as a whole. These findings suggest that the idea that placing SWDs in the regular classroom will automatically result in friendships and a widened social network needs to be interrogated.

Although most SWDs, especially those with visible disabilities, are facing social rejection, some SWDs at other campuses have experienced notably positive relations with their non-disabled peers. For instance, some of the SWDs who participated in a study by Swart & Greyling (2011) reported feeling more accepted in friendships they had with both other SWDs and non-disabled

peers, and found most of these friendships giving meaning to their lives at university and beyond. Furthermore, in order to feel that they are being accepted in friendship relationships, some participants in the study argued that their non-disabled peers should see and recognise the former as full human beings, regardless of their disabilities (Swart & Greyling 2011). In particular, participants in this study expressed a firm belief in their own ability and inherent potential, stating that others had to recognise this, and value and respect them as human beings: "I am a complete person. It's just that I have a disability" (Swart & Greyling 2011: 97).

DUSMs as enablers for the social inclusion of SWDs

Literature which takes the notion of social inclusion seriously has also emphasised that DUSMs have an important role to play if they are to achieve the successful social inclusion of SWDs in HEIs. There is a general consensus within in this literature that this will require DUSMs to move away from their conventional professional duties, which focus more on rendering academic inclusion oriented support mainly provided through liaising with lecturers and SWDs, to facilitating the teaching and learning process. Jeffreys (2004), for instance, argues that university support staff should work hard to ensure that SWDs are socially integrated into both the residential and co-curricular environment on campus, as this is one of the major factors influencing the retention of students upon their transitioning to university. Moswela & Mukhopadhyay (2011) argue that DUSMs should be involved in actively combating the social isolation of students in HE through, for instance, launching campaigns aimed at raising awareness around disability, and these should specifically target non-disabled students. Doing so would be important, especially considering findings from numerous studies which have reported on the social isolation and rejection faced by SWDs in South African HEIs.

Some studies have recommended the need for DUSMs to liaise with their universities in hiring professionals to conduct mobility orientation training with newly enrolled students with visual impairments, particularly blind students, if these students are to be included socially on campuses. This is a result of the potential challenges faced by these students if they have not undergone mobility orientation training. Central to a mobility orientation programme is how it

familiarises visually impaired students with the physical layout of the campus, and this "may be very useful and might help to alleviate the emotional distress associated with those first few weeks on campus" (Lourens & Swartz 2016b: 249). Mobility training and orientation is therefore one of the important skills for independent living among visually impaired students (Howell 2005). In a study of students with visual impairments at a Zambian university, Simui *et al*. (2019: 52) found that the absence of support staff willing to act as guides and provide mobility and orientation services to students with visual impairments left student "at the mercy of their sighted peers to progress in their academic endeavours".

Furthermore, this study found that because the participants did not receive mobility orientation training, some of them reported challenges of being at risk of falling in uncovered ditches, which posed a danger to their safety on university premises (Simui *et al*. 2019). Having to depend on sighted peers to accompany students with visual impairments safely does not only deny them independence, but also a sense of belonging within their institution. Against this background, Lourens & Swartz (2016: 249) recommend universities "consider employing mobility instructors as part of their disability support team". In addition, Lourens & Swartz (2016) recommend universities to employ additional mobility instructors to conduct ongoing orientation programmes aimed at addressing all the mobility needs of blind students, including unexpected changes to the physical environment, as this might risk their safety in navigating the campus.

DUSMs can also facilitate the social inclusion of SWDs by ensuring that relevant departments, especially those dealing with communication issues, advertise information on social activities taking place on campus in accessible formats, especially for blind students who cannot read visual posters. This was raised as a matter of concern by some SWDs sampled in Matshedisho's (2010: 732) study, with some of them complaining that "they did not receive information that was posted on common notice boards. Hence, they are uninformed about campus activities. They usually learn about past activities from conversations with other students". Likewise, Lourens & Swartz (2016a: 249) recommend DUSMs to inform "visually impaired students of accessible social activities on campus, such as chess, choir and so on" if they are to be fully socially included. Some SWDs, especially those with visual impairments, from a University of KwaZulu-

Natal campuses sampled in Naidoo's (2010) study complained about not having access to university notices in an alternate format, and noted that this sometimes resulted in them failing to receive relevant important information regarding issues that affected all students. The few SWDs who had access to such information had to be dependent on their friends to update them on current university news (Naidoo 2010).

Despite these studies showing how the denial of accessible information can impose a barrier, especially for students with visual impairments, there are some of these students who have applauded their DUSMs for always ensuring that they make information about social activities accessible to them. For instance, in a case study of blind and visually impaired students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Pietermaritzburg Campus, the participants considered their DUSMs as an indispensable part of information access (Seyama *et al*. 2014). Apart from issues related to accessibility of information, DUSMs in some South African universities have been commended for not only playing an important role in helping SWDs address their academic needs, but non-academic aspects such as "securing residences and adjusting to the university environment" as well (Matshedisho 2010: 732).

Other scholars suggest that DUSMs should liaise with relevant authorities in ensuring that they plan inclusive, informative and fun Orientation Week programmes as this is central to including SWDs socially. As argued by Matshedisho (2010: 738), Orientation Week programmes "are crucial for every undergraduate or new student in any campus". Matshedisho (2010: 738) further argues that "knowing one's way on campus and feeling comfortable on it seems to be the initial measure of student retention". Thus, orientation and adjustment become important to SWDs' introduction to university life. When conducting Orientation Week programmes, it is important that DUSMs avoid practices which reinforce the social exclusion of this group through discriminating against them. In concluding her study of 20 SWDs on four campuses of Walter Sisulu University, Makiwane (2018) recommended the need for this institution to arrange and conduct a pre-orientation programme specifically for SWDs.

Makiwane's (2018: 993) rationale is that pre-orientation week "would be utilised for assessment to take place, mobility instructions to be given to understand space, to enable students with disabilities to settle down well and to tour the campus before students without disabilities arrive". I find this recommendation reinforcing the indirect discrimination against SWDs, as it isolates them from their non-disabled peers, and this might not always be in their best interests. To substantiate this view, I draw on findings from Naidoo's (2005) study of SWDs, particularly the narrative from one of the wheelchair users. This participant complained about how other wheelchair users, including themself, were singled out from their non-disabled peers by being confined to one wheelchair friendly residence. This participant went on to argue how this discriminatory process denied members of this group an opportunity to participate in Orientation Week's several activities which would have helped them build friendships within residences like other students (Naidoo 2005). Therefore, elaborating on SWDs' quest for equal treatment in spite of their disabilities, Naidoo (2005: 60) notes that upon attending an educational institution SWDs "just want a 'fair go' like everybody else", and not be singled out by any form of discrimination nor be subject to over-protection.

As Belch (2000) cautions, the values of human dignity and equality need to be reflected by those working with SWDs in HEIs. According to Mutanga (2019), this obligation should also apply to DUSMs at South African universities, as this cadre is important to the lives of SWDs both academically and socially. In order to exercise this obligation, Mutanga (2019: 6) enjoins DUSMs to need to exercise agency in order "to avoid stereotyping students with disabilities and alienating them from the rest of the student population, while maintaining the same dominant culture that views people with disabilities as second-class citizens, who must be helped by a Disability Unit to "fit into" an 'unchanging' higher education system". It is hoped that through exercising this caution DUSMs will be able to work with SWDs as equal members of the university community who have agency, and not as passive human beings. Mutanga & Walker (2015) also recommend HEIs create a conducive environment for SWDs to be able to exercise their individual agency and choice.

Although DUSMs could play an important role in including SWDs socially, I caution against overworking the former for having to deal with all issues affecting SWDs. For instance, recently Makiwane (2018: 792) has called for DUSMs to "intervene when students are mistreated and when students with disabilities are inappropriately treated". While this could be a relevant recommendation considering DUSMs mostly work closely with SWDs, such issues ought to be mainstreamed within university structures as well. This could occur through creating structures responsible for the mistreatment of students, whether they have a disability not, in order to avoid a context where all issues related to disability are dealt with by DUSMs - this can further stigmatise and reinforce the othering of SWDs. Apart from this, previous research has shown that most South African Disability Units and their personnel have minimal autonomy and direct communication with university management, a group playing an important role in decision making in universities (FOTIM 2011). Hence, DUSMs' have a limited potential of addressing the social inclusion needs of SWDs.

Student Engagement and campus disability activism

Kuh (2009: 683) defines student engagement as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities". Central to student engagement is how it impacts on the "academic success, persistence and retention" of students within universities, hence some scholars have enjoined South African universities to create a conducive environment for student engagement to thrive (Schreiber & Yu 2016: 158). Also central to student engagement is how it promotes the social inclusion of students within universities as it provides one of the avenues "to explore how the experiences within and beyond the classroom impact student persistence behaviours" (Schreiber & Yu 2016: 157). This makes student engagement a reliable predictor of success within HEIs (Strydom & Mentz 2010).

Within the South African literature, there is a general consensus that student engagement among SWDs can take root if this group is given the right to self-representation within HEIs. Some

South African disability policies point to PWDs' right to self-representation as one of the fundamental principles "which informs the outlook of the disability rights movement in South Africa and internationally" (Office of the Deputy President 1997: 23). The Office of the Deputy President (1997: 28) further notes that PWDs ought to be afforded the right to self-representation as this group is "best equipped to change perceptions and attitudes towards disability, and should therefore play a central role in the development of strategies and projects through their legitimate Organizations". In the context of South African HE, Ndlovu (2016: 30) argues that what most SWDs "seek within any society is to be empowered to become self-reliant, independent, and equal in dignity to the so-called normal people".

Given this, Roux & Burnett (2010) recommend South African HEIs to encourage SWDs to participate in decision-making if their special needs are to be met. Opportunities to participate in decision-making are important for SWDs, as "they are the best experts on disability" issues, and as such their voices and opinions are vitally important (Mutanga 2019: 2). Arguing from a social model of disability standpoint, Shakespeare (2014) notes that giving a voice to PWDs is an important starting point of integrating this group within mainstream society and subsequently guarantee them political emancipation. Seen from this angle, the formation of legitimate Societies of SWDs on some South African campuses is an indication of how student engagement for this group has taken a new form. As will be shown below, these Societies of SWDs have played an important role in representing the needs of SWDs as most leadership positions within these Societies are occupied by SWDs themselves.

At the University of Cape Town, for instance, one of the disabled student activists, Kanyisa Ntombini, created, and chairs, an Organisation called "University of Cape Town (UCT) for Disability Justice". The purpose of UCT for Disability Justice is to help SWDs navigate the university's bureaucratic systems (Hendricks 2016). In January 2016, Kanyisa Ntombini handed over a memorandum to the then University of Cape Town Vice Chancellor Max Price, which outlined the difficulties SWDs face in navigating a campus environment which was not built for non-disabled students (Hendricks 2016). Hendricks (2016) further argues that the "demands in the memorandum included a complete review of UCT's disability policy, disability unit and

Student Wellness Services (SWS) […] as well as disabled-friendly facilities such as bathrooms and theatres. The memorandum also called for staff and students to be trained and sensitised about disabled students". It is clear that from the perspectives of SWDs that these issues are important to the social inclusion of this group.

At the University of Venda, the Disability Student Council (DSC) is a student representative body for SWDs established to give them a collective voice in challenging the institution's discriminatory policies and practices (Mutanga 2015). Mutanga (2016: 165) argues that "members of the Council are voted for by disabled students along the same lines as members of the Student Representative Committee (SRC)". Some of the SWDs sampled in Mutanga's (2016) doctoral dissertation commended the positive role played by the Disability Student Council, particularly its Chairperson, whom SWDs viewed as proactive in bringing challenges to the attention of management. In another study, a student with a disability at the University of Venda applauded the Disability Student Council's Chairperson as follows: "as disabled students we have our own Disabled Student Representative Council. We always push our chairperson to represent us well when he meets the university management" (Mutanga & Walker 2015: 513). Apart from this, some of the University of Venda SWDs commended the Disability Student Council's Chairperson for successfully facilitating their social inclusion through ensuring campus social spaces are accessible for SWDs. This is evident when one of participants argued that "there is a student bar on campus and we usually go there to play pool but it was inaccessible for students using wheelchairs so we approached the Chairperson for Disabled Student Council and it was sorted" (Mutanga 2015: 165). This shows how such facilities are important in creating an enabling space for SWDs to socialise and have fun with both their SWDs and non-disabled peers.

A growing literature in South Africa indicates that participating in decision-making structures of student governance, such as the SRC, is a crucial platform from which SWDs can have their collective voice heard. In a study overviewing numerous South African universities, Howell (2005) emphasised that SWDs themselves need to be involved in a representative capacity in student decision-making structures. Howell (2005: 53) found that at three of the sampled

institutions “the imperative for disabled student representation was linked to the broader principle of student representation and initiatives had been started with the SRC to ensure disabled student participation in student Organisation more broadly”. Mutanga & Walker (2015: 513) argue that being an SRC member gives SWDs a “voice” which is central in participating “effectively in the university, individually or collectively”. Mutanga & Walker (2015: 513) found that SWDs in the SRC stand better chances to self-advocate for their needs in comparison to their SWDs peers who are not in the SRC, as the former utilises this platform by being “more active in fighting for what they value in life when it is not available”. For instance, at the UFS SWDs used their influence in the SRC to address the challenges they faced “within the university e.g. accessing buildings, lack of support from teaching staff and attitudes of other students” (Mutanga 2015: 105).

Against this background, it is clear that Societies of SWDs give this group agency to mobilise amongst themselves and collectively devise effective strategies of critiquing injustices within their universities. This formation of Societies of SWDs give members of this group an alternative platform to work collectively in create an inclusive HE environment for themselves, in contrast to the dominant approach which sees members of this group being invited to participate in qualitative studies. This is because the voices of SWDs in South African HE have mainly been heard through numerous studies which explore their lived experiences, with most studies reporting the continual discrimination emanating both from policy and practice (Chiwandire 2017; Makiwane 2018; Mutanga 2019; Mbuvha 2019; Lourens & Swartz 2020). It is for this reason important for HEIs to create an enabling environment for the formation and growth of these Societies of SWDs and provide them with the necessary support to thrive as they are playing an important role in facilitating both the social and academic inclusion of SWDs. This shows how SWDs should be encouraged to use their collective voice to mobilise effectively on their own, rather than having to wait to be assisted by their DUSMs or other stakeholders. Thus, instead of becoming the recipients of services initiated by others assuming what they need, the FOTIM (2011) study stresses the importance for SWDs to express their experiences and needs independently.

Promoting the health and well-being of SWDs

It could be argued that the health and well-being of SWDs is one of the important aspects of social inclusion which the dominant approach to inclusive education has neglected. Elaborating on this, Mutanga (2019: 2) argues that one of the recurring issues in most international studies on disability in HE is the absence of consultation with SWDs when HEIs design or provide services. Given the emphasis placed on consultation with SWDs regarding their academic needs, universities have neglected to address students' psychological and mental well-being through the provision of a wide range of quality health- and counselling services.

Some studies have called for the provision of quality counselling services for SWDs as one of the ways in which HEIs can achieve the social inclusion of SWDs. For instance, a study by McAllister *et al*. (2014) on the staff experiences of providing support to students managing mental health challenges at two Australian universities, it was reported that the non-availability of counselling services to students at peak demand times was raised as a major concern by students. Hence, the study recommended the widening of the provision of these services, especially when crises tend to occur, such as in the lead-up to exams, during evenings or weekends (McAllister *et al*. 2014). In the South African context, Matshedisho (2010) argues that transportation services should be provided to some SWDs whose disabilities require them to visit health professionals in hospitals for regular medical check-ups. This study further notes that not only is this important in ensuring the promotion of the wellness and wellbeing of SWDs, but that this prevents a situation where students have to incur extra costs for transport services, and which might be a burden for those who cannot afford it (Matshedisho 2010).

Mbuvha (2019: 60) noted that counselling services at South African universities "are also an important part of academic support and classroom assistance in HEIs settings. This service includes student participation in individual counselling and/or support groups provided by the university disability office". Given this, Greyling's (2008) doctoral dissertation, which sampled SWDs on their experiences of support and barriers to their development at Stellenbosch University, found that this institution made support groups available to students with ADHD,

learning disabilities, and students with mental challenges. Such support groups were central in providing SWDs with support, social interaction and problem-solving strategies through meeting on a regular basis (Greyling 2008). With reference to Walter Sisulu University, Makiwane (2018) recommends the presence of well-trained psychologists and counsellors to guide SWDs.

At Rhodes University, two students with mental health challenges sampled in Chiwandire's (2017) study complained about the institution's counselling services, which were, in their view, ineffective in catering to the daily needs of students with mental health challenges. Among other things, both participants complained about how they could not consult with the institution's psychologists immediately in cases of emergency, as they had to book for an appointment in advance and be put on the waiting list which they found unhelpful (Chiwandire 2017). Furthermore, both participants also complained about inadequate psychologists and an overall lack of confidentiality (Chiwandire 2017). Hence, these participants resorted to seeking counselling services from private psychologists off-campus, whom they found to be more professional and convenient (Chiwandire 2017). These participants spoke about their privileged backgrounds and social class as making it easier for them to access private psychologists as a result of receiving coverage on their parents' medical aid (Chiwandire 2017).

The shortage of psychologists, and the impact it has on SWDs relying on these services for their well-being, was also raised as a matter of concern by some students with mental health challenges at the University of Cape Town (Hendricks 2016). Students called for the institution to hire more black psychologists, to whom they felt they could relate to better, as a matter of urgency (Hendricks 2016). Apart from counselling services, some studies have called for South African HEIs to strengthen their provision of rehabilitation/therapeutic services to SWDs. One such studies was conducted by Tugli *et al*. (2013b: 363) into the experiences of SWDs at the University of Venda and found that "rehabilitation/therapeutic services were the least ranked among other services provided in the institution". The authors called for this institution to hire more professionals to provide rehabilitation/therapeutic services because "without these services, students with disabilities will be excluded from the core activities in the learning environment" (Tugli *et al*. 2013b: 363). All these examples clearly illustrate that addressing the needs of SWDs

holistically is not only supporting them in the classroom setting, but also ensuring that their health, mental and psychological well-being is taken care.

Conclusion: rationale for the study

Case (2015) has cautioned against the potential negative impact of universities only paying attention to the traditional view of academic inclusion through supporting students in the classroom setting. Case (2015) further argues that this might result in these institutions addressing difficulties being experienced by their students in isolation from the broader conditioning context, which, as I have argued in this chapter, could include issues of social inclusion. A similar argument has been noted in South African disability policies, such as the *Policy Framework for the Realisation of Social Inclusion in the Post-School Education and Training System* (DHET 2018). This policy document has warned South Africa's PSET institutions to move away from "the assumption that all of a student's problems can be remedied by a particular piece of equipment (the classic 'technological fix' mentality)" (DHET 2018: 30). Rather, these institutions should make efforts to understand not only the social context, but other factors which might exacerbate the barriers experienced by SWDs on campus (DHET 2018). This policy document's recommendation is important taking into consideration the fact this chapter has shown how social inclusion-oriented barriers can equally impact on the participation of SWDs. The 2015 *Guidelines for the Creation of Equitable Opportunities for People with Disabilities in South African Higher Education* proposes achieving social inclusion for SWDs through increasing this group's active participation in activities such as clubs, societies, sports, and other activities offered in residences (Howell 2015).

This shows how debates regarding the inclusion of SWDs in South African HE dynamics are not static, but fluid, especially given how universities are being called upon not only to secure a sense of belonging for SWDs in the classroom setting, but also outside the classroom setting by ensuring that members of this group's social needs are addressed. In this regard, I agree with Lourens & Swartz's (2016b) view that universities which promote meaningful social inclusion

are those which create opportunities for their SWDs to participate in all spheres of campus life, thus enabling this group to feel like are valued members of the tertiary environment. From a social inclusion standpoint, securing a sense of belonging for SWDs beyond the classroom setting involves providing services which might be taken for granted by non-disabled people, yet such services could be very important for the former. For instance, recent disability policies have noted that in order for the South African PSET system to achieve social inclusion, it is important that these institutions remove most barriers related to student housing, recreational areas, including sporting facilities, and public adapted transport used by SWDs (DHET 2018). This has also been confirmed by numerous South African studies discussed in the above paragraphs.

Likewise, recent research conducted at various South African universities has shown that the inaccessibility or the lack of provision of SARAs and cafeterias, toilets and transportation accessible to wheelchair users is one of the indications that most institutions are not prioritising issues relating to the social inclusion of SWDs (Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). At present, some South African universities which have adapted accessible transport services for wheelchair users, seem mainly to provide such services to support students in academic, and not social activities (Mbuvha 2019). Some studies also show that other South African universities do not have accessible transport at all. For instance, Wright's (2007: 20) study of SWDs at the University of the Western Cape found that certain wheelchair users "would have to pay additional costs to be transported home" from campus as this institution did not have adapted accessible transport.

Mutanga (2017) has criticised the South African HE system for failing to question the subtle dynamics of inclusion which has resulted in many SWDs to continue to feel socially excluded. Given this, I agree with Mutanga's (2018: 238) suggestion that attempts to tackle injustices against SWDs in South African HE "should not only focus on overtly discriminatory practices but also have appreciation for other subtle manifestations of intolerance". The subtle discrimination against SWDs, as suggested by some South African policy documents, could be alleviated if disability issues, including social inclusion, are mainstreamed "within the context of the PSET system; therefore actively eradicating discrimination against people with disabilities in the PSET system and in society is mandatory" (DHET 2018: 21). Non-prioritisation of social

inclusion matters could be said to be reinforcing the social exclusion of SWDs, because most universities do not seem to see such matters as important to the holistic inclusion of SWDs. Antonak & Livneh (2000) subsequently suggest that the full acceptance of PWDs by non-disabled people could be achieved when subtle barriers are removed. As suggested by some proponents of inclusive education, full acceptance in relation to social inclusion could be achieved if a student with a disability is granted a "full member" status in terms of truly belonging and having his or her contributions to the diversity of the university valued and celebrated (Swart & Greyling 2011).

Furthermore, as regards to how securing a "full member" status is important for SWDs, Moabelo (2012) asserts that unlike the non-disabled who form the majority group, SWDs are the minority group at South African HEIs, which is why they are more susceptible to discrimination or marginalisation, with their needs subsequently not being adequately met by their institutions. Hence, securing "full member" status for SWDs can help us to think more critically on the need to take the social inclusion of SWDs seriously if we are to create welcoming university spaces for these students.

Cuseo (2007) notes that human interaction, collaboration and formation of interpersonal connections between students and other members of the university is important in enhancing the success of these students at their institutions. This is one of the justificatory reasons as to why the present thesis predominantly utilises *Ubuntu* values in order to gain an in-depth understanding of issues of social inclusion in South African HEIs in relation to SWDs. This is because central to *Ubuntu* is how it emphasises that "social interrelations and responsibilities are a precondition for human life, i.e. that the individual has meaning only in relation to an experience of community" (Msengana 2006: 20). Msengana (2006: 99) further argues that this is likely to create a conducive environment where community members could possibly be "willing to accept others as they are and being thankful for them". This could also be necessitated by the fact that *Ubuntu* promotes diversity in the form of creating a welcoming community for everyone regardless of their social status (Sindane 1994). In the context of the inclusion of PWDs, proponents have argued that taking diversity seriously from the perspective of *Ubuntu* can potentially result in the

formation of reciprocal interpersonal relationships between PWDs and non-disabled people through preventing the othering of the latter who are sometimes considered not to "be fully human" by the former (Berghs 2017: 2).

In light of this, as a starting point, the present thesis challenges the dominant conventional academic inclusion approach which associates placing SWDs and non-disabled students in the regular classroom setting as automatically resulting in friendships and the formation of a widened social network as not always true. This dominant understanding has been put forward by scholars like Moriña (2017: 5) who defines inclusive education as the right of SWDs to participate and "benefit from high-quality learning and enjoy full participation in the educational system". In addition, Moriña (2017) believes that HEIs can best achieve this right for SWDs through transforming their classroom practices if SWDs are to succeed academically on the same level as their non-disabled peers. This one-sided approach of only supporting students from an academic inclusion position has been challenged by Tinto (1975). This is evident when Tinto (1975) cautions universities against focusing too much on integrating students in either the social or the academic aspect, which could lead to students dropping out, in turn depriving those students of a balanced university life. Likewise, Lynch (2001) also argues that in order for mainstream educational institutions to be truly inclusive, they need to integrate SWDs not only educationally, but socially as well. Applying this reasoning in the context of South African HEIs' SWDs, the present study also acknowledges the importance of supporting SWDs both from an academic and social inclusion standpoint, however it pays more attention to the social aspect of inclusion. One of the reasons for doing so is that, to date, there are few existing studies (see, for instance, Kajee 2010; Losinsky *et al*. 2009; Matshedisho 2010; Lourens & Swartz 2016a; Greyling & Swart 2011) which have examined the issue of the social inclusion of SWDs at South African HEIs.

This gap in literature is the rationale for this study. Mutanga (2019), for instance, cautions South African universities to appreciate the multi-dimensional nature of disability by considering the individual differences and the effect of multiple factors on the lives of SWDs on campuses. Seen from a social inclusion standpoint, it is important for universities not only to embrace diversity in

the classroom setting, which is mostly expressed through addressing the curriculum needs of students with diverse disabilities, but also to address the social inclusion needs of SWDs. By sampling Heads of Disability Units and their DUSMs, it is therefore hoped that the present study will generate new knowledge which can assist universities in improving their response to the needs of SWDs. This is particularly due to Disability Units in most South African universities being responsible of supporting students with diverse visible and invisible disabilities, making Heads of Disability Units and their DUSMs key informants of both the academic and social needs of SWDs. Hence, it is also hoped that by sampling Heads of Disability Units and their DUSMs, participants' voices will assist in identifying social inclusion-oriented institutional barriers which are hindering the full participation of SWDs at South African HEIs.

Xulu-Gama (2019) argues that supporting students both socially and academically is central to effecting positive results pertaining to integration, and this can potentially limit students' dropout rates. There are notable examples which indicate how universities' failure to address the social aspect of inclusion can negatively affect the academic inclusion and learning process of SWDs. Mutanga (2019) argues that HEIs also need to take the right of SWDs to a healthy life seriously, and therefore provide medical rehabilitation services where necessary, as this could have a positive impact not only on the social inclusion of SWDs, but also on their academic inclusion. As regards the role of sport in facilitating social inclusion, the World Health Organization (2005) suggests that participation in sport gives youth with disabilities opportunities to interact with others, thus creating a conducive environment to make new friends and maintain social networks. Hence, having friends is also important in facilitating the academic inclusion of SWDs, especially in cases where SWDs and their non-disabled peers do academic group work together among other forms of supporting each other academically. For some SWDs, especially those with severe disabilities, a university's failure to provide helpers upon the transition to these institutions can potentially negatively impact the former's academic inclusion. This is evidenced by South African disability activist, former legal researcher at Section27, and current clerk at the Constitutional Court, Silomo Khumalo (cited in Van der Merwe 2017), as follows:

> You are in a residence, you have never cooked, ironed, made your bed by yourself, and you must do these things on top of the struggles with your academic

work, all without the necessary support. You feel useless, like you want to quit. Depression, drug abuse and dropping out are all risks, he added.

Chapter 4: Conceptual Framing: *Ubuntu*

Introduction

Ubuntu is a "Nguni term *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (often translated as 'a person is a person through other persons')" (Gade 2012: 487). The concept of *botho/Ubuntu* is said to be as old as humanity itself (Dolamo 2013). Some commentators agree that the roots of the concept of *Ubuntu* can be traced back to African rural communities (Netshitomboni 1998). Broodryk (2008: 45) traces the roots of the concept of *Ubuntu* from Egypt and believes that it dates as far back as 1500 BCE based on the "seven cardinal values in the Netchar Maat culture [of] truth, justice, propriety, harmony, balance, reciprocity and order" – all of which were the bases and guidelines for correct and moral behaviour". Broodryk (2008) argues that with the movement of people to the southern parts of the continent these values and beliefs were transferred to other parts of Africa. This shows that *Ubuntu* has its roots in the African continent and that its values played an important role in the daily lives of many African traditional communities.

Berghs (2017) argues that there is a need to adopt an African model of disability that encapsulates *Ubuntu* in fighting struggles against oppression and disablement currently faced by PWDs in Africa. *Ubuntu* "recognises an individual's status as a human being who is entitled to respect, dignity and acceptance from other members of the community" (Hailey 2008: 10). *Ubuntu* offers a vantage point that helps make visible invisible inequalities (Berghs 2017) that give rise to the social exclusion of SWDs on the grounds of both their disability and minority status in South African HEIs. *Ubuntu* ethics also help to make visible some of the deficiencies of Western-oriented disability theories, especially when uncritically applied in studying the experiences of PWDs in Global South countries. *Ubuntu* does that by functioning as a unifying factor particularly through attempting to bring people together regardless of their backgrounds (Sithole 2001). Seen from this angle, if South African universities are to embrace some of the positive values of *Ubuntu,* especially the value of diversity these institutions can potentially create inclusive spaces which also welcome and support SWDs as equal members of the university community regardless of their disabilities. From an *Ubuntu* standpoint, the value of

diversity is understood holistically with particular attention being paid to placing the obligation on each individual to be sensitive to the needs and wants of others especially those who are mostly disadvantaged within the society (Chinkada 1990). This unique obligation is often absent in the Western individualistic human rights approach which emphasises the concept of autonomy. For this reason, with this form of self-centred self-rule, individualistic persons are less likely to be inclined to make efforts to cultivate good relations with PWDs as equal members of the society as the latter place little value on social interdependence. In other words, unlike *Ubuntu*, within a Western individualistic society the non-disabled person would not necessarily feel obligated or accountable to cultivate good relations with their PWDs peers as the former's rights always take precedent.

Given the inadequacies of Western individualist theories of disability, particularly the human rights approach, I propose *Ubuntu* values as a contextually relevant starting point for building HE institutional cultures in South Africa that foster the social inclusion of SWDs. This approach represents a radical departure from the taken-for-granted ableist, Western individualist norms that suffuse much of the contemporary discourse regarding disability inclusion in HE.

Deficiencies of Western-oriented disability theorising

Meyer (2010) has applauded the US for successfully implementing a rights-based disability policy framework and has also encouraged other countries to follow suit. Within the field of DS, Western conventional and individualistic theories of disability continue to provide the dominant lens for analysing the structures and practices that marginalise PWDs in society (Woodin 2012). Many of these contributions to the social theorisation of disability have been contributed by disabled academics (see, for instance, Hahn 1989; Oliver 1990; Abberley 1993; Zola 1993; Shakespeare 1994). Some of these academics have contributed immensely to the formulation of the social model of disability which, as applied in educational settings, enjoins HEIs to shift their focus from the individual student with a disability to the educational environment in order to address the disadvantages faced by people with impairments in exercising their right to inclusive

education (De Beco 2018). It is this social model of disability that has formed the bedrock of the human rights approach which has been adopted internationally in many countries' (including South Africa) national and university disability policies.

It is important here to briefly unpack the differences between the human rights approach and the social model of disability. Retief & Letšosa (2018) have argued that both the social model of disability and the human rights model of disability bear close affinity to each other and this has resulted in some researchers treating both models as virtually synonymous. However, Degener (2017) is one of the scholars who argues that there is a clear distinction between the social model of disability and the human rights model of disability by highlighting what he considers to be a number of important differences between them. Firstly, Degener (2017: 43) argues that although the social model of disability is central to helping people understand the underlying social factors that shape the society's understanding of disability, "the human rights model moves beyond explanation, offering a theoretical framework for disability policy that emphasises the human dignity of PWDs". Secondly, unlike the social model of disability, "the human rights model incorporates both first and second generation human rights, in the sense that 'it encompasses both sets of human rights, civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural rights'" (Degener 2017: 44). Thirdly, the social model of disability could also be distinguished from the human rights model as the former renders pain and suffering in the lives of some PWDs as immaterial (Degener 2017). In contrast, (Degener 2017: 47) finds the human rights model more willing to appreciate the reality of pain and suffering in the lives of some PWDs as it "respects the fact that some PWDs are indeed confronted by such challenging life situations and argues that such factors should be taken into account in the development of relevant social justice theories".

Fourthly, Degener (2017: 49) argues that the social model of disability "does not pay adequate attention to the importance of identity politics". Oliver (1996) has faulted the social model of disability for failing to incorporate other oppressions such as race and gender. Gabel & Peters (2004: 589) have suggested that the social model of disability could be strengthened through incorporating theories "that once were outside the social model (e.g., feminist theory, critical

theory, queer theory, race theory)". In contrast to this, the human rights model rather "offers room for minority and cultural identification" (Degener 2017: 49). Fifthly, while the social model is mostly critical of public health policies that advocate the prevention of impairment, the human rights model recognises the fact that a properly formulated prevention policy may be regarded as an instance of human rights protection for PWDs (Degener 2017). Lastly, although the social model may offer insights into the reason for many PWDs living in poverty, the human rights model also offers constructive proposals for improving their living situation (Degener 2017).

It is important at this juncture to discuss how this thesis' proposed *Ubuntu* ethics can compensate for the limitations of both the social model of disability and the human rights approach. As regards the social model of disability, I also argue that this model should be criticised for its disassociation of pain and disability as possible factors that may result in social institutions which do not address the daily needs of certain PWDs whose daily participation is mainly hindered by pain. *Ubuntu* can potentially compensate for this limitation as most of its values obligate African communities to endeavour to achieve the full inclusion of all members of the community (Nxumalo & Mncube 2019). Apart from these values, *Ubuntu* also mandates all community members to be aware "of the needs and interest of others as demonstration of sensitivity to those needs" (Gyekye 2004: 91). It is hoped that utilising *Ubuntu* values may potentially create communities which welcome and address most of the daily needs of PWDs, including measures aimed at limiting the pain for some PWDs so that they may be able to participate on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

The human rights approach also has its own limitations which may be augmented by some *Ubuntu* values. The individualist human rights approach, as provided in the UNCRPD, generally notes that PWDs have individual autonomy and independence which should give them the freedom to make their own choices within society (United Nations 2006). Weber (1989: 76) defines individual autonomy as "self-rule" and it is central in giving meaning to individualism. As defined by Chirkov (2008: 247), "autonomy as a psychological state which includes intentions to act, originated within one's self, and which most naturally occurs when a person

chooses among alternatives". According to Realo *et al*. (2002: 167) "autonomy refers to a person's capacity for independent thinking, judgment, and survival". It is the self-rule that entitles an individualist person to always endeavour to seek autonomy from others rather than trying to create any form of interdependence relations with others (Triandis 2000). In other words, a person who defines themself as autonomous largely leads an independent lifestyle "without references to other people, groups, or institutions" (Realo *et al*. 2002: 167). They give priority "to [their] own aims, decisions, and choices" (Realo *et al*. 2002: 167). This implies that an individualist individual is solely responsible for their own decisions, as well as actions and is expected to accept personal responsibility for his or her self-fulfilment and future (Msengana 2006). Within liberal individualism literature, the need to take full responsibility of one's action is often captured under what Ho & Chiu (1994) refer to as the concept of "mature self-responsibility".

One of the UNCRPD's Article 3 general principles impose obligations on States Parties to recognise and respect PWDs' "individual autonomy and independence, including the freedom to make their own choices" (United Nations 2006: 5). However, both from a policy and practice standpoint, achieving PWDs' individual rights to autonomy under this Western individualist human rights-based approach has and continues to be a challenge in many countries. For instance, critical disability theorists like Hosking (2008: 12) has criticised the human rights approach to disability inclusion for failing to respond adequately to the needs and interests of some PWDs "individually and collectively by failing to incorporate the diversity of the disabled community within the scope of its conception of equality". In the South African HE context, recent disability policies such as the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* notes that achieving autonomy and self-determination for SWDs require HEIs to mainstream issues of disability inclusion in all aspects of the universities' transformation initiatives (DHET 2018).

Swart & Greyling (2011: 83) have argued that SWDs can meaningfully exercise their rights to equality if disability policies are practically "converted into effective practices" since merely having these rights on paper does not have a positive impact on these students. Although this

could be a reasonable solution for respecting the rights of SWDs, some South African scholars, who argue from a human rights approach, seem to continue to place the onus on SWDs to use their autonomy to their advantage in order to create a conducive HE environment where they may participate with success. Notable examples are scholars who draw on the Western individualistic concept of resilience which as defined by Pooley & Cohen (2010: 30) is "the potential to exhibit resourcefulness by using internal and external resources in response to different contextual and developmental challenges". One of the central factors of resilience is one's ability to cope effectively when faced with adversity and being able to minimise the impact of stressful life events (Abiola & Udofia 2011). In the context of HE Duma (2019: 78) has associated resilient students with those that are capable of adapting in order to achieve "successful outcomes despite challenging circumstances".

Recently, there are South African studies which have utilised the concept of resilience in interpreting and analysing the experiences of SWDs in South African HEIs. In her phenomenological study Duma (2019) explored the experiences of resilience among SWDs who consisted of three wheelchair users and four students with dwarfism at a campus residence of one South African university and the study utilised resilience as the conceptual framework. The study found that one of the ways in which the participants demonstrated resilience was through developing personal attributes which positively impacted on how they were "responding to the stressors they encountered" on a daily basis in their residence (Duma 2019: 75). The study also found that participants also benefited from utilising social networks in addressing not only their challenges, but also in navigating institutional barriers which they faced within their residences (Duma 2019). Apart from that, the study also "revealed that resilience supported these students to build on their strengths and to mitigate most potentially harmful consequences of residence life" (Duma 2019: 84).

Likewise, in their qualitative study which examined the experiences of SWDs at two South African universities, Mutanga & Walker (2015) utilised Walker's (2006) capabilities approach or list which included eight valued freedoms and opportunities. Educational resilience was one of the valued freedoms and opportunities on this list and Walker (2006: 128-129) defines it as being

“able to navigate study; work and live; able to negotiate risk; to persevere academically; to be responsive to educational opportunities and adaptive to constraints; self-reliant; having aspirations and hopes for a good future”. In their findings, Mutanga & Walker (2015) commended some of their participants for demonstrating educational resilience in order to secure their other valued capabilities in the form of negotiating risk, persevering academically, not giving up on their academic pursuits in the face of adversity as well as showing determination at the university.

Although both the above studies (Duma 2019; Mutanga & Walker 2015) indicate how the concept of resilience is important in the successful integration of some SWDs in a way which demonstrates how to exercise their agency, one could, however, also argue that this concept does not holistically facilitate the inclusion of all SWDs. Duma (2019: 84), for instance, found that “even resilient students may temporarily or permanently regress and succumb to adversity, depending on the severity of the challenges they experience”. Here Duma (2019) was referring specifically to wheelchair user students whose resilience was consistently challenged by poorly designed residence physical infrastructure that was not built in compliance with South Africa’s national building legislation, which made it difficult for these students to access such essential facilities as toilets and bathrooms.

Hence, Duma’s (2019) study then recommended that the appropriate solution in this regard would be for this institution to do more work in terms of supporting wheelchair user students through adapting the inaccessible residences’ built environment using the concept of universal design as this was found to be the root cause of these students’ challenges. Likewise, Mutanga & Walker (2015: 510) acknowledge the importance of resilience in the case of other students, but caution that resilience on the part of SWDs within HEIs in general “should not be used to obscure the need to address the limitations of provision within these universities and the need to attend to practices that are unjust”. Rather, “students with disabilities’ educational resilience still needs to be complemented by guarantees of the opportunities they value; universities need to play their role in promoting and ensuring that all students are treated with dignity” (Mutanga & Walker 2015: 508).

These critiques of resilience (see, for instance, Mutanga & Walker 2015; Duma 2019) show how trying to understand the experiences of SWDs through the Western individualistic theories such as resilience does not fully address the deeper institutional barriers facing SWDs in South African HEIs. There are also scholars writing from other contexts in Africa who have criticised the application of the concept of resilience as narrow in addressing the rights of SWDs. Morley & Croft (2011: 393), for instance, have raised concerns about how the repositioning of SWD as autonomous and resilient actors have often resulted "into victim-blaming by suggesting a lack of heroic struggle by other disabled students who continue to encounter structural challenges". Likewise, Lyner-Cleophas *et al*. (2014) have warned that although some SWDs might develop effective coping mechanisms to the challenges they face in HEIs, it would, however, be unfair to use this to stall governmental and institutional processes towards inclusivity. Chataika (2010) also argues that rather than expecting SWDs to be resilient, more attention needs to be paid to effectively implementing policies and practices so that SWDs do not have to face the rather unfair task of attaining the status of superheroes in their effort to juggle regular academic work alongside disability-related challenges.

Even beyond the HE circles, the application of the concept of resilience in understanding the lived experiences of PWDs in mainstream society in general has also been criticised for reinforcing an erroneous assumption which discriminate against this group. For Hiranandani (2005: 3), the resiliency perspective in social work poses a danger in that PWDs who "'overcome' their disability are seen as "disabled heroes". Although "disabled heroes" can be inspiring to people with disabilities and comforting to the able-bodied, they may perpetuate the false notion that anyone can "overcome" the disability and accomplish unusual feats (Hiranandani 2005). Also, scholars, from a feminist theory of disability viewpoint, argue that the concept of "disabled heroes" overlooks the realities of the impact of the intersectionality of race, class and gender which play an important role in enabling or disabling certain PWDs from being "disabled heroes". For instance, as Wendell (1997) cautions, the image of the resilient "disabled hero" creates an ideal which most PWDs cannot achieve, and in this way, it increases the "otherness" of the majority of PWDs. Wendell (1997) based his view on the fact that this distorted image fails to take into consideration the reality that in most cases those who attain the

status of “disabled heroes” often have exceptional social, economic, and physical resources to which most PWDs do not have access.

Although societies which embrace Western individualistic values place emphasis on the need for respecting an individual’s autonomy, the acceptance of this view at face value has recently been criticised even by proponents of the human rights approach. Most of these proponents have argued that PWDs are often one way or the other still disadvantaged by their disabilities when it comes to participating fully in mainstream societies on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers. This has also been confirmed by proponents of the capabilities like Sen (2007: 9) who argues that “while exercising, your own choices may be important enough for some types of freedoms, there are a great many other freedoms that depend on the assistance and actions of others and the nature of social arrangements”. Other proponents have argued that although concepts of self-determination and autonomy could be valuable for the capability approach, they would rather emphasise the need to put supportive measures in place to assist some PWDs if they are to meaningfully practice their rights to self-determination (Nussbaum 2011; Trani *et al*. 2011). Also drawing on the capabilities approach, Dubois & Trani (2009: 199) have called for “collective capability of a community, including around addressing disability within that community” if PWDs are to effectively exercise their agency within communities.

Recently Skarstad (2018) has criticised the human rights approach for failing to meaningfully realise the rights of PWDs in society because of how such concepts of independence and autonomy are defined from a classic individualistic liberal perspective. This Western individualistic liberal perspective defines being independent as not having to rely on others (Nussbaum 2009). As for autonomy, it is defined or understood as “self-governance, meaning the right to make one’s own choices and control one’s own life” (Skarstad 2018: 37). For this reason, Skarstad (2018: 33) has criticised the Western individualistic liberal theories of rights for always emphasising “individuals’ independence—sometimes to the degree that an individual’s situation is understood in isolation from the social context in which the individual lives”. Likewise, proponents of relational theories have also argued that autonomy for PWDs is achieved through support and assistance from others (Mackenzie & Stoljar 2000).

This shows how the Western individualistic liberal perspective fails to take the concept of interdependence seriously. Skarstad (2018) finds this problematic because in order to make human rights a reality for PWDs, there is a need to understand such rights in accordance with how human beings are interdependent. In other words, most human beings depend on reciprocal interactions with others for their survival. This underscores the centrality of social inclusion in practical realisation of PWDs, especially taking into consideration the fact that "rights are achieved through supportive relations" meaning PWDs depend on the cooperation of their non-disabled peers in order for the former to enjoy their individual rights (Skarstad 2018: 36). In order to compensate for the limitations of the Western individualistic liberal perspective, Skarstad (2018: 29) has proposed the relational theory as a better alternative as "it focuses extensively on social relations and sees such relations as a way of fulfilling individual rights". Central to relational theories is that it "explain[s] how individuals are restrained and supported by the socially constructed environment and become who they are through interactions with others" (Skarstad 2018: 29). In addition, relational theorists also believe that the way human beings develop and the way in which they view themselves are intimately connected to their interactions "with other persons and the various influences of the society they live in" (Skarstad 2018: 34). Although relational theories provide a useful alternative, it is not without limitations. Skarstad (2018: 29), for instance, has criticised relational theory for lacking "sufficient explanation as to how we can perceive of all persons with disabilities as having equal human rights to their non-disabled peers".

Given this limitation of relational theories, I propose *Ubuntu* as an alternative theoretical lens to study the inclusion of SWDs in South African HE because *Ubuntu* takes the concept of interdependence from a more holistic standpoint seriously in a way that is "primarily grounded in African realities" (Qobo & Nyathi 2016: 421). Hence, this could possibly make *Ubuntu* to embrace such traditional African communities' values as interdependence and interconnectedness (Somni & Sandlana 2014). For Somni & Sandlana (2014: 2159) interdependence could be defined as meaning a situation "where people rely on each other for support and for survival". According to Nussbaum (2003b see also Ndlovu 2016) this interconnectedness stems from community members' common humanity which subsequently

obligates them to be mutually responsible towards other. This is because within an *Ubuntu*-oriented community people are expected to live in relationships of interdependence rather than living in a state of independence (Turaki 2006). It is under these relationships of interdependence that everyone has the responsibility to recognise the humanity of their fellow brothers and sisters, and according to Nyangweso (2018: 24) this stems from *Ubuntu*'s "ethics of the shared collective humanity".

Against this background interdependence becomes one of the *Ubuntu* value that can play an important role in the inclusion of PWDs in societies. Berghs (2017: 2), for instance, suggests that *Ubuntu*'s value of "shared humanity" could be useful in mobilising people to take collective social action against the oppression and unjust treatment of PWDs within African societies. It is hoped that by taking *Ubuntu*'s value of interdependence seriously, this can potentially result in community members cooperating and helping each other, and if such relationships thrive, disability will not be seen as something that is shameful but embraced as positively contributing to diversity. Hence, this highlights how *Ubuntu*'s value of interdependence helps us step away from the Western individualistic liberal perspective that places "emphasis on the individual as the self-fulfilling unit of society" (Msengana 2006: 20).

Critics of conventional Western theories of DS like Gleeson (1997) argue that the disability debate is still suffering from the legacy of theoretical deprivation stemming from DS' failure to engage major theories of society. For Gleeson (1997), DS continue to exist in a state of theoretical underdevelopment which needs to be ameliorated by new theoretical inputs. One of the criticisms of the field of DS is its failure to take history seriously or nearly remaining silent on the issue of history (Gleeson 1997). Alatas (2003: 601) argues that Global North researchers rarely consider "concepts and knowledge from the Global South, the Southern voice and epistemologies […] [thus] sustaining an academic neo-imperialism". Scheer & Groce (1988) refer to DS as largely an ahistorical field of inquiry. Abberley (1987) has written of DS' misrecognition of the historical specificity of the experience of disability which led to the field not only being theoretically backward but also a hindrance rather than a help to PWDs.

In those few cases where Western theories of disability attempt to engage the history of disability, such investigations are usually restricted to Western societies' history (Gleeson 1997) with the assumption that such analyses can be applied uncritically to non-Western societies' experiences of disability. Grech (2011: 217) has called for the rejection of "Western Disability Studies in favour of engaging alternative approaches to knowledge and its generation, challenging dominant epistemologies and exploring possibilities of developing DS that is both critical and global". In her 2008 keynote paper delivered at the 4th Biennial Disability Studies Conference, at Lancaster University, UK entitled "Contextualising disability: developing southern/ global theory", Meekosha (2008: 15-16) expressed concerns over the dearth of DS literature from the Global South:

> The time is ripe for developing southern/Majority World perspectives on disability. We must recognise the validity of non-metropolitan experiences of disability and challenge the terms in which the dominant theory is currently constituted. By looking at the inadequacy/irrelevance of northern concepts we come to see the need for developing southern theories.

Against this background, since the millennium we have witnessed the emergence of scholarship questioning the whole field of DS, mainly on the grounds that it privileges the Global North at the expense of Global South experiences (Meekosha & Shuttleworth 2009). Following Elder's (2016: 3) definition, Global North countries could be defined as "wealthy countries that have colonizing histories (e.g., United States, countries in Western Europe, Japan)". In contrast, the Global South could be defined as "countries that have been colonised and exploited by Northern nations (e.g., much of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia)" (Elder 2016: 3).

In recent years writers from the Global South and the majority of the world have played an important role in adding their voices to the expansion of the field of DS by calling into question the Northern-dominated approach to the field (Grech 2009; Grech 2011; Grech 2012; Chataika 2012; Daniels 2011; Meekosha 2008; Meekosha & Soldatic 2011; Meekosha & Shuttleworth 2009; Ghai 2002; Soldatic & Biyanwila 2006; Watermeyer *et al*. 2006; Ingstad & Whyte 2007).

Nevertheless, scholars still raise concerns that "the dominant discourse of DS is still framed within the concerns of the Global North" (Meekosha & Shuttleworth 2009: 49). Critical Disability Studies (CDS) has developed as an alternative to conventional DS. As defined by Goodley *et al.* (2012: 321), CDS is "an emerging area of research and practice which revisits many of the traditional tenets of disability studies and draws upon a host of theoretical approaches ranging from phenomenology to poststructuralism". Vehmas & Watson state (2014: 638-639) that central to CDS is its "challenge to the predominantly Marxist/materialist line found in the more conventional disability studies approaches".

Through her work, "influenced by historical materialism, CDS, feminism and postcolonial studies", Meekosha (2008: 2) has made a significant contribution to this debate. Central to Meekosha's (2008 see also Meekosha 2011) argument is that the dearth of literature about disability emerging from Global South countries has exacerbated inequitable power relations resulting in Global North countries continuing to marginalise and silence voices from the Global South. This creates a situation in which concepts of DS from the Global North are "exported to the southern metropole without reference to the work of southern disability theorists or southern contexts" (Meekosha 2008: 2). For Meekosha (2011: 667), this process constitutes "an intellectual crisis for disability studies in the periphery". Meekosha (2008: 2) further argues that this process also results in "a form of scholarly colonialism, which needs to be urgently addressed". Meekosha (2008: 2 see also Meekosha 2011) thus argues for the need of "a paradigm shift in thinking about disability" in which researchers draw on the "work of southern disability theorists or southern contexts". Recognising that the epistemologies of the Global North have limitations "especially in trying to understand the experience of disabled and dispossessed indigenous peoples", Meekosha (2008: 3) describes this work of critiquing northern discourses on disability as "writing back at the west".

Another scholar whose work has contributed to theorising DS from a Global South perspective is Grech (2009; Grech 2015). Although Grech writes from the UK context, his work is "inspired by elements of post-structuralism and Latin American writings on coloniality/neocolonialism" (Coronil 2000; Coronil 2008; Quijano 2008). In addition, Grech's work is also inspired by

decolonised methodologies (Fanon 1967; Meekosha 2008). Drawing on these theories Grech (2012: 52) has explored "some of the gaps that emerge when attempting to articulate a critical debate around disability in the majority world". In taking this stance Grech (2015: 6) criticises the continual marginalisation or invisibility of the Global South "in the dominant disability discourse and literature". Grech (2015: 6) attributes this to the fact that DS has been and continues to be "a field of thought that retains an indiscriminate focus on the Global North, echoing the voices of Northern academics and activists, particularly those in the UK and the US".

For Grech (2015), even where Global North researchers have attempted to study disability in the Global South, the latter do so in an *ad hoc* manner which is opportunistically influenced to achieve their self-interests and results in discourse that simplifies, generalises, decontextualises and dehistoricises the lives of PWDs in the Global South context. As a result, Western knowledge and practices are legitimised and DS become "complicit in the neocolonising of the Southern space" through ignoring or intentionally resisting critical issues in this space (Grech 2012: 52). To fill this gap Grech (2012: 52) proposes what he terms "Critical Global Disability Studies" – an alternative approach to DS which would be "situated around prioritising, engaging with and learning about the Global South in its full complexity".

Ghai's critique of mainstream DS in her 2002 paper entitled "Disability in the Indian Context: Post-colonial Perspectives" and in her 2012 paper entitled "Engaging with Disability with Postcolonial Theory", draws on the work of such post-colonial theorists as Memmi, Said, Bhabha and Mohanty (Ghai 2002 see also Ghai 2012). In particular, Ghai (2002: 96) critiques the Western universalising discourse for ignoring "the harsh realities of disabled peoples' lives in countries such as India, which are caught in social and economic marginalisation". For Ghai (2002: 96) this shortcoming can be addressed through the employment of post-colonial theories which serve to destabilise "the totalising tendencies of imported Western discourse", hence enriching the DS perspective in India and elsewhere (Ghai 2012).

In unpacking Ghai's (2002) above criticisms of the Western universalising discourse, at face value one would expect this discourse to also prioritise the lived experiences of PWDs living in the Global South countries especially when taking into consideration the fact that one of the pioneers of the social model of disability, Vic Finkelstein comes from South Africa. However, the reality is that despite his contribution as the founding member of the social model of disability coming from the Global South, in his early writings Finkelstein (1980) admitted that the major reasons for the discrimination against PWDs in the Global South and globally were beyond his control, or tenets of the social model of disability to be more specific. He argued that disability directly resulted from the development of Western industrial society in the nineteenth century which negatively resulted in people with impairments being excluded from employment (Finkelstein 1980). The ground for the exclusion of people with impairments was that they were unable to keep pace with the new factory-based work system, therefore most countries began to segregate this group from the mainstream of economic and social activity into a variety of residential institutions (Finkelstein 1980). Other scholars argue that although most Global South countries have incorporated the tenets of the social model of disability, PWDs are still experiencing harsh realities even in the millennial. This is evidenced by Chouinard (2015: 2) when he considers the majority of PWDs in most African countries as still occupying what he refers to as "particularly disadvantaged places in the global capitalist 'able' order– places that not only produce and exacerbate impairment but also expose disabled people to particularly severe deprivation and exclusion".

Other scholars whose work has been influential in theorising DS from a Global South perspective are Edler & Foley (2015). What distinguishes Edler & Foley (2015) is that they have focused their attention specifically on the need to decolonise methods related to studying inclusive education in the Global South — in their case, Kenyan educational practices – through drawing on the theory and philosophy of CDS as well as post-colonial theory. In this they are inspired by the work of scholars who emphasise the need to study disability in its individual country context and as a fluid concept (Meekosha 2011; Connell 2011).

Elder (2015: 773 see also Edler 2016) has cautioned about the danger of uncritically applying "oppressive imported Western practices", concepts of inclusive education and disability rights to Global South under-resourced countries. Central to Edler's (2016: i) criticism of doing so is that this often frames many Global South countries as "poor [and] consistently in need of help from the Global North". To avoid this, there is a need for "mutual knowledge production between the Global North and South" as a viable alternative which "leads to better ways of conceptualising and supporting people with disabilities in the Global South" (Elder & Foley 2015: 773). Elder & Foley (2015: 773) caution that the imported Northern theory should first be engaged using "a more critical and self-reflexive approach" before being applied to the Global South experience.

Likewise, in the South African context, following Saavedra *et al*. (2009), Daniels (2011: 5) enjoins South African researchers to exercise reflexivity as it opens up a space to problematise how education and training through "Western ethnocentric, patriarchal and capitalistic methods and epistemologies" influence research in the global periphery. Thus, the prioritisation of alternative voices, particularly those from the Global South, is needed in order to move away from the dominance of Western understandings and theorisation of DS, in order to understand the experiences of PWDs in contextually relevant ways. More than simply describing — or "giving voice to" – experiences from the Global South though, is the need to theorise those experiences in contextually relevant ways. *Ubuntu* ethics as a starting point for understanding questions of disability and inclusion/exclusion is proposed here as an example of how such a project may be effected in practice.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu values are rooted in collectivism and opposed to Western individualism. *Ubuntu*, as Metz (2011b) writes, is collectivist orientated and supports uncompromising majoritarianism which makes it incompatible with the value of individual freedom that is grounded in the liberal tradition. In other words, communal obligations and interests are at the centre of *Ubuntu* obligations over the rights of the individual which always take precedence in individualistic societies (Nkondo 2007). According to Murithi (2007: 281), "*Ubuntu* is a notion that has probably existed as long as the human societies that forged the notion". *Ubuntu* is a notion found in diverse forms in many societies throughout Africa but, as Mokgoro (1997: 2) has commented, "the concept *Ubuntu*, like many African concepts, is not easily definable". Among the *Bantu* languages of eastern, central and southern Africa, the notion of *Ubuntu* is a cultural worldview that tries to capture the essence of what it means to be human" (Murithi 2007: 281).

The concept *Ubuntu* is however not necessarily uniquely African – Praeg (2014: 114) refers to *Ubuntu* as a "glocal" phenomenon. He further argues that the values of *Ubuntu* can be applied to places other than Africa: "it can be a gift to the world" (Praeg 2014: 47). Metz (2007: 376), similarly, criticises scholars who "limit *Ubuntu* to Africa merely because it emerged there, nor does it need to be an exclusively African idea (perhaps there are similar concepts in other cultures)". Hankela (2012: 39) also agrees that although *Ubuntu* language is embedded in Africa, the concept's dominant commonly agreed upon value of humanity is universal. Furthermore, as Biney (2014: 28) points out, although the emergence of democracy in South Africa witnessed the burgeoning of literature on *Ubuntu*, the concept is not something that is new nor unique to South Africa. The concept of *Ubuntu* has also been documented both from a historical and contemporary perspective in other Global South countries, particularly those in Africa which also practiced *Ubuntu* and this has been shown in this chapter. The reason for the many challenges still faced by several PWDs in South Africa is hard to determine. *Ubuntu* philosophy may provide some answers, but it cannot fully explain these injustices. Ultimately, the marginalisation of PWDs is a popular phenomenon in Global North and Global South countries. Barnes (2012: 21) has attributed these challenges to deepening global economic crises which

have increased "since the coming of capitalism inequality within and across nation-states has escalated". Barnes (2012: 21) further argues that capitalism and the "globalisation of a particular materialist world view that prioritises the pursuit of profit over equality and social justice" have negatively resulted in the increased numbers of PWDs who do not have access to material resources both in Global North and Global South countries.

Mbigi (1997) argues that although the concept of *Ubuntu* has gained momentum universally, it has mainly been discussed in the context of African communities' experiences. As Tambulasi & Kayuni (2005: 147) argue, *Ubuntu* is a "basis of African communal cultural life". Likewise, Murithi (2006) also argues that the concept of *Ubuntu* is a worldview that tries to capture the essence of what it means to be human from an African point of view or in an African way of viewing the world. For Letseka (2011), *Ubuntu* undergirds the relationships between members of African communities as it is the force that drives almost every facet of societal life in African societies and for Ndondo & Mhlanga (2014), *Ubuntu* emphasises ethics and practical morality from an African standpoint.

Ubuntu is thus an indigenous African cultural philosophy which emphasises "notions of universal human interdependence, solidarity and communalism which can be traced to small-scale communities in pre-colonial Africa" (Roederer & Moellendorf 2004: 441). The concept of *Ubuntu* saw people in ancient African villages aiming to live in harmony together as individuals, partners, villagers, and communities for the benefit of wider society (Jolley 2011). Thus, the concept has been, and still is, the backbone of many an African society — guiding the actions and attitudes of people in those societies (Nyathu 2004). As Makhudu (1993: 40) formulates it, *Ubuntu* is "a process and philosophy which reflects the African heritage, traditions, culture, customs, beliefs, value systems and the extended family structures" all of which govern societies across the African continent and shed clear light on this concept's origin in Africa.

Gyekye (1997: 292-293) states that "one outstanding cultural value of the traditional African society that is a feature of ever-present consciousness of ties of kinship is the emphasis on the

[…] extended family". For this reason, *Ubuntu*-driven African communalist societies place emphasis on extended familyhood as an important shared value (Chikanda 1990). The "extended family" is defined as a microcosm of the wider society which "presupposes a broad spectrum of associations including children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and other distant relatives" (Mbiti 1975: 176). Central to this "extended family" is how it provides holistic built-in psychiatric and psychological systems necessary for educational and social development (Samkange & Samkange 1980). Thus, whenever anyone has a problem, there is always a member of the family able to assist: a *sekuru* (uncle) or *tete* (aunt) to tackle that problem (Samkange & Samkange 1980). This does not negate the importance of biological parents in raising children. In contrast, the family systems in Western individualistic societies predominantly tend to be nuclear family oriented. Drawing on Zimmerman (1972: 109), "ordinarily the nuclear family is pictured as the standard household social group – a unit of man and wife, who, as parents, have some children".

Many African societies today still uphold the values of *Ubuntu*, and these values continue to be acquired and transmitted from one generation to the next in these societies. Kamwangamalu (1999: 27) points to "oral genres such as fables, proverbs, myths, riddles, and story-telling" as the means through which the values of *Ubuntu* are transmitted from one generation to another. For Bujo (2003: 14), *Ubuntu* values are acquired through socialisation within one's community. Likewise, as noted by Keevy (2009), one of the ways in which *Ubuntu* values are passed from one generation to the next is through word of mouth.

Ramose (1999) argues that the ultimate goal of teaching *Ubuntu* values in traditional African societies was to produce morally upright members who had empathy for their fellow community members. Children were the main focus to achieve this by encouraging them to interact with their elders as well as their peers in the community (Vygotsky 1985) as a way of producing people who were acceptable in that particular community given that there was no formalised traditional education (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). *Ubuntu* values were, and are, considered to be in the best interests of building, maintaining and strengthening contemporary communities and

improving how their members relate to one another. In the following sections the central values of *Ubuntu* are described in greater detail.

Communalism

Communalism is one of the central pillars of *Ubuntu.* Sebidi (1998) argues that *Ubuntu* is anti-individualism and pro-communalism as the concept of *Ubuntu* notes that one's personhood is dependent upon one's relationship with others. As Bhengu (1996: 2) puts it, "the person [...] cannot exist of himself, by himself, for himself; he comes from a social cluster, [and] exists in a social cluster [...]". Incorporated within the notion of communalism are such values as self-sacrifice for the benefit of family and community; African brotherhood; reciprocity; inclusivity; interdependence; group solidarity; cooperation or communalism; forgiveness; patience; loyalty; conviviality; sociability; vitality; endurance; sympathy; obedience; humanity and group solidarity; reconciliation; hard work; fidelity; humility; responsibility; conformity; responsiveness; fraternity; humility; trustworthiness; honesty and integrity (Broodryk 2002; Broodryk 2008; Letseka 2000; Ng'weshemi 2002; Murithi 2007; Prinsloo 1996; Prinsloo 1998; Biney 2014; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Makoba 2016; Bessler 2008). As evidenced below, *Ubuntu* values are said to thrive where there are communalistic reciprocal relations which promote interdependence among community members:

> The cornerstone of *botho*/*Ubuntu* as a core value in African ethics is the community. Individuals cannot survive outside of their respective communities in as much as fish cannot survive outside of water. For the community to be strong and successful, individuals need to work together as a team (Dolamo 2013: 8).

Individualism and collectivism "are at present amongst the most widely used constructs in research about cultural differences" (Vogt & Laher 2009: 41). The Western individualist tradition produces a rights-based approach to disability (Meyer 2010: 165). It is important here to define different types of Western individualism which include ethical, ontological, methodological or explanatory. Clegg (2000: 3) has defined ethical individualism as one of the ways of "describing what each person should do to enhance awareness and give themselves the

best chance of developing". Methodological or explanatory individualism as defined by Mason (2006: 2) holds the supposition "that any explanation of behaviour, whether individual or collective, has to be reducible in principle to explanations which mention only properties of individuals, such as their beliefs and desires, and relations between individuals". Ontological individualism as defined by Epstein (2009: 187) "is the thesis that facts about individuals exhaustively determine social facts".

Gouveia & Ros (2000) argue that constructs of individualism and collectivism can be viewed as opposite poles. Western individualism gives precedence to the claims of the individual self, whereas collectivism gives precedence to the claims of the group (Meyer 2010). This is to say that within an individualist society, people are viewed as independent from the group and they have the full autonomy to prioritise their personal goals over those of the group (Triandis 2001; Green *et al*. 2005). In other words, the emphasis on claims of the individual within individualist cultures result in "refuting the idea that the group has legitimate claims over the individual" (Meyer 2010: 168). In contrast, within collectivist societies emphasis is placed on people's interdependence within the group and this should be manifested in maintaining relationships with others and avoiding conflict (Triandis 2001; Green *et al*. 2005). In other words, collectivist cultures see to it that "the claims of the group (family, peers, work group, company, nation) trump those of the individual" (Meyer 2010: 168). Critics fear that communalism can deny certain individuals' agency by reducing them "to nothing — thereby denying their unique contribution to the community" (Gathogo 2008: 51). This is due to the fact that under communalism, conformity is cherished more than innovation (Sono 1994). These criticisms take the value of autonomy as a starting point without recognising that autonomy itself has the potential to be degraded to selfishness and self-centredness, in contrast to *Ubuntu* which promotes cooperation between individuals (Nzimakwe 2014).

Rooted in collectivism and in opposition to individualism, *Ubuntu*'s concept of communalism preaches interdependence through insisting that "the good of all determines the good of each or, put differently, the welfare of each is dependent on the welfare of all" (Kamwangamalu 1999: 27). Traditional African societies which drew on the values of *Ubuntu* were communitarian in

nature (Khoza 1994a; Prinsloo 1998) and communalism is one of the cornerstones of *Ubuntu* (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014; Kamwangamalu 1999). Under African traditions, not all behaviours are considered right, ethical or moral. In such communities, people who tend to be accepted are those who lead a communitarian African way of life in which the individual is not solitary (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). There is the expectation for every human being to be "a social being" who should engage in reciprocal social relationships guided by respect for the social unit (Prinsloo 1998). Having this knowledge that an individual belongs to a greater whole will result in that particular individual exhibiting such *Ubuntu* values as being welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share, being open and available to others in times of need (Tutu 2003).

African societies which uphold *Ubuntuism* frown upon Western individualism as it often translates into selfishness and competitiveness (Khoza 1994b; Prinsloo 1996). Under *Ubuntu* emphasis is placed on such aphorisms as if one were to face a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then that person should opt for the preservation of life (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). *Ubuntu* thus places emphasis on "respect for the sacredness of human life" (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012: 22). Thus, one could be said to be exhibiting *unhu/Ubuntu* if one prioritises the preservation of life (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012). As Metz (2011: 554b) explains, "if you had to choose between running over a cat or a fellow person, you should run over the cat, intuitively because the person is worth more".

In Zimbabwe's Shona ethnic group's culture, if someone kills someone, that deceased spirit will haunt not only the perpetrator, but their entire immediate and extended family as well, which is commonly known as *ngozi* (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013). *Ngozi* does not only affect the individual who commits an offence, but all those related to him/her and at times even the community – a clear indication of the connection between the soul of a deceased person to their *dzinza* (bloodline) and *nhaka* (heritage) (Mahoso 2013). This is the reason why African traditional jurisprudence obliged the perpetrator of wrongdoing's family to pay reparations, often in the form of livestock, and then perform a cleansing ceremony in order to prevent *ngozi* from escalating (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013).

It is in this light that Van der Merwe (1996) views *Ubuntu* as consisting in normative ethics about how people should behave towards others and how to become human. Given this, one could be seen as human or as having *Ubuntu* if that person is open and available to others, but also affirms others and does not feel threatened that others are better at something or more successful (Murithi 2006). This is because one community members' success is tantamount to the community's success and is more valuable than personal success (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). Even individual talents are treated as common assets which not only benefit that particular individual, but their entire community (Makuvaza 1996a; Samkange & Samkange 1980).

Universal brotherhood

> *Ubuntu* is about "brotherliness" "brotherhood", a quality that not only displays identity but more importantly defines the meaning of existence for its members. As social capital is about social ties so *Ubuntu* is about interconnectedness and interdependence (Mbaya 2010: 372).

In an *Ubuntu*-driven community, people are expected to cultivate reciprocal relationships. From an *Ubuntu* standpoint, community members are enjoined to live as one or as a collective (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013). Many *Ubuntu* proponents frame the community as central to one's attainment of personhood. As Shutte (2001: 12) argues, one's holistic personhood comes as a gift from constant interaction with other members of one's community. Oppenheim (2012) puts forward a similar argument when she argues that *Ubuntu* can help build a truly human community. *Ubuntu* does potentially create a human community through one of its values of African humanness which seems to be absent in the Western individualistic human rights approach. As defined by Phasha (2016) African humanness relates to the inherent dignity of each human being as a full individual who ought to be afforded equal respect, care and compassion by other members of the community. Central to the concept of African humanness, as argued by Mabovula (2011: 40), is that it "emphasises the value of human dignity irrespective of a person's usefulness". In addition to that, Mabovula (2011: 40) also commends the concept of African humanness for emphasising "the idea that a person's life is meaningful only if [they live] in

harmony with other people because an African person is an integral part of society". According to Wiredu (1996: 31) the beneficial outcome of embracing *Ubuntu*'s value humanness is that it encourages one to conduct oneself with "a due concern for the interests of others". In other words, before pursuing any action, one has to consider how one's actions will impact on the interests of others, and this could require that particular person to imaginatively put himself in their position (Wiredu 1996). As for *Ubuntu* proponents who have discussed the value of African humanness in the context of the inclusion of PWDs, Berghs (2017: 4) has argued that *Ubuntu*-oriented societies take the notion of "shared collective humanness" or humanity seriously as members of the community are expected to depend on each other. The potential positive impact of this is that PWDs will not be viewed as a burden within the society, but instead be seen as full and equal members of the society who could be depended on by non-disabled people. It is empowering to PWDs to be viewed as having a role and to be contributing towards society, as well as being valued as an equal member of the community. All these factors contribute to them feeling part of the mainstream in society.

In addition, as Gyekye (2002) states, an individual realises her/his full potential only as a member of a community, that is, in the context of relationships with other individuals. This is made possible in a human community where all members are harmoniously integrated. Traditional communities had strong relational ties. In small, traditional African societies, direct face-to-face, positive interaction amongst members of a community served to make these individuals more genuinely human (Oppenheim 2012). In this context, immorality by an individual has the potential of disgracing the whole community just as the misfortune of the individual is seen as the misfortune of all (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014).

One of the important ways of exhibiting *Ubuntu*-driven reciprocal relationships, as argued by Bhengu (2006: 129), is the value placed on the "spirit of African brotherhood" or "universal brotherhood". This value encourages people to share material things as well as respecting one another as human beings within a community (Bhengu 1996). Wiredu (1980: 4) defines this form of brotherhood as a "universal brotherhood for all Africans" which is reflected in embracing a spirit of group solidarity, conformity, sharing, caring, respect and

hospitality within these societies. Similarly, for Mbaya (2010: 372 see also Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012), *Ubuntu* is about "brotherliness" or "brotherhood" which flows from social ties and the interconnectedness and interdependence of people within a community.

The concept of "universal brotherhood" is rooted in the idea of an "extended family" which emphasises that a "family is something that is valued for its own sake" (Shutte 2001: 29) and positively results in people being more united in an African *Ubuntu*-inspired community. Thus, *Ubuntu* is generally associated with "African brotherhood" (Broodryk 2002: 33). This form of "African brotherhood" is seen as important in "ensuring a happy […] community life in the spirit of family" (Broodryk 2008: 17). This idea of extended family is a radical departure from the conventional (Western) biological understanding of familial relations and rather views all human beings as potential members of an ideal extended family who also ought to be loved and respected (Metz & Gaie 2010). Treating all others as part of the extended human family connects people holistically, thus creating a conducive environment for them to respect one another (Eliastam 2015).

Kamwangamalu (1999) sheds light on this when he argues that the use of the term sister to refer to any female, and not necessarily to one's sibling in South African communities, is a representation of this idea of extended family. From the perspective of the Zimbabwean Shona culture, Magumbate & Nyanguru (2013) argue that it is unheard of to refer to someone as stepsister, stepdaughter, stepson or half-sister. One's father's brother is one's father, his wife your mother, his child your sister or brother (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013). *Ubuntu* language transcends narrow tribal relations and widens the African understanding of community to include people who are not part of the blood community through promoting a sense that every person is related to one another (Setiloane 2000). This is clearly evidenced in the Shona culture where all people are seen as *hama*, that is relatives (Murove 2008).

In the context of South Africa's Venda culture, there is a proverb *Muthu ubebelwa mumwe* which means a person is born for the other (Murove 2009). The Swahili culture gives credit to the concept of *Ujamaa* which emphasise that "all human beings are members of an extended family, an 'African socialism' based on harmony rather than class struggle", this concept was also promoted by former President Nyerere of Tanzania (Gade 2011: 305). To elaborate on this, Nyerere sought via *Ujamaa* to restore the sense of family as the new social unit of production (Cooper 2002).

As regards children's position in a traditional African society, it should be noted that they "belong not only to their biological parents, but are also under the authority and control of any adult in the community" (Kamwangamalu 1999: 27). Not only that, but children are taught from a young age to unconditionally respect their elders by referring to them as their father/mother and never to call such people by their names (Kamwangamalu 1999). Children are seen as belonging to the corporate body of kinsmen, even if they bear their father's name (Mbiti 1969). The same applies in the Zimbabwean context where, for instance, being a mother does not merely imply being the mother of one's own biological children. "Thus, a community with *unhu* will never have orphans. Mothers are mothers for the whole community" (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013: 95).

Proponents of *Ubuntu* have highlighted the benefits of this form of brotherhood for the sustenance of communities. According to Nussbaum (2003a), it is this universal brotherhood that will encourage people to have a natural desire to affirm their fellow human beings and to work and act towards each other for the achievement of the communal good. Makoba (2016) sees universal brotherhood as a form of social glue that brings communities together for the common good regardless of their indigenous boundaries. For Mbigi (1997) this brotherhood enables people to survive, despite difficulties within African communities. Universal brotherhood for Tutu (1999) promotes "social harmony" which is the greatest good among community members. Similarly, for Munyaka & Mothlabi (2009), universal brotherhood creates a conducive environment for harmonious relations within society.

In the event of this universal brotherhood being broken down between two or more members of the community it is expected of them to forgive one another and reconcile with each other. Mawondo (2009: 3) defines reconciliation as "a process that re-establishes love and understanding between two or more estranged parties". Furthermore, he argues that it is important that the initial cause of the problem must be honestly reappraised with a view to finding a genuine solution (Mawondo 2009). Reconciliation requires that all parties to the conflict present their demands and that any proposed settlement should take into account these various demands. Reconciliation involves self-appraisal, negotiation and compromise (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012). The argument for compromise and leniency rests on the need to achieve reconciliation so that a conflict situation is resolved, and a new harmony emerges based on tolerance, broad-mindedness and accommodation of differences and diversity (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012).

For Huyse (2005: 8), "reconciliation prevents, once and for all, the use of the past as the seed of a new conflict. It consolidates peace, breaks the cycle of violence and strengthens newly established democratic institutions". According to Ramose (2002: 95), traditional African societies always endeavoured to maintain equilibrium as a way of achieving justice: "*Ubuntu* legal philosophical principles seek the restoration of disturbed equilibrium regardless of the time when the disturbance occurred". Under these circumstances, traditional African societies always resorted to reconciliation as an important way of restoring equilibrium within communities (Ramose 2002). Therefore, the ultimate goal of traditional African societies was the restoration of peace in the form of a win-win situation between conflicting parties (Mbigi 1997).

Ubuntu values forgiveness, harmony and reconciliation and is opposed to vengeance, confrontation and retribution (Hailey 2008; Wichtner-Zoia 2012; Biney 2014). It was in accordance with these values that, for example, despite the loss of dignity and the suffering experienced by the majority of Africans during apartheid South Africa, the new government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to ensure that there was no lust for retribution (Louw 1998). The TRC through its Investigative Unit sought to uncover the truth

about gross human rights violations during apartheid but was also connected to *Ubuntu* and forgiveness as a way of finding reconciliation in the future (Gade 2012) rather than focusing on retribution for past harms. As the TRC's approach to achieving fairness and justice exemplified, *Ubuntu* values place emphasis on mending relationships (Eze 2010) and building social harmony in the interests of the greatest good. This could be contrasted to Western perspectives on justice which emphasise individual responsibility and retribution (Villa-Vicencio 2009) and give rise to anger, resentment, and lust for revenge. *Ubuntu* thus describes a cosmology that sets a premium on human relations and emphasises the need to transition from a culture of imposition, force, violence and war to a culture of dialogue, conciliation, alliance, understanding and peace in human relations (Kotite 2012).

Even though Eze (2010) discussed *Ubuntu*'s contribution to the TRC's process in a positive way, there are many scholars (see, for instance, Van Norren 2014; Fox 2011: Van Binsbergen 2001; Meiring 2015; Battle 1997; Rubio-Marin 2006) who have voiced the criticism that *Ubuntu* was operationalised in a way which did not benefit the majority of black South Africans concerned. Before unpacking these criticisms, it is important to note that central to the TRC process was the understanding that forgiveness is part of *Ubuntu,* as espoused in Archbishop Tutu's *Ubuntu* theology which focused "on reconciliation, on the joining of apparent opposites and the restoration of the humanity and dignity of the victims of violence, but also that of the perpetrators of violence" (Meiring 2015: 5). Tutu (1999: 35) expressed this in his words when he wrote that "our humanity was intertwined". Tutu (1999: 52) also argued that "justice, restorative justice, is being served when efforts are being made to work for healing, for forgiveness and for reconciliation". However, Battle (1997: 64) has criticised Tutu for turning the notion of *Ubuntu* "into a theological concept in which human beings are called to be persons because we are made in the image of God". Likewise, for Allais (2011), the role of Tutu as the Chair of the TRC strongly influenced this TRC to place strong emphasis on the concept of a forgiveness rhetoric which was conceptualised from a Christianity point of view.

According to Van Binsbergen (2001), basing the TRC process more on the Christian idea of forgiveness than on the holistic meaning of the traditional concept had such negative

implications as the TRC, and the whole transitioning from apartheid to democracy, failing to address many injustices of apartheid which affected the majority of black people. This is evidenced by Van Binsbergen (2001: 76) who argues that the TRC's attempt to mollify apartheid's injustice ended up dangerously "conceal[ing] real conflicts, just like it may conceal class differences". Meiring (2015: 3) also expresses similar concerns when criticising the TRC for failing to address the '"relations of inequality' between men and women, between the middle classes and the poor, between the youth and the older generation, between the non-educated and the educated and between the landless and the land-owners" with the majority of South Africans, i.e., Black people, being the most disproportionately affected group. Leebaw (2005) cautions that the omission of economic injustices from consideration during the TRC process has functioned to normalise social and political inequalities which in reality were born from the legacies of apartheid.

Kashyap (2009: 461) attributes the current racialised economic and structural inequalities which have not been disrupted "to the failure of the exclusion of the economic structures of apartheid from discussion at the TRC" as "the economic status quo of apartheid South Africa was not disrupted". Against this background, the TRC process objectives were narrow through conveniently reducing reconciliation "to a psychological problem, or a misunderstanding between parties who need to communicate better" (Kashyap 2009: 461). For this reason, Allais (2011) suggests that the former apartheid government and the democratic government political negotiators should not have seen the TRC as the only strategy for dealing with the past, but instead they should also have focused on the economic redistribution of wealth. This is because "the issue of structural inequalities makes reparations an important component of justice" (Kashyap 2009: 461).

Some scholars believe that the benefits of most of the TRC's reconciliation processes were one-sided in terms of mainly benefiting the perpetrator over the victim or the deceased victim's family. As Rubio-Marin (2006: 22) notes, one of the TRC's flaws is that it prioritised focusing mainly on "prosecutorial rather than reparative avenues". Furthermore, Rubio-Marin (2006: 22) argues that despite reparations being an important need of the victim, it was often "neglected

while the perpetrators' needs are in comparison better met. They (that is, perpetrators and ex-combatants) receive benefits through disarmaments, demobilisation, and reintegration programmes". Allais (2011: 335) also elaborates on this when he discusses how the TRC process yielded an unfair outcome for the victims: "in terms of reparations, at the time of the process, victims walked away with nothing (while perpetrators of horrific crimes could appear before the TRC and be immediately granted amnesty)."

Even for those victims who were patient enough and "had to wait for the long process of the TRC report being concluded and recommendations being made to parliament" it was later found that "when the TRC did put its recommendations to parliament, parliament dramatically reduced the amount that victims would be paid" (Allais 2011: 335). Scholars like Van Binsbergen (2001: 76) has also criticised the TRC for being ineffective for granting the victims justice, particularly because it was rooted in a "Roman-Anglican Christian model of confession and absolution". Given this, Van Binsbergen (2001: 76) "regards the idea that a perpetrators' humanness could be restored by their victims 'at no greater cost than admission of guilt and offering of apologies' as a fallacy and that the terms of reconciliation was set by 'European and White dominance'".

Other scholars have criticised the TRC process for over pressurising the victims to forgive the perpetrators. Kashyap (2009: 454) argues that because of the TRC's "overzealous promotion of forgiveness to achieve its ambitious goal of reconciliation departed from the principles of restorative justice, which has a context sensitive nuanced approach to forgiveness". Given that in many instances it was found that "victims were routinely asked if they forgave, which, arguably, put them under unfair pressure" (Allais 2011: 335). In criticising this form of pressurising the victims to forgive, Zehr (2005: 46) opines that "though forgiveness may occur more often in restorative justice, there must be no pressure on the victim to forgive or seek reconciliation, stating that 'to forgive or to be forgiven is not easy, and cannot be suggested glibly. Nor should those who cannot find it in themselves to forgive be encouraged to feel an extra burden of guilt'". All these criticisms shed light on how the improper operationalisation of *Ubuntu* can result in disadvantaged members of the society being disproportionately affected.

Interdependence and group solidarity

> *Ubuntu* implies a web of human relationships in which Africans are engaged. These relations are characterised by the spirit of interdependence and mutual trust as people rely on each other in everyday life (Mbaya 2010: 369).

An individual in traditional African communities had an implied and expected indebtedness to all persons in the community as the latter were regarded as central in giving the individual their identity (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013). Apart from giving people their identity, relationships forged around interdependence were central in achieving unity, survival in traditional African societies, and getting recognition as a people having *Ubuntu* (Praeg 2014). These interdependent relationships take a reciprocal form where they depend "on others and they depend on [them]" (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014: 3 see also Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013; Kamwangamalu 1999). From an *Ubuntu* perspective, an individual cannot live on his or her own in the community. Rather, an individual is dependent on other members of the community (Mbigi 1996). As Tutu (2004: 25) explains, "a person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human".

As noted by Kimmerk (2011) promoting interdependence creates a conducive environment for the creation of relationships which are characterised by mutual recognition and respect. In the words of Nussbaum (2003a), genuine *Ubuntu* ensures the promotion of a community culture that emphasises commonality and both concepts are central in building civil society, enhancing community relations and promoting social cohesion. All of these are accomplished through peoples' ability to live with others and building a network of delicate relationships of interdependence which are marked by affirmation and acceptance of others (Nussbaum 2003a).

In order for people to thrive in a community founded on *Ubuntu,* they had to conform to the preferred conduct and the reciprocal duties and obligations expected of them (Coertze 2001). These reciprocal relationships take the form of dependence of a person on personal relations with others which that person is expected to exercise with a view on developing in order to enhance

those capacities that make one a person (Shutte 2001). The individual is expected to act according to the values of the community (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013). This is because *Ubuntu* is about developing one's "fullness of being" through one's relatedness and relationship to others (Louw 1998). As Mbigi & Maree (1995: 2) point out, "the cardinal belief of *Ubuntu* is that a man can only be a man through others". In short, "a person becomes more fully human through the way one lives in the community" (Shutte 2009: 85). Moreover, interdependence is not just seen as necessary for an individual's welfare, but also for the welfare of the community as a whole (Bhengu 1996).

Communities that embrace *Ubuntu* invest in nurturing individuals who embody the community's moral prescriptions, one of which is depending on other individuals for survival (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014 see also Mbigi 2004). Thus, *Ubuntu* philosophy emphasises group solidarity and interdependence across African communities (Mthembu 1996). Broodryk (2008) terms this form of group solidarity "collective solidarity". As for Mbaya (2010: 372), he terms it "human solidarity" – that is "the extent to which organisations or associations enforce and display a sense of loyalty and trust among members, a sense of belonging to its members". Group solidarity plays an important role in influencing how people make choices in life (Broodryk 2006). It implies that every individual has the moral obligation and duty to exhibit solidarity with others (Metz 2007b). In other words, the interconnectedness of Africans entails that they are morally responsible for one another in their communities (Behrens 2014). Apart from that, Africans should also "exhibit solidarity toward one another" (Metz 2011b: 559). Seen in this light, the concept of solidarity is ultimately viewed as empowering since from an *Ubuntu* perspective one cannot exist without the other within a community (Van Norren 2014). The self is perceived primarily in relation to others. That is to say, "persons are perceived less as independent of one another, and more as interdependent of one another" (Laden 1997: 134). This should take the form of being responsible towards other people, seeing other community members' suffering as one's own suffering, as well as being able to rejoice when community members are rejoicing (Mbiti 1969). Embracing group solidarity enables individuals to become humble humanised beings that seek to maintain harmonious relationships in the community and the world beyond (God, the cosmos and the ancestors) (LenkaBula 2008).

It follows that within this collective solidarity-oriented conception of relationships, whatever happens to the individual, be it good or bad, also happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group equally happens to the individual (Mbiti 1969). Dehumanising the other is tantamount to dehumanising oneself (Hulley *et al*. 1996). This collective solidarity in a society which upholds *Ubuntu* "is characterised by a preference for co-operation, and groupwork or *shosholoza*" (which means work as one, teamwork), rather than individual competitiveness. Solidarity is favoured over solitary activities (Van Norren 2014: 260 see also Louw 1998). An example of how such cooperation is put into practice is collective enterprises, or *stokvels.* A *stokvel* is "a very popular example of informal social security […] where, for instance, a group of five friends make monthly contributions to a *stokvel* or pool. Each member will have a turn (every fifth month) to use the total of the pool, enabling them to buy goods such as furniture and school clothes" (Tshoose 2009: 15). In such cooperative ventures, profits are equally shared and may never be gained at the expense of the other (Louw 1998).

One could be said to be exhibiting the spirit of *Ubuntu* through engaging in mutual relationships with other members of the society as well as acting in ways that are reasonably expected to benefit other members of the community (Metz 2011b). In addition to that, group solidarity spirit can also be exhibited through people's attitudes such as emotions and motives being positively oriented toward others through, for example, sympathising with them and helping them for their sake (Metz 2011b). Within this framework, all individuals are expected to internalise the belief that "when a person suffers, the whole group suffers. Similarly, people rejoice with their neighbours and relatives" and the privileged are encouraged to share their material resources with the underprivileged community members (Paul 2009: 13 see also LenkaBula 2008). Setiloane (2000: 20-23), for instance, cites the missionary pioneer Robert Moffat who remarked on the Khoi's sense of solidarity which he said was expressed through this group's weeping for one another, and always stretching out a helping hand to underprivileged members of the society, especially widows and orphans. On the contrary, actions that are frowned upon are when members of a community fail to exhibit solidarity such as being jealous of their fellow community members' flourishing, or exhibiting ill-will, hostility or cruelty (Metz 2011b).

Interdependence thus arises within a community that values collectivism (Khoza 1994a). In traditional African societies a collectivist community was central in providing the individual with a sense of belonging (Tutu 1999). Apart from that, such a collectivist community was central in providing the individual with the "opportunity to express [their] personality, to acquire and develop [their] personality and to fully become the kind of person [they] wants to be" (Gyekye, 2002: 301). Commenting on how the concept of *Ubuntu* is strongly rooted in African traditions, Ng'weshemi (2002: 15) argues that "for Africans, one is not human simply by birth, but rather one becomes human through a progressive process of integration into society". In other words, "being an individual by definition means 'being with others'" (Macquarrie 1972: 104). As Munyaka & Motlhabi (2009) explain, the community is the context through which an individual can fulfil his or her full potential. *Ubuntu* thus defines the individual in terms of their relationship with others (Shutte 1993). Individuals only exist through their relationships with others – their existence can only be understood with reference to others (Louw 2001; Samkange & Samkange 1980).

Hospitality

As one of the ancient African codes of ethics, *Ubuntu* emphasises the importance of hospitality through embracing the view that all people belong to "one human family" (Murithi 2007: 283). Gathogo (2008: 43) terms this form of hospitality "African hospitality" and believes that it acts as an important tool for bringing the African community together as well as facilitating social capital accumulation which enhances the well-being of all members. Similarly, Mbigi (1997) associates *Ubuntu* with "the spirit of unconditional collective hospitality" which one should receive if one visits an African home by immediately being made to feel welcome.

Being hospitable should manifest itself in, for example, giving food, drink or water to invited guests (Mbigi 1997) and encompasses a range of traits such as love for one another; caring; sharing; appreciation; consideration; generosity; friendliness; helpfulness; compassion; altruism;

kindness; generosity; concern for others; sensitivity to the needs of others; alms-giving, consideration; patience; sympathy; sharing of material resources; consideration; courtesy and gentleness (Broodryk 2002; Broodryk 2008; Letseka 2000; Ng'weshemi 2002; Murithi 2007; Prinsloo 1996; Prinsloo 1998; Biney 2014; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012; Shutte 1996; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Makoba 2016; Bessler 2008).

Individual community members show their hospitality through orienting themselves toward friendly communal relationships and if they do so they are regarded as acting rightly and exhibiting *Ubuntu* (Metz 2011b). Being hospitable means "honouring communal relationships […], being as friendly as one can […] and doing what one can to foster friendliness in others [and refraining from] using […] unfriendly means in order to promote good outcomes" (Metz 2011b: 539–540).

Caring for strangers

Obligations to the extended family in *Ubuntu*-oriented communities can be comprehended as going beyond extending hospitality only to known community members, but also encompass the obligation of hospitality to strangers. A stranger in African societies is defined as "one who comes in from outside; another continent, another race, another civilisation, another worldview. Strangers are people with other values, other perspectives, other objectives, other principles of life" (Oduyoye 2001: 95). African hospitality extends to strangers: "[a]s long as you [the stranger] stay in the village you are cared for as a spirit envoy and respected" (Keevy 2009: 48). It is the host's responsibility, or in the words of Dlomo (1991 see also Mnyaka & Motlabi 2005), the host's "sacred duty" to ensure that guests are protected from harm during their stay in the host's homestead or community. Hospitality means that strangers are respected and afforded the same duty of care as those who are familiar or known to us.

Ubuntu values emphasise openness and acceptance and thus it is considered to be "a moral evil to deny relatives, friends and strangers hospitality" (Mbiti 1991: 176). In a 2006 interview with Tim Modise, the late South African President Nelson Mandela echoed this view that genuine African hospitality was also afforded to strangers by traditional African community members:

> A traveller through a country would stop at a village and he didn't have to ask for food or for water. Once he stops, the people give him food, entertain him. That is one aspect of *Ubuntu* […] (Oppenheim 2012: 369).

As Mbaya (2010) argues, *Ubuntu*-oriented African hospitality is central to breaking down barriers, which then creates an enabling environment for the community to embrace people who might be perceived as "other" or different. Setiloane (2001: 21) refers to the example of how the African king, Ngqika took the white settler, Coenrad de Buys, into his tribe and made him one of his councillors in the 1780s and how white missionaries were looked after like fathers by the Sotho-Tswana. Motlhabi (1987: 94) describes how the Mpondo recognised a traveller as "under the protection of the chief". African hospitality was thus extended to non-Africans because the understanding of "community" extended "beyond the family, clan or tribe, [and] also include[d] people of different skin colour" (Setiloane 2000: 20).

This is not to idealise African communities as always exhibiting perfect hospitality. Of course, in practice, strangers were not always treated equally (Mdluli 1987). Coertze (2001: 113) points out, for example, that in the Nguni languages, derogatory terms such as "*abelungu* or *makgowa* are used to refer to white people". Also, several scholars point out that foreigners were likely to be treated with scepticism in traditional African communities (Mbiti 1991; Turaki 1997; Akatsa-Bukachi 2005; Mutwa 1996; Mutwa 2003). *Ubuntu*'s affirming of human dignity cannot be taken for granted especially when it comes to the rights of those regarded as "other". As with all other moral codes, *Ubuntu* values would need to be inculcated and generosity to strangers in particular would emanate from the example of the chief or leader setting the tone for the behaviour of everyone else.

Sharing

Sharing of material resources is one of the central features of *Ubuntu* hospitality with the responsibility being placed on advantaged members of the community to help their disadvantaged counterparts. In light of this, Nussbaum (2003b) argues that *Ubuntu* plays a critical role in building communities that are marked by mutual support and care. This is ensured through the value of "compassion", which Mbigi (1997) defines as a human quality of understanding the dilemmas of others and wanting to help them. One's ability to help others stems from one's ability to be sensitive to the needs of others which results in caring for them (Prinsloo 1996).

In a 2006 interview with Tim Modise, the late South African President Nelson Mandela cautioned that:

> *Ubuntu* does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question therefore is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve? (Oppenheim 2012: 369).

Not only does *Ubuntu* promote hard work if people are to achieve personal well-being (Mayer 1980), it also encourages those who have achieved success to uplift their fellow brothers and sisters through sharing material resources. In the words of Netshitomboni (1998: 13) it is "considered inhuman not to share" by those who subscribe to *Ubuntu* values. Therefore, this means that the advantaged have the responsibility to take care of the disadvantaged. People could be said to be living according to *Ubuntu* values if they "care about each other's quality of life" (Metz 2011b: 559 see also Mbigi 1997). Individuals who are often praised as having *Ubuntu* are those who are always willing to share what they have with other members of the community (Murithi 2007). Caring and sharing are part of what it means to be human (Mbigi 1997). Netshitomboni (1998: 18) argues that the idiom *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through other persons) should be interpreted as signifying the centrality and appropriateness of mutual support and sharing of material resources in order to achieve equality

and reduce poverty. Family members, friends and leaders such as kings and chiefs have the obligation to share their wealth with the rest of the community, particularly the least advantaged members of the society (Dei 1994). Members of the community are recognised as having *Ubuntu* if they ensure equal access to material resources for the improvement of everyone's collective well-being (Murithi 2007).

From a family point of view, family members are expected to take care of their least advantaged family member or close friends through the *ukusisa* tradition (farming out cattle to poor families) (Nicolaides 2002) that is still observed by many African communities. To elaborate on this, the *ukusisa* tradition takes the form of lending of a small number of beasts for an indefinite period as a form of assisting the needy – very often a relative or close friend or family member without cattle (Reader 1966). In addition to that, in traditional African communities there were also instances where a fully grown young man who could not afford payment of *lobolo* (meaning bride price), could have it paid for him by his relative or a traditional leader as a generous way of making him substantively equal with his peers (Netshitomboni 1998). According to Mandela (1994), giving food and water to strangers was not the only gesture of *Ubuntu* by the host, but also entertaining that particular guest. This shows us how *Ubuntu* is always taking a holistic approach of addressing the "whole person's" needs. In addition, parents and other elderly community members taught their children at an early age to share any delicacies that they may receive (Netshitomboni 1998).

Hospitable leadership

There is no automatic equality in an *Ubuntu*-motivated society. Much depends on good leadership and socialisation to inculcate in members of a community the values of *Ubuntu.* As Khoza (1994) argues, in reality, communalism exists as part of social organisation in which the individual is seen as being subordinate to a social collective such as a state, a nation, a race, a social class, and relations of dominance are likely to exist in these settings. For this reason, *Ubuntu* values are not easy to achieve unless the leader can be held accountable, and there are culturally appropriate leaders who are sensitive to the needs of their subjects (Hailey 2008).

Leaders in *Ubuntu*-oriented societies need to be more sensitive to the needs of their subjects and also willing to listen to them, this will result in these leaders making decisions which are both just and reflect the group consensus (Nussbaum 2003b).

Apart from ensuring that all individual community members conform to the values of *Ubuntu*, the leadership of traditional African communities was also expected to be as fair as possible in their dealings with their subjects. Letseka (2000) contends that individuals could be said to be treating others with a sense of *Ubuntu* if they treat others with justice and fairness. This responsibility was mainly expected of leaders who wielded political power together with councillors in traditional African communities (Netshitomboni 1998). Hence, *Ubuntu* was reflected in those leaders who led their subjects in a fair manner (Samkange & Samkange 1980). In a society which values *Ubuntu* there are no bureaucratic hierarchical relationships. An *Ubuntu*-driven society was believed to result in optimal development of human relationships because of non-domination (Letseka 2011). The philosophy of *Ubuntu* aims to break down hierarchical relationships by emphasising the fact that individuals are interdependent (Mayer 1980). Traditional leaders and their subjects were expected to be equal and traditional leaders were expected to be accountable to their subjects. Such leaders were expected to be selfless and did not impose their will on their subjects, instead they consulted widely and listened to their subjects (Samkange & Samkange 1980).

This affirmation of *Ubuntu* shows that everyone's opinion ought to be taken seriously and that *Ubuntu* "is a powerful tool for gluing the community together" (Gathogo 2008: 43). As Prinsloo (1998) notes, a tradition of consultation and decision making by ordinary members of society is emphasised in a society governed by *Ubuntu* in order to ensure that everyone may participate in the making of central community decisions. The consultation preceding decision making in precolonial African societies is one notable example that has led scholars like Sindane & Liebenberg (2003) to conclude that African societies were inherently democratic, even though the word democracy may not have been in use then. Traditional African leaders were expected to not dominate their subjects in any way. In this regard, Magumbate & Nyanguru (2013: 84) point to the maxim deeply embedded in traditional African political philosophy which says that "the

king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him". Similarly, Netshitomboni (1998) argues that the idiom which underscores political power is *inkosi yi nkosi nga bantu bayo* which means that a traditional leader is what they are because of the people and owes allegiance to them. Apart from traditional leaders, elders in individual communities also have the obligation to decide on the kind of interaction which will result in each individual flourishing and, in doing so, they are guided by what majorities want and which norms become dominant (Metz 2011b).

From an *Ubuntu* perspective, one way in which leaders can show their allegiance to their subjects is by making decisions which "are all transparent and a reflection of the legal convictions of that leader's community" (Netshitomboni 1998: 6). Netshitomboni (1998) states that *Ubuntu* spirit recognises the subjects' freedom of speech in various forms, including artistic creativity and imparting information or ideas, for instance, in traditional communities freedom of speech featured prominently in songs criticising governing institutions. Not only that, but "it was common to find villagers ploughing a field of a traditional leader singing about their complaints regarding certain aspects of governance" (Netshitomboni 1998: 14). In addition, traditional gatherings created a conducive environment for everybody to be allowed to speak, which is also another reflection of freedom of speech (Netshitomboni 1998). For this reason, it follows that criticism of governing institutions was more acceptable than criticism of an individual (Netshitomboni 1998: 14). In accordance with this view, Schapera (1996: 184) observes that:

> The Chief himself is not above the law. Should his action run counter to accepted standards of what is right and proper, he is severely criticised by his councillors and the people at large. This form of freedom of expression helps to strengthen good governance.

Traditional leaders were said to be fair if they took responsibility for the care of those in need. Netshitomboni (1998: 12) argues that "the poorest of the poor members of the community receive more generously from traditional leaders in the spirit of *Ubuntu* than those considered well to do". For some traditional leaders, this took the form of allowing less fortunate members to stay at the kraal of the traditional leader under the latter's care (Netshitomboni 1998). The

kings in particular also had an obligation to enhance their least advantaged subjects' quality of life whenever possible through taking care of them generally and through sharing of material resources (Shutte 1996). Likewise, community members in general also had an obligation to lend a helping hand. This was often done through coming together and collectively ploughing the fields of unfortunate members of the community (Netshitomboni 1998). Similarly, in the Zimbabwean Shona culture, people used to cooperate and engage in community work, referred to as *zunderamambo,* which involved community members working together to grow food that was kept by the king for distribution to the needy (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013).

Human Dignity

> The wisdom of *Ubuntu* lies in the recognition that it is not possible to build a healthy community at peace with itself unless the human dignity of all members of the community is safeguarded (Murithi 2007: 282).

The third central pillar of *Ubuntu* is human dignity, encompassing such values as respect; self-respect; respect for others; respect for the sacredness of human life; harmony; equity; fairness and equality (Broodryk 2002; Broodryk 2008; Letseka 2000; Ng'weshemi 2002; Murithi 2007; Prinsloo 1996; Prinsloo 1998; Biney 2014; Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012; Shutte 1996; Mbigi & Maree 1995; Makoba 2016; Bessler 2008). One of the reasons why community members should learn to acknowledge one another is because every individual community member has a right to human dignity which ought to be respected by everyone, including those in positions of power and the elders. Within *Ubuntu* every individual deserves not only to be treated equally, but also to be treated with human dignity (Netshitomboni 1998). *Ubuntu* advances a framework of human dignity which resonates with the notion of human rights in the context of modern societies (Murithi 2007). *Ubuntu* ethics imply that those who are the most disadvantaged are the ones whose dignity ought to be respected the most.

Ubuntu accords inalienable or inherent dignity to all human beings within a community (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013 see also Metz 2011b; Murithi 2007). In other words, "being

born in an African society which values *Ubuntu* entitles each individual to their inalienable dignity" (Bujo 2003: 117). According to Mcunu (2004), the concept of human dignity is something intrinsic and rooted in personhood itself, regardless of a person's social standing in the community and includes such central values as respect, freedom and free will. Respect for human dignity is unconditional and everlasting (Netshitomboni 1998). Likewise, Dolamo (2013: 4) points out that dignity is inherently possessed by all humans, "but it can be enhanced or diminished according to what the individual does or does not do within the community". For this reason, *Ubuntu* societies established institutions that had at their core concern for human dignity (Murithi 2007).

Ubuntu requires the equal and dignified treatment of all persons irrespective of circumstances (Netshitomboni 1998). This is because from an *Ubuntu* perspective "a human being deserves dignity from cradle to grave" (Netshitomboni 1998: 8). Acting immorally does not necessarily take away one's dignity (Metz 2011b). For example, even the most socially outcast who behave like animals would always be regarded as members of the community worthy of humane treatment (Netshitomboni 1998). One's criminal conduct does not in any way make that human being sub-human; respect for human dignity is unconditional and everlasting (Netshitomboni 1998).

It should be noted that one has an obligation to respect the human dignity of other community members, but that individuals also need to conduct themselves or behave themselves in such a way that other community members can affirm or respect their human dignity (Ramose 2002). Elaborating on the root of human dignity, Botman (2000: 270) argues that "[t]he dignity of human beings emanates from the network of relationships, from being in community; in an African view, it cannot be reduced to a unique, competitive and free personal ego". Likewise, Dolamo (2013: 4) argues that one's dignity and integrity could be associated "to the extent to which one recognises the rights of others by discharging one's obligations and responsibilities to the other" within a society.

Mutual respect

What makes respect for one's human dignity thrive within societies is the notion of mutual respect among community members. According to Mbigi (1997) respect together with dignity are considered as the most important values in African societies and cultures. Within the *Ubuntu* worldview, what is morally good is what brings respect to the community at large (More 2006 see also Nussbaum 2003a; Kimmerk 2011; Bhengu 1996; Ramose 1999; Eliastam 2015; Biney 2014; Jolley 2011; Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013; Murithi 2007; Nzimakwe 2014). In a community that values *Ubuntu* people are expected to establish and cultivate respectful relations (Ramose 1999).

According to the concept of *Ubuntu,* an individual's relationship to the self is regarded as not nearly as important as the individual's reciprocal relationships with other community members as such relationships create a conducive relationship of "respect for the other" (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013: 236-237 see also Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012). For this reason, each individual has the responsibility to respect all members of his or her community (Murithi 2007). In traditional African communities children were taught from an early age to respect one another, but also to "respect any person who is their parents' peer in the manner that they would respect their own parents" (Netshitomboni 1998: 5).

Central to the value of respect is that it results in mutual recognition of all members in the community (Kimmerk 2011). This positively enables people to bond in a network of reciprocal relationships which are fundamental to *Ubuntu*'s worldview (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013). A notable example of interdependence is one's expectation to act according to the values, beliefs and practices of the community (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013). A good community is seen as one in which its humans behave with respect toward one another because the value of respect binds and links community members together (Jolley 2011). Individuals in a community that value *Ubuntu* should not only have respect for their fellow community members but should also have self-respect (Biney 2014). Fundamental to treating all people with respect is that it results in granting all community members their human dignity (Bhengu 1996). Treating others as part of

the extended human family connects people holistically, thus creating a conducive environment for them to respect one another (Eliastam 2015) and cultivating respectful relations with other community members.

Acceptance

> *Unhu*/*Ubuntu* forces us to come to terms with the fact that whether we are African, European, Shona, or Ndebele, *tose tirivanhu* (in spite of our racial or ethnic diversity the bottom line is that we are all human beings). We all need to live together (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012: 22).

Ubuntu's emphasis on treating every individual with dignity, equal respect and fairness sheds light on how an *Ubuntu*-driven society values acceptance. It is important for this form of acceptance to be grounded in diversity in the sense of moving beyond racial and ethnic boundaries. *Ubuntu* calls on people to be more humane and accepting of one another (Mbigi 1997). The core of *Ubuntu* morality is acceptance of others in the community regardless of differences (Eze 2010). This takes the form of celebrating "shared humanity" through ensuring that all, regardless of their differences, are treated as full members of the society (Biney 2014: 37). *Ubuntu* morality requires mutual respect regardless of differences (Eze 2010). For this reason, *Ubuntu* has been seen as having the potential to play an important role in promoting multiculturalism through "promot[ing] respect for and tolerance towards cultural diversity and an appreciation of cultural diversities without feeling threatened by the culture of the different other" (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012: 23). *Ubuntu*'s philosophical framework thus has the potential to play an important role in promoting respect for cultural diversity and acceptance of all people through such values as humanity, good behaviour, being respectful to others, and being pleasant and honest (Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru & Shizha 2012).

For Mayer (1980), the notion of acceptance helped traditional African community members to value diversity, thus living together in peace and harmony. This form of *Ubuntu*-oriented spirit of acceptance takes a long-term view because of the belief that "even if a person is an outcast now, that person may at a later stage be depended upon" (Netshitomboni 1998: 8). Likewise,

Ubuntu's emphasis on encouraging people to look forward into the future helps with transforming belief systems (Msila 2008). *Ubuntu* acknowledges diversity in the form of creating a welcoming community for everyone regardless of their status or behaviour. Respect for diversity and what it means to be human is at the heart of *Ubuntu* (Eze 2008). As Sindane (1994: 8-9) argues, "*Ubuntu* inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the difference of their humanness so as to enrich our own''. Likewise, given that *Ubuntu* accredits the community as the essential aspect of personhood this will result in community members being able to recognise and acknowledge each other through mutual encounter and cultural integration regardless of social status (Nussbaum 2003b).

In the words of Berghs (2017: 6), people have "responsibilities towards upholding respect for human diversity". Central to *Ubuntu*'s valuing and respecting of diversity is that it encourages people to be empathetic of people of diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds within a society (Bondurin 1991). *Ubuntu*'s idiom "I am because we are" emphasises recognising the differences in others but overcoming judgemental attitudes and stereotyped notions so that people are able to come to terms with otherness and "understand that others are just as good as us" (Mbaya 2010: 373).

Conclusion

A sense of *Ubuntu* on the part of traditional communities was altered and distorted following the arrival of colonists, traders and missionaries on the African continent (Ng'weshemi 2002). In the process of distorting the identity, dignity, humanness and value of African peoples' lives colonisers emphasised the point that "there was nothing positive in what Africans believed and practiced, and even their intellectual capacity was questioned" (Ng'wesheni 2002: 42). As Dolamo (2013: 1) argues, "people who came to Africa as colonisers, missionaries and researchers regarded Africans as primitive, backward, irrational, ignorant, pagan and uncivilised, and their mission was to correct all that using any means possible, including murder, pillage, plunder and theft". Gordon (2014: 11) has written that colonialism offered itself as the only viable future for its subjects. Makoba (2016: 42) argues that "in order for Africans to ascend and obtain some form of status in colonised societies they had to isolate themselves ideologically and physically" from their cultural values including *Ubuntu*. This unfavourable historical background raises the question as to whether or not *Ubuntu* still has a place in African societies, including in South Africa, or was it permanently eroded by the history of colonialism?

Many commentators believe that there is still a place for *Ubuntu* in modern societies especially in solving the problems that Africa is currently facing (Sindane & Liebenberg 2003; Richardso 2008). The values and attributes inherent in *Ubuntu* can play a valuable role in helping community development and nation building initiatives (Hailey 2008). Institutional governance that is based on *Ubuntu* is characterised by accountability and transparency, equality, promotion of peace, self-reliance, and a commitment to the promotion of the public good in the disbursement of public resources to promote the social welfare of citizens (Tambulasi & Kayuni 2005). *Ubuntu* offers hope and possibility in its contribution to transcendence of injustice and a more democratic, egalitarian and ethical engagement of human beings in relation to each other (Swanson 2007). *Ubuntu*'s central values of altruism, kindness, generosity, benevolence, courtesy, and respect for others have the potential to deepen our disposition for compassion and caring (Olinger *et al*. 2007) and thus to contribute significantly to the development of an ethical disposition that can enable citizens to reach beyond narrow identities including those historically

entrenched by the apartheid regime (Nkondo 2007). Some critics have blamed the apartheid regime for preventing the development of social cohesion (Morrow 2007). Against this background scholars like Letseka (2012: 47) believe that *Ubuntu* has a critical role to play in enabling South Africans to achieve a common understanding of "the constitutional values of non-racialism, non-sexism, non-discrimination, and respect for freedom, human rights and dignity".

In this thesis the project involved taking one particular institutional governance challenge in contemporary South Africa, namely disability inclusion in HE, and applying insights from the philosophy of *Ubuntu* to how we might approach this challenge. The field of DS has been criticised for favouring voices from the Global North at the expense of those from the Global South, and this marginalises and distorts the experiences of PWDs living in Global South countries (Mallett & Runswick-Cole 2014). This has resulted in the burgeoning of literature by African authors who have applied the concept of *Ubuntu* as a useful alternative in developing disability research and activism (Chataika *et al*. 2015; Mutswanga & Chataika 2016; Mji *et al*. 2009; Mji *et al*. 2011). This literature has placed emphasis on the need to employ *Ubuntu* as a guiding principle to inform DS research, because this concept pays more attention to local cultural contexts of disability (Mallett & Runswick-Cole 2014). What makes *Ubuntu* pay more attention to local cultural contexts is that its values downplay the rights of the individual in favour of communal rights, and this could possibly mean that those who respect such values are more inclined to respect the communal interests or needs, obligations, duties and the welfare of their fellow brothers and sisters (Nkondo 2007; Molefe 2017). In contrast, the Western individualistic model could be said to disregard the Global South or local contexts especially when it comes to coming up with meaningful practical solutions for issues affecting PWDs in this geographical area. Howell *et al*. (2019: 1727), for instance, have attributed this to how the field of DS continue to distort the realities experienced by PWDs "through the application of a Northern lens in these contexts". In addition to that, one of the ways in which the scholars writing from the Northern lens distort the lived experiences of PWDs is through the homogenisation of the experience of disability within the Global South context (Grech 2011; Meekosha 2011). Grech (2011: 88) raises concerns of how such homogenisation, and the

assumptions that underpin it, is contributing to negative consequences as a situation where "critical issues related to context, culture, economy, history, community and relationships of power among others are often bypassed or reframed to accommodate a minority world view".

In addition, *Ubuntu* also "locates disability politically within the wider environment and practices of sustainability" (Berghs 2017: 6). Writing from a South African context, Gade (2012: 485) has argued that "*Ubuntu* is needed to address the divisions and strife of the apartheid era". The South African government has adopted *Ubuntu* as one of the effective means by which the country's HEIs can deepen the process of transformation (Van Wyk & Higgs 2004 see also Mokadi 2004). The values of *Ubuntu* emphasise the need to advance the interests of the marginalised members of society, thus empowering them to reach their full potential and effectively guaranteeing their rights (Nzimakwe 2014).

In reality though, HEIs continue to mainly support and advance the educational and social needs of non-disabled students at the cost of those of SWDs. Research in South Africa, for instance, shows that the minority status occupied by SWDs in HEIs has resulted in this group being subjected to discrimination and their needs not being adequately met by their institutions (Moabelo 2012). Hence other scholars suggest that inclusive education can best be achieved by responding to the differentness of all students if universities are to adequately meet the needs of this group (Howell & Lazarus 2003; Ohajunwa *et al*. 2015; DHET 2018). Other scholars believe that educational institutions which embrace or respond to diversity play an important role in preventing the social exclusion of their SWDs, thus creating an enabling environment for these students to flourish (Eunice *et al*. 2015; Thomas 1997). South African HEIs have been enjoined not to ignore "the diversity of disability and the variety of needs experienced by people with different types of disability" (Office of the Deputy President 1997: 6).

From the standpoint of other proponents of inclusive education, the marginalisation of SWDs noted by Moabelo (2012) becomes a barrier to meaningful inclusive education that puts diversity at the centre of educational provision for SWDs. As Mittler (2000: 10) argues, inclusive

education should be "based on a value system that recognises and celebrates diversity arising from gender, nationality, race, language of origin, social background, and level of education achievement or disability […]". Likewise, Eleweke & Rodda (2002) call for a respect of differences if educational institutions are to break down attitudinal barriers. Similarly, for UNESCO (2009), inclusive education should also eliminate all forms of discrimination as this will enable educational institutions to offer "quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students".

As Berghs (2017: 7) contends, "within an African focus on disability as *Ubuntu*, the dignity of the otherness of another and respect for that diversity is at its heart". It is this respect for diversity which should motivate people in an *Ubuntu*-oriented society to be willing to learn from others through exchange in dialogue with people they meet and associate with through work or other community-related activities (Nafukho 2006). *Ubuntu*'s valuing of diversity can help change non-disabled people's ableist attitudes of commonly viewing PWDs as being abnormal to viewing this group as members of a distinct minority community (Olkin & Pledger 2003; Reid & Knight 2006). Thus, from an *Ubuntu* diversity standpoint, PWDs are not necessarily "different in *kind* from the rest of the community; such differences if they exist must be viewed against the whole spectrum of individual variations, strengths and weaknesses which characterise the human condition" (Hyland 1987: 168).

Educational institutions aiming to achieve inclusive education from an *Ubuntu* perspective, as argued by Kaur & Arora (2014), should adapt their educational systems to effectively respond to the diverse needs of all SWDs in order to increase their participation, rather than changing the individual to fit the system. This highlights how proponents of *Ubuntu* emphasise the fact that PWDs contribute to diversity in societies (Berghs 2017). It should be noted that this value of disability as diversity is also found within the Western human rights approach model and this is evidenced by Woodin (2012) when he argues that Western theories of disability also emphasise the need to respect diversity. In addition, "respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity" is one of the eight guiding principles that underlie the UNCRPD (United Nations 2006: 3). The same holds true for the concept of human

dignity which is also found in both *Ubuntu* philosophy as well as in the Western human rights approach model. From an *Ubuntu* standpoint, a person's dignity should not be violated or compromised irrespective of one's status in the community: "an individual has an inborn corresponding duty to accord respect to other members of the community" (Netshitomboni 1998: 4-5). Likewise, in the context of the Western human rights approach model, Jacobson (2007: 295) views human dignity as something that all people possess and "is experienced in a social context through interactions with others and can be lost or gained, threatened, violated, or promoted".

Although the present study predominantly draws on *Ubuntu* values, I acknowledge the fact that, like any other theory, *Ubuntu* also has its own limitations and to elaborate on these I draw on various criticisms which have been levelled against this theory especially in its application in the African context. Suttner (2008: 4-5), for instance, is one of the scholars who has cautioned against "romanticising the concept of *Ubuntu"*. In particular, Suttner (2008) challenges the dominant view held by most *Ubuntu* proponents that *Ubuntu* enabled traditional communities to cultivate consensual, peaceful relationships of interdependence. Suttner (2008) regards this utopian assessment as imaginary and justifies his view by citing instances of some precolonial societies that engaged in war. Likewise, proponents of disability scholars have also cautioned that applying *Ubuntu* in studying the experiences of PWDs in Africa "is not without risks" (Berghs 2017: 6). Evidence to substantiate this from a pre-colonial societies' standpoint is how some societies were not always welcoming to persons with certain types of disabilities. Livingston (2006), for instance, argues that traditionally children with albinism were killed at birth in Botswana. Drawing on ethnographic studies in the 1980s in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Devlieger (2000) found that communities would kill infants with disabilities and then throw them into the river or bury them in termite hills. These actions were considered justified among this region's community members as a way of returning the "wrong" body to God or to some spiritual force.

Likewise, older research shows that negative attitudes towards PWDs particularly newborn children were also engrained in the Ashanti people of central Ghana. For instance, research

conducted by Rattray (1952) shows that children with obvious deviations, such as infants born with six fingers, were killed upon birth. Danquah's (1977) research also shows that the rejection of children born with severe mental challenges was a common phenomenon among the Ashanti people of central Ghana as these children were either abandoned on riverbanks or near the sea. It is important to note that the children with disabilities were not the only victims of social rejection among the Ashanti people of central Ghana, the elderly with certain disabilities suffered the same fate. This is confirmed by studies which show how men with physical defects, such as amputations, were precluded from becoming chiefs under the Ashanti's traditional beliefs and that it was common practice within this ethnic group to destool current chiefs, if they suffered from epilepsy (Rottray 1952; Sarpong 1974). All these examples should make us view Bhengu's (2006: 38) statement that *Ubuntu* is a way of life which is anti-discriminatory against any members of the society with scepticism.

In this study, I seriously consider the suggestion from recent scholars that issues of disability in Africa could benefit from blending certain values of *Ubuntu* with those of the human rights approach. Among such scholars are Nyangweso (2018: 1) who has proposed that "African countries should draw from human rights values and the African morality of *Ubuntu* to promote and respect the rights of those with disabilities". Since both the values of the human rights approach and those of *Ubuntu* have their own limitations, it is hoped that blending the two approaches would show the ways in which they complement each other and in turn this will yield holistic data analysis. It is worth elaborating on the limitations of both approaches, for instance, although Eliastam (2015: 1) believes that *Ubuntu* can potentially "offer possibilities for nation building and social cohesion in post-Apartheid South Africa", he also argues that there are other scholars who still find the concept of *Ubuntu* "vague and open to abuse". Metz (2011b: 532) also agrees with this view when he argues that one of the "major reasons why ideas associated with *Ubuntu* are often deemed to be an inappropriate basis for public morality in today's South Africa […] is that they are too vague".

Ramose (1999) argues that although the concept of *hunhu*/*Ubuntu* has largely become the main root of all African philosophy, the lack of a universally agreed upon definition of this concept as

well as the lack of laid down standards or parameters could make it difficult for social institutions to operationalise it. Furthermore, Ramose (1999) argues that since African traditions, especially those consisting of standards, norms and values of *Ubuntu*/*hunhu,* hardly have any policy documents that explicitly identify standard procedures and behaviour consequences and as such could also make it difficult for social institutions to operationalise *Ubuntu* values. This limitation can best be compensated for by implementing human rights approach-oriented theories, like the capabilities approach, that are operationalisable. This is evidenced by Mutanga (2019: 36) when he argues that the capabilities approach can provide practical solutions through offering "higher education and disability policy-makers tools to question the extent to which students' opportunities are being promoted or inhibited within and across different higher education institutions" thus making it easy to "measure the gap between the lived experiences of students with disabilities and what they value in higher education".

Ubuntu's emphasis on group rights over individual rights (Keevy 2009) may occasionally not work in favour of some PWDs especially those who may feel that strictly conforming to group rights could violate their autonomy. In other words, there could be cases where some PWDs may be comfortable with "individualism" and others that may view *Ubuntu* as an infringement on their personal space. By emphasising individual rights, the human rights approach then becomes important in compensating for this limitation, especially Article 22 on "Respect for privacy" of the UNCRPD which obligate States Parties to "protect the privacy of personal, health and rehabilitation information of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others" (United Nations 2006: 15). Most South African universities have an obligation to respect the SWDs' right to privacy and this is enshrined in most institutions' disability policies. For instance, under the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) Disability Policy this institution "will encourage voluntary disclosure in order to provide suitable support but will not impose any obligation on students to disclose their disability status" (WITS 2016: 3). This shows that formally disclosing one's disability could be seen as good practice as this will entitle the SWDs to receive reasonable accommodations and other necessary supports. It is evident that the individualist human rights approach takes SWDs' right to privacy seriously. Hence, some students may prefer it this way especially those who may want to keep their disability status a

private matter, an option which they could be denied if their university strictly applied *Ubuntu* values. This is because *Ubuntu* places emphasis on "social or communal interests, obligations and duties over and above the rights of the individual" (Nkondo 2007: 90).

Despite *Ubuntu* and the human rights approaches having limitations in their practical operationalisation, I believe that in some cases challenges associated with their operationalisation occurs when their values are misused especially where there is no coordinated efforts or political will on the part of relevant stakeholders. This is evidenced by Maluleke (1999: 13) when he argues that the reason why *Ubuntu* is often described as riddled with problems could stem from how "it has often been conducted in sporadic unstructured, naive and dangerous ways. This relates to the lack of deliberate and focused interest". The same also holds true for the human rights approach as evidenced by Mutanga (2019: 4) who points out that as an international human rights treaty the UNCRPD "is supposed to protect the rights and dignity of people with disabilities", but the lack of implementation of its provisions in South Africa and other countries is one of the reasons which excludes SWDs in these institutions. Hence, for purposes of this thesis, I believe that some values of *Ubuntu* and the Western individualistic human rights approaches, if utilised and implemented well, can potentially result in South African HEIs creating welcoming spaces for SWDs on their campuses.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed description of the step-by-step process which I followed in executing this research project, starting from how I contacted the participants to arrange interview meetings with them and the actual interviewing process with the participants. The chapter also discusses how I transcribed the audio interviews; coded the data; and finally, how I reported on the findings through the write-up process. Disability Units have been called upon to play a key role in the creation of "a welcoming culture for students with disabilities" (Basson 2014). Disability Units and DUSMs are in a position to effect positive change in the lives of SWDs and are expected to take a leading role in proactively promoting the inclusion of SWDs in HEIs (FOTIM 2011). Unlike previous research which has mainly focused on exploring the issue of access to universities from the perspectives of students with physical disabilities (see, for instance, Losinsky *et al*. 2003; Engelbrecht & de Beer 2014; Ntombela 2013), the focus of the present study is on understanding how Disability Units, DUSMs and disability policies at selected South African universities are or are not working to ensure the accessibility of universities to students with diverse disabilities. Also, rather than focusing only on physical accessibility issues as most of the extant literature does, in this study accessibility is understood taken to incorporate wider social inclusion questions.

In particular, the study sought to discover:

1. How are Disability Units at South African public universities currently approaching questions of inclusion for SWDs?
2. What are existing policies and practices with respect to inclusion of SWDs at South African HEIs and do these enhance or restrict SWDs' full participation in campus life?
3. What challenges are DUSMs facing in ensuring that their universities are socially including SWDs, and if any what measures are they taking to address these challenges?

4. How might the values associated with the philosophy of *Ubuntu* provide a context specific set of tools with which both to critique existing HE practices with regard to disability inclusion and with which to imagine an alternative approach?

Research paradigm: Critical theory

The term paradigm originated from the Greek word *paradeigma* which means *pattern* and was first used by Kuhn (1962) to denote a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists which provided them with a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions. Following Kuhn's (1962: 33) definition, a paradigm is "an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools […]". Kuhn (1977) also defines a paradigm as a research culture with a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. Hence, a paradigm could be said to imply "a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions" (Olsen *et al*. 1992: 16).

The term *critical theory* was first coined in 1937. The Frankfurt School was in exile by then in the US (Bronner 2011). According to Bronner (2011: 1), both World War I and World War II saw the generation of critical theory, "and its most important representatives would wage an unrelenting assault on the exploitation, repression, and alienation embedded within Western civilisation". Apart from critiquing Western civilisation, critical theory also criticised Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment concepts of knowledge, truth, and rationality by subjecting these to scrutiny as not universally applicable (Carspecken 2008). According to Barnes (2003: 3), Enlightenment included the development of "a range of progressive ideas including a critique of established religions, an emphasis on the value of 'rational science', a commitment to social progress, and the generation of philosophies of secular, rational self-interest such as Liberal Utilitarianism" by the seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers. Central to Enlightenment thought, as argued by Duignan (2020), "were the use and celebration

of reason, the power by which humans understand the universe and improve their own condition. The goals of rational humanity were considered to be knowledge, freedom, and happiness". According to Coleborne (2017), Western civilisation could be defined "through classical studies, including ancient Greek and Rome, the European renaissance and enlightenment, modernism, and Christian thought and philosophy. It seeks to put European cultural production at its heart".

The quest to contest establishmentarian views of history motivated the Frankfurt School members to put forward critical theory as a radical alternative (Bronner 2011). Here establishmentarian could be defined in relation "to support for the official status of an established church, especially the Church of England" (*The Free Dictionary* 2020). Bronner (2011: 1) argues that the Frankfurt School considered establishmentarian philosophies as obstacles to bringing about a liberated society, thus its members particularly directed their condemnation to "phenomenology" and "positivism". Both "phenomenology" and "positivism" were attacked for treating society in ahistorical terms and eliminating genuine subjectivity. Proponents of the Frankfurt School saw critical theory as an effective alternative which could bring about genuine transformation in society (Bronner 2011). This has been attributed to critical theory's emphasis on history and treatment of social reality as historically constituted and produced and reproduced by people (Myers 2009).

Critical theory thus emphasises historical situatedness as an important methodological component. As Budd (2008: 176) explains, "critical theory relies on a particular kind of historicism (the starting point that people are historical agents who are participants in action as well as being subject to action)". Hence, critical theory is said to have "a non-foundational epistemology, believing that there is no theory or value-free knowledge given that human understanding consists of socially and historically situated patterns" (Madill 2008: 734). From an ontological standpoint, critical theory is thus grounded on such ontological assumptions as "multiple realties shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, race, ethnic, gender and disability values" (Chilisa 2011).

In its emphasis on history, critical theory builds on Marx's examination of the genealogy of capitalism (Budd 2008). Critical theory also builds on Marxist philosophy focus on the centrality of "class conflict in understanding community and societal structures" (Patton 2008: 586-587). Hence, critical theory takes historical developments and how they have contributed to an unjust status quo seriously, which these theorists seek to critique. As Reeves & Hedberg (2003: 33) argue, the main aim of critical theory is to foreground "the conflicts and constraints in contemporary society, and seek to bring about cultural, political and social change that would eliminate the causes of alienation and domination". In Horkheimer's (2003: 149) words, critical theory seeks "the potentiality for, or desirability of, things being other than they are". Research drawing from critical theory is thus focused on critically assessing some aspect or aspects of the current state of things in order to reach a desired state (Budd 2008). Critical theory scholarship seeks to transcend "taken-for-granted beliefs, values and social structures by making these structures and the problems they produce visible, by encouraging self-conscious criticism, and by developing emancipatory consciousness in scholars and social members in general" (Kincheloe & McLaren 1994: 138-157).

Central to critical theory is the desire to challenge unequal power relations which disproportionately affect the most marginalised community members. As Davis (2008: 140) argues, "critical theory looks at, exposes, and questions hegemony—traditional power assumptions held about relationships, groups, communities, societies, and Organisations—to promote social change". Given its emphasis on power, critical theory becomes useful in addressing issues of oppression and social injustice, including economic, racial, gender, and social inequalities within societies (Patton 2008). Critical theory is also concerned with dismantling relations of domination. According to Boje (2001), critical theory aims at deconstructing discourse to reveal hidden structures of domination, particularly dichotomies (e.g., male/female) and then reconstruct or offer alternative, less exploitive social arrangements. Critical theory is mindful of how prevailing relations of social, cultural and political domination constrain disadvantaged people from changing their social and economic circumstances (Kincheloe & McLaren 1994).

Analysis grounded in critical theory includes examination of ideological forces and statements that influence human action with attention being paid to "why people do what they do—and also what they cannot do" (Budd 2008: 177). In other words, studies grounded in critical theory aim at investigating "who is given voice and who is not – as well as the agency of the speakers (the extent to which their voices are heard and acted on)" (Budd 2008: 178).

Unlike other paradigms, Chilisa (2011 see also Bronner 2011) has argued that critical theory is a transformative or emancipatory paradigm which aims to destroy myths and empower people in achieving radical change in their society. Likewise, Madill (2008: 734) opines that critical theory takes an emancipatory approach and this is evident from its "aims and focus on the critique of [oppressive] ideology; that is, on revealing historically created distortions in understanding that influence everyday life". According to Patton (2008: 586-587), "critical theory provides a framework—both philosophy and methods—for approaching research and evaluation as fundamentally and explicitly political and as change-oriented forms of engagement". This makes critical theory a useful means of inquiring into questions of social structure and action (Budd 2008: 175).

> Critical theories use a complex matrix to describe how the structures and processes of institutions and social systems — as well as individual attitudes and behaviours — oppress members of subordinated groups while simultaneously privileging members of dominant groups (e.g., whites, men, heterosexuals) (Holley *et al.* 2012: 51).

In the context of South African HEIs and elsewhere, as will be shown in subsequent chapters, research has shown that SWDs constitute a subordinated community in these institutions. Critical theory's tenets provide a useful lens for critically analysing the situation of PWDs who are often excluded from mainstream society including educational institutions. As will be shown below, given the gap between policy and practice in most South African HEIs' approaches to the inclusion of SWDs, critical theory becomes useful in analysing this situation as it provides "both philosophy and methods for approaching research as political praxis (connecting theory and action) and as change-oriented forms of engagement" (Patton 2008: 303). Critical theory is

committed to using research to critique society and "change the balance of power in favour of those less powerful" (Patton 2002: 303). Critical theory's transformative and emancipatory intent (Bronner 2011) can be used to inform research that aims to help to bring about positive change in the lives of SWDs by critiquing taken-for-granted knowledges, assumptions and approaches and proposing new frameworks of understanding and action.

According to Holley *et al*. (2012), critical theory can play an important role in transforming oppression faced by PWDs. Oppression of PWDs in HE has taken the form of unchallenged disabling policies and practices which result in SWDs being marginalised and faring differently compared to their non-disabled peers when it comes to educational and personal outcomes (Youdell 2006). In the South African context, this oppression is evident from how SWDs occupy an inferior and marginalised position which stems from these students' disability status (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013). The present study is grounded in the tenets of critical theory as it has as one of its overarching objectives the emancipation of PWDs (regardless of disability category or type) from societal and institutional oppressive barriers. In particular, the study seeks to critique the Western, liberal, individualist approach to disability and inclusion and to offer an alternative, context rich approach informed by the values and ethics of the philosophy of *Ubuntu*.

Methods, procedures and techniques

This study employed a qualitative approach to studying the notion of social inclusion from the perspective of forty (40) participants: ten (10) Heads of Disability Units; fifteen (15) DUSMs; three (3) SWDs in leadership positions like the SRC and Societies of Students with Disability; four (4) residence wardens; and eight (8) other participants from various universities and universities of technology whose portfolios show similarities on issues related to social inclusion of students, including those with disabilities. Almost all the Heads of Disability Units and other participants sampled in this study emphasised that I should keep the names of their institutions confidential when reporting on the findings. In addition, other participants could not allow me to take pictures of certain facilities which I was hoping to integrate into this study, as such I agreed to respect their opinions. I can, however, disclose that the sample of universities was broad in the

sense that they were drawn from ten different HWIs and HBIs public universities from four of South Africa's nine provinces. In-depth face-to-face interviews formed the primary data collection method. The data was analysed both inductively and deductively — the latter using concepts associated with the philosophy of *Ubuntu* as an interpretive lens.

Following Denzin & Lincoln's (2003) definition, by involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter, qualitative research attempts to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, that is to say, "real world settings [where] the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton 2001: 39).

Qualitative research, broadly defined, means "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 17). Instead, qualitative research refers to the kind of research that produces findings arrived at from real-world settings where the "phenomenon of interest unfolds naturally" (Patton 2001: 39). From this, it follows that qualitative studies help reveal aspects of phenomena that the researcher would not uncover using quantitative methods because of the richness of the data (Forman *et al*. 2008). Qualitative methods are holistic, employed by investigators seeking to understand a complex picture that cannot be meaningfully reduced to a few discrete variables and linear cause-and-effect relationships (Patton 2002). Qualitative approaches have been seen as particularly useful for studying educational settings and processes (Denzin & Lincoln 2003).

Apart from SWDs and residence wardens, Heads of Disability Units and DUSMs were the key informants for the study. Participants were recruited using the method of purposive sampling. Out of 23 South African public HEIs included in the sample were those with established Disability Units. Purposive sampling is employed in qualitative research when "[…] randomness and representativeness are of less concern than relevance […]" (Popay *et al*. 1998: 346). As suggested by Palinkas *et al*. (2015: 533), purposive "sampling is widely used in qualitative

research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest". The selection of participants is made on the basis of their ability to provide relevant data for the investigation. As Horsburgh (2003: 311) states, "one well-placed articulate informant will often advance the research far better than any randomly chosen sample of 50". For purposes of this study, following Palinkas *et al*. (2015: 533), the purposive sample size was "determined on the basis of theoretical saturation (the point in data collection when new data no longer bring additional insights to the research questions)". For these reasons purposive sampling is "most successful when data review and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection" (Lehaney & Vinten 1994).

Ethical approval to conduct this research was granted by the Rhodes University Ethical Clearance Committee. The request to participate was sent via email to Heads of Disability Units who were requested to identify colleagues who could also potentially participate in the study. This method of recruitment, "where nomination of other potential participants is made by those already enrolled in the study" is known as "snowball sampling" (Eide 2008: 744). This yielded important additional data as Heads of Disability Units referred me to additional participants (some of whom were DUSMs) outside Disability Units whom the former felt were well placed to provide useful information regarding matters pertaining to the social inclusion of SWDs.

The data generation method was face-to-face in-depth interviews which, as Silverman (2000) notes, provide an understanding of social phenomena from a deeper level. This is achieved directly from the individual participants' "views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations" (Gill *et al*. 2008: 292). Disability research is a sensitive area of research and face-to-face interviews are appropriate "for exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment" (Gill *et al*. 2008: 292). Interviews were semi-structured because of this format's likeliness "to yield as much information about the study phenomenon as possible and also be able to address the aims and objectives of the research" (Gill *et al*. 2008: 292) in a focused way with a range of different participants.

Participants

The email addresses of Heads of Disability Units were retrieved online from the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA)[11] website which has a link that contains information on all South African universities (both previously advantaged and disadvantaged universities/HWIs and HBIs). The websites of Disability Units were also accessed to obtain information regarding relevant people to contact, especially the contact information of the Heads of Disability Units. Given that the HEDSA website only consists of South African universities and universities of technology with Disability Units, it follows that institutions without such facilities were excluded from the sample. For example, the country's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges (formerly Further Training and Educating (FET) colleges) were not included because most of these institutions currently "lack the capacity, or even the policies, to cater for students and staff with disabilities" (*News24* 2014). Apart from this, for convenience sake, I prioritised institutions which were on the HEDSA website as these had all the relevant contacts of Disability Units. In addition, these institutions participate in HEDSA's colloquium where they exchange best practices for supporting SWDs which could be an indication that they are more engaged on disability matters.

The invitation to participate was sent by email to the Heads of Disability Units. The invitation included a detailed description of the purpose and objectives of the study and invited participants to take part in in-depth interviews on a date and at a time that best suited the participant. Most of the interviews were conducted in participants' offices. Participants were informed that participation in the study was entirely anonymous and voluntary, and that their interview responses would be treated with confidentiality – a fact that was highlighted in the consent forms and reiterated verbally to each participant before each interview.

11 Established in 2007, the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA) is an advocacy and rights-based non-profit organisation (NPO) representing the collective voice of disability services in higher and further education institutions in South Africa. It is recognised and endorsed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and is accepted as a community of practice by Higher Education South Africa (HESA).

Data collection began in June 2015 and ended in November 2015 when, through a process of constant comparison of the emerging data, it became apparent that a sufficient level of saturation had been achieved in the sense that no further themes were emergent from the responses being received. Theoretical saturation, as Sandelowski (2008: 875-876) suggests "is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges with respect to the newly constructed theory. Hence, a researcher looks at this as the point at which no more data needs to be collected". It is important to clarify here that in this study theoretical saturation only applied in the context of DUSMs and not to sampled Heads of Disability Units as I only sampled at most one DUSM per institution, as well as three SWDs in this study.

The table below provides the details of forty (40) individuals who participated in the study:

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Position**
Beverly	Female	Support staff
Claudine	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Debbie	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Deidre	Female	DUSM
Elizabeth	Female	Sports Manager
Jarome	Male	DUSM
Richard	Male	DUSM
Catherine	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Thandokazi	Female	DUSM
Kerry	Female	Governance & Student Life
Ryan	Male	DUSM
Roy	Male	DUSM
Joyce	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Rebecca	Female	DUSM
Timothy	Male	Head of Disability Unit
Thembani	Male	Residence Warden
Lethabo	Female	Residence Warden
Fatima	Female	DUSM
Mitchell	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Lulama	Male	DUSM
Boitumelo	Female	DUSM
Amanda	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Julia	Female	DUSM
Andries	Male	Institutional Manager: Staff with Disabilities
Mthobisi	Male	Employment Equity Practitioner
Elize	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Tumelo	Female	DUSM
Francois	Male	Head of Disability Unit
Elna	Female	DUSM
Abina	Female	SWD, SRC Member
Nthabiseng	Female	Residence Warden

Lilian	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Fiona	Female	Head of Disability Unit
Yolani	Male	Director: Student Catering & Accommodation
Luyolo	Male	Member: Society for SWDs
Thandolwethu	Female	Chairperson: Society for SWDs
Tshepo	Male	DUSM
Olwethu	Male	Head of Disability Unit
Lebogang	Female	Residence Warden
Pula	Female	DUSM

Table 1: Participant demographics

Data Analysis

Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and then coded using the method of inductive and deductive thematic analysis as espoused by Braun & Clarke (2006). The particular aim of the data analysis process was to understand, interpret and critique current policies, practices and approaches of Disability Units at South African HEIs from the perspective of the values and ethics of the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. While the purpose was to give a voice to DUSMs, in analysing and interpreting the data, I did not simply accept the participants' views at face value. I critically analysed their narratives in order to ascertain if participants are (sometimes unwittingly) involved in reinforcing the oppression of SWDs.

According to McCracken (1988), one of the objectives of analysing qualitative data, including interview transcripts, is to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that inform the participants' view of the world in general, and of the topic in particular. This makes analysing interview data a multistep "sense-making" endeavour and this requires the researcher to engage in the process of coding data (DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011: 137). Saldaña (2009: 3) defines a code as "[…] a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data".

Miles & Huberman (1994: 56) define codes as ‘‘tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study’’.

According to Charmaz (1983: 186) codes serve as shorthand devices to “label, separate, compile and organise data”. Central to a code is that it captures the main essence of one small dimension of one’s data (Aurini *et al*. 2016). Codes are assigned to chunks of data, usually phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that are connected to a specific context or setting with the hope of achieving meaningful labels (Miles & Huberman 1994). Central to the development of codes is that it plays an important role as the initial step in analysing interview data (DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011). Coding is defined as a task of fitting data and concepts together in such a way that conceptualisation is under constant revision (as in grounded theory) (Richards & Richards 1991). For this reason, coding often takes the form of summarising, synthesising, and sorting many observations made out of the data (Charmaz 1983). The outcome of coding should reflect both the personal analytic habits of the researcher “and the general principles that flow from particular qualitative research methodologies and theoretical perspectives” (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008: 187).

The process of coding is an integral part of the interview data analysis process as it allows researchers to engage in data reduction and simplification (DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011). In this process, a “good code” is one that captures the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis 1998). It has been suggested that very often, such good codes “can be developed a priori from existing theory or concepts (theory-driven); they can emerge from the raw data (data-driven); or they can grow from a specific project’s research goals and questions (structural), with most codes being theory- or data-driven” (Ryan & Bernard 2000: 800). In the present study a mix of these three processes were employed.

As argued by Krauss (2005), qualitative researchers should take the voices and perspectives of their participants during the interviewing and data analysis process seriously as failure to do so constitutes disrespecting the latter. Taking the perspectives of my participants seriously enabled

me to use the insights of participants interviewed early on in the process to "inform the next wave of data collection" (Aurini *et al*. 2016: 190). Thus, subsequent interviews were informed by a revised interview guide that incorporated issues that had emerged as prominent in these early interviews. For example, participants spoke at length about the inadequacies of South African special schools in failing to equip learners with good social skills and that these inadequacies result in them struggling to socialise with their non-disabled peers when they enter university. Given that this emerged as a prominent (but unanticipated) theme of early interviews, I asked subsequent participants for their views on special schools. This demonstrates the iterative and emergent nature of qualitative research, in which it is common practice for the researcher to use interim findings to inform ongoing data collection and analysis (Forman *et al*. 2008).

I would not have found out about unanticipated themes in participants' narratives which were not included in my initial interview guide, if I had not taken into account Bryman & Burgess's (1995: 11) suggestion that researchers ought not to relegate the data analysis process "to the end of a research project", but should rather see analysis as "part of the continuous process of doing research". Consequently, I listened attentively during these early interviews, and carefully probed, jotted down notes, as well as reviewed field notes in my research diary. Upon completion of the interviews, I listened to each recorded interview whilst the participants' stories were still fresh in my mind and started coding and writing memos. This was extremely important in establishing "close contact and familiarity with the data" (Tuckett 2005: 34).

As Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006: 83) point out, "coding is an iterative process that evolves as the data collection and analysis progresses". Although qualitative studies are often presented as a linear, step-by-step procedure, data analysis is in reality often an iterative and reflexive process (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). This is to say that data analysis phases do not necessarily need to be linear or done by moving from one step to the next. Instead, the researcher is encouraged to move forward and back between the different data analysis phases, perhaps many times, especially if dealing with a lot of complex data (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Thus, I followed this procedure by undertaking the data collection and analysis stages concurrently and re-reading the previous stages of the process before undertaking further analysis (Fereday &

Muir-Cochrane 2006). I did this to ensure that the theme development process was firmly grounded in the original data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006). In this way, following DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. (2011: 138), my coding process throughout took the form of "a circular process in that the researcher may then revisit the raw data based upon theoretical findings and the current research literature". In simpler terms, rather than taking a rigid approach throughout all the phases of coding, I kept myself open to new possibilities by "develop[ing] new codes as they emerge or mak[ing] changes and update[ing] the codebook" (Aurini *et al*. 2016: 192).

I began by pre-coding – assigning preliminary codes manually to collected interview transcripts in a Word document throughout the data collection process (Aurini *et al*. 2016). DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011 argue that the development of codes is the initial step in analysing interview data. However, as Layder (1998 see also Saldaña 2013) cautions, researchers should never overlook the opportunity to pre-code their data before the first cycle process. Pre-coding the transcripts data for the interviews enabled me to identify elements that I thought stood out from the information that my participants were telling me which related to my research question, objectives and theoretical framework (Saldaña 2009). The pre-coding process was done manually through highlighting, underlining, or colouring rich or significant participant quotations or passages that struck me as "codable moments" worthy of attention (Boyatzis 1998).

I opted for coding the data manually rather than electronically using computer software. The recent development and introduction of software, such as Ethnograph and NVivo has been praised for enabling researchers to code large amounts of data as well as conducting studies involving far greater numbers of participants than in the past (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008). The benefit of using qualitative software such as ATLAS.ti and NVivo to conduct categorical analysis is that it gives multiple research team members the ability to collaborate during this phase of the research process (Green 2008). Proponents have criticised manual coding for being extremely labour intensive as well as potentially becoming unmanageable especially if the project involves a lot of qualitative data or multiple researchers (Aurini *et al*. 2016).

While these potential benefits of coding electronically are acknowledged, this does not necessarily mean that all researchers are obliged to code their data electronically (Aurini *et al*. 2016). Besides as Saldaña (2009) has pointed out, a program like NVivo does not actually code the data for a researcher. Ultimately, the interpretive work that is at the heart of developing codes, remains the sole responsibility of the researcher (Saldaña 2009 see also Fossey *et al*. 2002; Thorne 2000).

Furthermore, Saldaña (2009) suggests that the NVivo software is best used for storing, organising, managing and reconfiguring the data to enable the researcher to analytically reflect on the data itself. Such software does not guarantee that the analysis will be any better, and it may foreclose the interplay among creative insights, memoing, and continuing development of codes that result from an ongoing connection with the raw data (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008). As Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard (2008) argue, such software can impose a structure that may imperceptibly constrain the analysis. In the present study, coding the data manually was beneficial in the sense that it enabled a greater degree of immersion in the data, "thus encouraging the imaginative work of ideas alongside data management" (Mitchell 2015: 5). Hence, this potentially enabled me to yield richer insights from the data (Green 2008).

Basit (2003: 152) argues that "[…] the use of software may not be considered feasible to code only a few interviews […] [and] it is certainly worth the additional hassle to learn to use the package proficiently if a large number of interviews are to be analysed". For me, forty (40) interviews were a manageable number and I started coding them right from the outset of the data collection process, therefore I did not see the benefit of spending time learning how to use a new software program. Weitzman (2000) has cautioned that analysing the data with a computer program might potentially distance the researcher from the data too much. Following this reasoning, and since I had already established an intimate connection with my data during the data collection process, I found continuing with manual coding more practical and convenient for me.

Once all the interviews had been completed and I had printed all the interview transcripts, I (re)familiarised myself with the entire data set by reading the transcripts repeatedly to achieve a sense of the whole (see, for instance, Hsieh & Shannon 2005). In qualitative research this is referred to as the researcher's immersion in the data (see, for instance, Braun & Clarke 2006). Rather than relying on my ability to remember all of my reflections, I engaged in memoing while I was writing up my field notes as well as transcribing the actual interviews transcripts (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008). In other words, I followed the suggestion of Aurini *et al*. (2016) that writing memos should occur both during and after the data collection process. In order to effectively immerse myself in the data for the process of coding, I read each transcript on more than one occasion, highlighting extracts of text and making notes in the margin as I progressed.

In order to gain a holistic sense of participants' views, I wrote memos in the margin of each printed interview transcript as well as in a separate document (Aurini *et al*. 2016). The memos broadly consisted of my thoughts, hunches, theoretical musing, questions about the data, problems with the analysis, relationship with the participant, my own emotions, and questions about my coding decisions throughout the pre-coding and actual coding process (Aurini *et al*. 2016). For Saldaña (2009) memoing allows the researcher to reflect on the phenomenon being studied as well as engaging with their research deeply, in order to perform the puzzle-piecing, connection-making, strategy-building, and problem-solving engagement with the research data that is at the heart of qualitative data analysis. Following Glaser & Strauss (1967) in the process of writing memos, I paid particular attention to comments relevant to the interview and this aided in adding details to the categories, comparing different aspects within and between data categories as well as in identifying gaps in data.

According to Saldaña (2009), first cycle of coding affords one an opportunity to reflect deeply on the contents and nuances of one's data and to begin taking ownership of them. Memos may involve researchers' "guesses about what is going on, questions raised by the data" (Van den

Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008: 187). In addition to separate memos, I also began to make "marginal notes" and remarks on the hard copy transcripts that were printed (Tuckett 2005: 80). Moreover, I commenced the process of creating analytical memos from my data set. Saldaña (2009: 32) describes analytical memos as "the site of conversations with ourselves about our data".

One of the advantages of manual coding is that it enables one to accomplish data analysis "using very low-tech materials such as a pencil and paper, coloured sticky notes, or coloured felt pens" (Julien 2008: 121 see also Aurini *et al*. 2016). In all three phases of coding including pre-coding, first cycle, and second cycle coding, I used a colour coding system to differentiate codes, patterns or themes. I also wrote chunks of text on coloured sticky notes and each of these sticky notes served as one code. Through this process "marginal notes" and remarks were made on the hard copy of the printed interview transcripts that were printed (Tuckett 2005: 80). While codes were written on the left-hand side of the transcript page, corresponding remarks were written on the right-hand side (Miles & Huberman 1994). Remarks included: "ideas about ideas (theorising)", instructions for seeking clarification in the follow-up in-depth interview and "cross references to data within the same transcript or references to data in other transcripts" (Tuckett 2005: 34).

Even at the early stages of second cycle coding, I began to develop a set of propositions about what might be going on with the data. These propositions later informed the themes that were constructed at later stages of data analysis (Aurini *et al*. 2016). Braun & Clarke (2006) distinguish between two levels of themes: semantic and latent, both of which were used in the present study. Semantic themes emanate from the explicit or surface meanings of the data and in order to generate such themes the researcher need not look "for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written" (Braun & Clarke 2006: 84). In generating such themes, the *in vivo* method of coding among others is employed whereby the words of the participant are used as a tag or essence capturing summary rather than the words of the researcher imposing a category on that data. Latent themes involve looking beyond what has explicitly been said by the participant "to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions,

and conceptualisations — and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke 2006: 84). The literature on *Ubuntu* and inclusion especially concerning the social inclusion of PWDs in mainstream society helped to guide me in this process.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, following Lawless & Chen (2018: 2), is effective in helping one to analyse qualitative research interviews from a critical standpoint. As defined by Maguire & Delahunt (2017: 3352), thematic analysis "is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data". Vaismoradi *et al*. (2013: 400) define thematic analysis as an "independent and reliable qualitative approach to analysis". Thematic analysis is a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the phenomenon that is being studied (Daly *et al*. 1997). The process involves the identification of themes through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy 1999: 258). It is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006).

Braun & Clarke (2006: 79) define thematic analysis as an independent qualitative descriptive "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". Braun & Clarke (2006) provide a six-step procedure or framework for thematic analysis which was followed here: (a) familiarise yourself with the data; (b) generate initial codes; (c) search for themes; (d) review themes; (e) define and name themes; and (f) produce the report. This procedure for thematic analysis is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). In addition to that, this procedure for thematic analysis is also flexible enough to be used with any theoretical framework: "in contrast to [other methods of discourse analysis], thematic analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks" (Braun & Clarke 2006: 81).

Analysing data inductively alone or only deductively, may not yield the rich interpretive results that are made possible by a mix of the two. By deductively, I mean a "framework for classifying, organising, and summarising raw data [that is] developed *a priori* from theory" (Benaquisto 2008: 89). Some critics argue that analysing the data deductively or through using pre-set codes or coding schemes "may encourage one to force fit observations into existing categories" (Benaquisto 2008: 89). As Green (2008: 71) observes, "there is a chance that the categories generated from other sources will not be relevant or accurately reflect the qualitative data set at hand". Using Braun & Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework allowed me to analyse the data both inductively and deductively.

Braun & Clarke (2006) thus distinguish between a top-down or theoretical thematic analysis that is driven by the specific research question(s) and/or the analyst's focus, and a bottom-up or inductive one that is more driven by the data itself. Following Green's (2008: 71) recommendation, I developed the themes and categories from my data by "fluctuat[ing] back and forth between inductive and deductive analyses because blending the two methods helps the researcher to fully interrogate the data". Cannon (2012) refers to such a process as a blending of deductive and inductive approaches. Boyatzis (1998) refers to such a process as a hybrid approach of thematic analysis as it incorporates both the data-driven inductive and theory-driven deductive approaches.

Owing to the fact that thematic analysis is "a widely-used qualitative analytic method" (Braun & Clarke 2006: 4), it is important for researchers who adopt it to use it correctly and rigorously in order to avoid yielding poorly generalised results. Although central to thematic analysis is identifying themes in the data that are important or interesting, and using such themes to address the research or say something about an issue under investigation, Maguire & Delahunt (2017) caution that this should not be done in an oversimplified manner. Achieving the goal of thematic analysis is much more than simply summarising and organising the data rather than analysing it (Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Instead, a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of the data at the researcher's disposal (Maguire & Delahunt 2017).

First cycle coding

As Krauss (2005) cautions, during the data analysis process itself, researchers should avoid imposing their own views on the raw data and should also set aside any preconceived knowledge, instead they should be open, sensitive, and empathetic to the participants' responses. Although this is a difficult task, by employing the inductive approach in my first cycle coding I intimately involved myself with the raw data by rereading and reinterpreting it, as well as staying close to the data while searching for concepts, ideas, themes, and categories with which to organise and interpret the data (Julien 2008).

First cycle coding is more literal and codes the data at face value and happens at the early stages of data analysis (Aurini *et al*. 2016). Clarke (2005: 84) cautions qualitative researchers not to rush this process, but rather to begin with "digesting and reflecting" on the data before beginning the actual initial coding ventures. During first cycle coding, codes are "initially assigned to data chunks" (Miles *et al*. 2014: 73). It is for this reason that some scholars refer to this stage of coding as "initial coding" (see, for instance, Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1978). It is intended as a starting point to provide the researcher with analytic leads for further exploration and to see the direction in which to take his or her study (Glaser 1978).

Corbin & Strauss (2008) refer to the first cycle coding stage as "open coding". The purpose is to split the data into individually coded segments (Saldaña 2009; Braun & Clarke 2006; Charmaz 2006). These small segments are examined and compared for similarities and differences (Saldaña 2009). A list of preliminary codes is developed and then the work involves trying out and refining such codes to include more relevant categories (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard 2008). I began by coding each interview transcript individually to generate new codes but eventually material from other interviews, which was similar to some of the already coded material, was categorised under similar codes. Following Charmaz's (2006) advice, I performed a detailed line-by-line initial coding. Apart from coding each interview individually, I also paid attention to interpreting as well as writing analytic memos, and thus coded these memos

themselves — for further analysis (Clarke 2005). I also reviewed the memos that I had developed in the preliminary phase (Aurini *et al*. 2016).

Corbin & Strauss (2008) describe two major levels of coding during first cycle of coding which they term open coding and axial coding. When beginning to code interview data, the first step is to engage in the process of open coding or ‘‘breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data’’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 195 see also Strauss & Corbin 1990). Open coding allows for exploration of the ideas and meaning that are contained in raw data. While engaging in open coding, the researcher creates codes or concepts. Once codes have been created using open coding, it is necessary to analyse them through the process of axial coding. This higher level of coding enables researchers to identify any connections that may exist between codes (DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011). In addition, selective coding was also utilised as a process of identification and development of the central themes of the data (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

I also employed *in vivo* coding and process coding methods – both of which are foundational to grounded theory although they can also be applicable to other analytic approaches (Saldaña 2009). Employing *in vivo* coding enriched my analysis as this method “draws from the participant’s own language for codes” and this enabled me to conduct an open-ended reviewing of the corpus (Saldaña 2009: 81). In the words of Glaser & Strauss (1967 see also Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006) *in vivo* labels are created from the actual words of a participant. A common approach to coding is to categorise data using categories generated inductively (i.e., derived from the data), at least in part, and applied to the data through close reading (Morgan 1993). Data are sorted into these codes and then summarised (Forman & Damschroder 2007). The analysis process involves on-going interpretation of the data, with the researcher reading through the data and interpreting what the participant means, applying appropriate codes to segments of text, and recording thoughts and interpretations in a memo (Forman *et al*. 2008). The codes and memos are driven by a specific research question (Forman *et al*. 2008).

I then segmented my data into descriptive codes that captured the central characteristics embedded in the data, and in doing this, I was guided by developing tentative propositions about what I thought was happening based on what my participants were saying (Aurini *et al*. 2016). Keeping this in mind, I was able to break down my data into discrete parts which I subsequently closely examined and compared for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin 1998). The goal of first cycle coding is "to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data" (Charmaz 2006: 46). This is to say that all proposed codes during this cycle are tentative and provisional and will often be reworded as analysis progresses (Saldaña 2009). Aurini *et al*. (2016) suggest that the average project may develop approximately 100–200 codes. In the present study the initial coding yielded 184 codes which included merged *in vivo* codes and initial codes.

Second cycle coding

After I completed the first cycle of coding, I then proceeded to perform the second cycle of coding in which I paid more attention to working with the "resulting first cycle codes themselves by condensing, integrating and laying the codes into broader and more coherent categories and themes" (Miles *et al*. 2014: 73). In the early second cycle coding process I focused attention on developing categories which "pull together a lot of material into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis" (Miles *et al*. 2014: 73). The second cycle coding involved the interpretation and making sense of the data by identifying patterns, relationships and explanations, and I also relabelled, rearranged, structured and even eliminated some of my original codes hierarchically to identify categories (Aurini *et al*. 2016).

During second cycle coding, I started to recognise and subsume, where appropriate, first cycle codes that could be put together into broader categories (Aurini *et al*. 2016). At the early stages of this phase, same as in the first cycle coding process, I also had to develop a set of propositions about what I thought was happening on as I was coding my data and such propositions later informed my themes that developed at later stages of data analysis (Aurini *et al*. 2016). In addition, I was also writing memos both throughout the early and later stages of the second cycle of coding and I also revised the memos during the first cycle of coding.

While my analysis during the first cycle coding was more descriptive, my second cycle coding was more explanatory, and I relied heavily on "pattern coding" (Saldaña 2013). In addition, I relied on "focused coding" (Charmaz 2006), and finally I also relied on "axial coding" (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Hence, "pattern coding", "focused coding" and "axial coding" were all useful in developing meaningful categories from the data. In this thesis I have used multiple coding methods in line with Saldaña's (2009: 76) recommendation that researchers should always embrace the preparedness and willingness "to mix and match coding methods as you proceed with data analysis". Aurini *et al*. (2016: 195) define categorisation as "the process of grounding codes under larger unifying classification". For Green (2008: 71) categories "are analytic units developed by qualitative researchers to conceptually organise findings related to a phenomenon or human experience that is under investigation". Thus, in simpler terms categorisation means grouping of codes and in some cases the same codes were used in more than one category (Aurini *et al*. 2016). To achieve this, I arranged and re-arranged the data into broader classifications and typologies based on the patterns that began to emerge (Aurini *et al*. 2016).

From the early stages of coding, I proceeded to the later stages of coding where particular attention was paid to the formation of themes. A theme could be defined as an "outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded" (Aurini *et al*. 2016: 195). Following Boyatzis' (1998: 161) definition a theme is "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" [which is social inclusion of SWDs in South African HE – for the purposes of this study]. While codes and even categories tend to be descriptive in nature, themes rather tend to be the outcome of the interpretive process and they may also relate to an established concept or theory (Rossman & Rallis 2003). Themes for the present study emerged after significant analysis and reflection, as well as after the pre-coding and first cycle coding stages and arranging, re-arranging and adding of categories (Aurini *et al*. 2016).

According to Crabtree & Miller (1999), discovering themes and patterns in the data emanates from connecting codes. Here themes were an outcome of categories grouped according to their similarities. I created an overarching definition of each category which subsequently became my themes. In the words of Aurini *et al*. (2016), themes constitute the completed puzzle of a real story which the researcher is eventually able to tell people about their study. In order to tell this story, I drew on exemplar quotes from participants that best illustrated each theme.

When approaching data deductively, the aim is to test a previous theory in a different situation (Hsieh & Shannon 2005; Elo & Kyngäs 2008). In the case of the present study the previous theory that informed the deductive aspect of the data analysis was the philosophy of *Ubuntu* understood in relation to the social inclusion of SWDs in South African HE. Apart from testing previous theory, categories or themes generated deductively could also emerge "from prior studies, relevant literature, research questions, and the researcher's own experience with and knowledge of the phenomenon" (Green 2008: 71). My later second cycle coding process was guided by making connections between ideas and concepts, and by applying codes to raw data I was mainly interested in examining how the data related to fundamental concepts and principles within the philosophy of *Ubuntu* (DeCuir-Gunby *et al*. 2011). In this process, I asked how the ethical principles of *Ubuntu* could provide insight into the limitations of the current paradigm for understanding disability, and the roles and responsibilities of members of a community to one another, including PWDs.

In deductive thematic analysis, when analysing data in relation to theory, the researcher identifies specific areas that reveal the theory or that is in tandem with theoretical explanations (Riessman 2008). In the present study, inductive analysis proceeded by way of identifying thematic categories in the data which were of relevance to the dominant theoretical constructs of *Ubuntu*. When the codes, categories and themes that had been derived inductively were viewed through the lens of *Ubuntu*'s central precepts, I was able to discern three relevant categories which I captured in the themes of communalism, human dignity, respect and acceptance and hospitality. Each of these were associated with two subthemes as illustrated below:

Communalism	Human Dignity, Respect and Acceptance	Hospitality
From solitary to solidarity SWDs need for equal recognition Acceptance Sense of belonging Good social skills necessary for acceptance Barrier to reciprocal peer friendships between SWDs and non-disabled students Force-fitting SWDs in ableist norms of friendships Blaming for SWDs for not embracing the value of solidarity SWDs blamed for friendship formation and sustenance SWDs as shy SWDs as emotional SWDs lack adequate social skills Negatives of special school educational backgrounds Western individualist paradigm conceptualisation of	**Human Dignity** Western individualistic narrow conception of human dignity Kantianism and human dignity as individual autonomy Human dignity as avoiding treating SWDs as an afterthought *Ubuntu* human dignity more inclusive and holistic **Disrespect in concrete practices** SWDs living undignified lives on campus **Inaccessible toilets** Exclusion of wheelchair user SWDs Lack of appropriate toilet facilities Inadequate toilet facilities Inconveniencing wheelchair users Violation of rights of wheelchair users as provided in national legislation **Disablist assumptions** Need to respect artefacts such	**Attitudinal hospitability** *Ubuntu* hospitality addresses the needs of minority groups including strangers Residence life hospitable for SWDs Mainstream residence academic and social programmes Disability awareness raising programmes targeting the management Awareness raising during Orientation Week Awareness raising targeting House Committee members Empowering SWDs to believe in their potential DUSMs liaise with residence wardens and House Committee members Inclusive residence culture Brotherhood among SWDs and non-disabled students **Leadership attitudes** DUSMs inferior position makes it impossible for them to achieve fairness for SWDs Exclusion of disability from transformation agenda

friendships Interpersonal chemistry and friendship formation Respect peoples' choices to form or not to form friendships Onus for SWDs for friendship formation Residence inclusive programmes foster interdependent friendships between SWDs and non-disabled Lecturers pitying SWDs violate principles of co-operative learning **From independence to interdependence** Mistrust of SWDs by non-disabled students Discrimination of SWDs from groupwork Group assignments foster interdependence between SWDs and non-disabled students Academic success dispels prejudices against SWDs Western individualistic nuclear family Age of consent should give SWDs self-determination and autonomy	as wheelchairs as the actual user's body Avoid pushing wheelchair users without their consent Social events should be held in wheelchair accessible venues **Signage** Provision of public signage in Braille is an obligation under the UNCRPD Lack of signage in Braille excludes blind students on campus Braille in signage give blind students independence **Language and terminology** Ableist language oppresses SWDs Ableist language oppressive towards SWDs Referring to SWDs as "little chickens" **Disrespectful attitudes and assumptions** Wheelchairs users associated with incapability Wheelchair users dismiss the myth of incapability as a myth Non-disabled people respond with culture shock in their first	Disability inclusion not a budgetary priority for management Co-option of top management in disability initiatives DUSMs' subordinated status DUSMs powerless DUSMs compensating for their management's failings DUSMs outsourcing external funding Normalisation of discrimination against SWDs Self-representation Positive role of involvement of SWDs in leadership positions like SRC and House Committees SWDs leaders changing stereotypes against PWDs SWDs and self-advocacy Transforming ableist attitudes **Academic hospitality** Positives of residence programmes Creates well-rounded and job-ready students Improve social skills, confidence and academic success of SWDs Residences as living and learning spaces

Ubuntu and extended family Continual dependence on extended familyhood SWDs with special schools background too dependent on parents Criticising parents too involved in education affairs of their SWDs Inferior curriculum in special schools Abolishment of special schools SWDs with special schools background lack good social skills SWDs with special schools background isolate themselves **Individuality vis-á-vis community to individuality á la community** Descartes doctrine of individualism SWDs as oversensitive Desensitising SWDs to embrace values of communalism Disability disclosure central for acceptance of	encounter with PWDs Interrogating PWDs about their incapability Non-disabled people are scared of PWDs Non-disabled people are frightened of PWDs DUSMs frame SWDs as dependent DUSMs fixing SWDs to be independent DUSMs giving themselves for supporting SWDs instead of viewing it as their professional obligation Non-disabled respond with pity to SWDs Non-disabled ignorance Non-disabled hold stereotypes against SWDs Unfair double discrimination against SWDs Religion oppressive towards SWDs ***Ubuntu* and mutual respect** Acknowledging each other in mutual interactions central to mutual respect *Ubuntu* central to social interactions grounded in mutual respect Value of acceptance central to	DUSMs question the academic success of SWDs Disability sport as a pulling factor for SWDs to study at certain HEIs Sport participation creates disciplined SWDs Lack of and/or inaccessible sports facilities **Hospitable social environments** Social activities create hospitable social environments Residence programmes create holistic graduates Exclusion of off-campus SWDs from social activities Sport is a central aspect of social inclusion Association of physical disabilities with frailty and incapability Assumptions that students with physical disabilities cannot take part in sport Benefits of campuses with accessible sport facilities Campus geographic location and accessibility to transport Adapted and accessible transport foster social inclusion Transport challenges facing students with physical

SWDs Good social skills central to acceptance of SWDs SWDs experience a sense of exclusion One's disability determines level of inclusion or exclusion from an ableist standpoint Deaf students capable of lip reading are easily socially included Blind students more socially excluded SWDs should not hang out in Disability Units among themselves SWDs should learn social skills by interacting with non-disabled peers Disability Units as safe havens for SWDs facing discrimination Disability Units foster fruitful relationships between SWDs Disability Units provide a sense of belonging and acceptance for SWDs non-disabled people lack understanding of the lived experiences of SWDs Non-disabled privilege	human dignity **Mutual encounter** Residence Heads' attitudinal barriers, scared of SWDs Othering of SWDs in residences **Self-advocacy** *Ubuntu* traditional societies creates a conducive environment for all members to self-advocate for their needs Western individualist conceptualisation of self-advocacy is narrow Western individualist theory places more responsibility on SWDs to independently self-advocate for their inclusion Few SWDs are able to self-advocate for their rights SWDs in positions of influence only able to self-advocate for themselves and their peers **Collective responsibility** Disability mainstreaming foster full acceptance of SWDs Disability mainstreaming prevents systematic exclusion of SWDs Everyone should be involved in fostering disability inclusion	disabilities Discouraging SWDs to take part in sport SWDs incapable of balancing sport and academic demands Sport enables formation and sustenance of friendships Advertising of campus social events in accessible formats **Hospitable physical infrastructure** Construction of SWDs as dependent Inaccessible residences force SWDs to be confined to the ground floor Lifts breaking down impose mobility barriers to students with physical disabilities Residences should be located in the proximity of campus' central facilities Exclusion of blind students with guide dogs Comparison of sport infrastructure capacity between HBIs and HWIs No disability sport funding from DHET HEIs with adequate sport facilities promote social inclusion of SWDs Collaboration and sharing of

and power PWDs as incapable Non-disabled people focus on people's disability rather than ability Disability as weakness Historicise the cause of one's disability Assumptions against SWDs Awareness raising activities break non-disabled attitudes Questioning the effectiveness of awareness raising activities Beneficial outcomes of befriending SWDs	agenda Disability inclusion agenda should not only be driven by the Disability Unit SWDs suffer marginalisation because of their minority identity *Ubuntu* imposes a moral obligation to help one another "It takes a village to raise a child" All adults involved in raising a child Lecturers abusing their right to academic freedom Lecturers consistently referring their SWDs to Disability Units *All* academic departments should be involved *Ubuntu* value of collectivism Disability inclusion through the South African Constitution and the Bill of Rights' values Role of student volunteers in achieving inclusive education Reliance on volunteers unsustainable **Seeing the "whole**	sport facilities between universities Collaboration achieves community goals of *Ubuntu* **Infrastructure and Safety** Safe community central to *Ubuntu* hospitality Safety of buildings in line with South African relevant legislations' requirements Deaf students at most risk in the event of fire breaking out in residences Entering through the back door excludes SWDs Disability unfriendly buildings compromise the prospect of reciprocal friendship formation Unadapted kitchen facilities pose safety threat to some SWDs SWDs being assimilated into the ableist residence buildings and spaces Unsafe campus spaces for blind students Mobility orientation training to increase the independence of blind students **Parking**

	person” **Hunger** *Ubuntu* and the obligation to feed the needy and visitors Kings had obligations to produce surplus to feed poor members of community Poor first generation black African students are undernourished Poverty prevalent in HBIs and disproportionately affect black SWDs Disability Units curbing poverty through providing food parcels to SWDs **Healthcare** Disability mainstreaming by addressing the health-related needs of SWDs Reproductive rights as an important right under the UNCRPD Respect for human dignity through high-quality health care Accessible reproductive health services Availability of health professionals SWDs as sexually active	Disabled parking as a right for students with physical disabilities Adequate and accessible parking creates hospitable campuses Negatives of the marginalisation of DUSMs by the management Lack of human resources in Disability Units Job burnout Criticism of disability inclusion as expensive narrative “Home away from home” hospitable campus life

	Birth control/contraception **_Ubuntu_ and budgetary constraints** Underfunded Disability Unit *Ubuntu* should prevail despite budgetary constraints HEIs should continue to honour the obligation to uphold the dignity of SWDs HEIs still prioritise earmarking funds for removing architectural barriers Accessibility of built environment in compliance with national accessibility standards should always prevail DUSMs collaborating with accessibility experts to make built environment accessible Utilising universal design principles to make the built environment accessible as well as cost-effective Disability inclusion should be prioritised not as "an add on" Building of improper ramps impose financial burden on HEIs Borrowing international disability best practices **_Ubuntu_ and holistic**	

	consultations with SWDs Open door policy DUSMs' sensitivity to the daily needs of SWDs **Disability inclusion through an ableist lens** Ableism Internalised ableism Impossibility of making campus built environment 100% accessible More accessible built environment costly Normalisation of inaccessible built environment Inaccessible built environment barrier to full participation Preservation of historical heritage as an excuse Discontinuation of awareness raising activities because of ableist assumptions No funds earmarked for built environment accessibility Need for able-bodied peoples' mindset shift Best practices Disability Units	

Table 2: Categories and Themes

These themes and subthemes then became the organising categories for the three data analysis chapters which appear in the thesis. The thesis is thus organised into three main data analysis chapters: Communalism; Human Dignity, Respect and Acceptance; and Hospitality. Each of these corresponds not only to a central theme emergent from the data but also to the central values of *Ubuntu*.

Chapter 6: Communalism

Introduction

Many Western approaches to disability are rooted in values of individualism – defined "as an orientation towards one's own welfare" (Kirkpatrick Johnson & Monserud 2009: 387) – and autonomy. Anderson & Honneth (2004) argue that the modern Western conception of autonomy aims at creating a just society through emphasising the need for people to be independent from others as possible if they are to meaningfully realise their autonomy. The realisation of a person's autonomy is viewed as having to do with gaining as much independence as possible from their consociates (Anderson & Honneth 2004). Western cultures have been characterised as emphasising "individualism, autonomy, personal responsibility and control" in contrast to non-Western cultures which have been characterised as placing greater emphasis on "the importance of family, community and collectivism" (Brannon *et al*. 2015: 588).

The concept of *Ubuntu* takes a radical departure from Western approaches to disability which place a strong emphasis on autonomy, independence and individualism (Mji *et al*. 2009). How *Ubuntu* does this is evidenced by Shutte (2001: 30) when he explains that an *Ubuntu*-driven community excludes any form of selfishness through imposing a moral obligation on every individual to become more fully human through "entering more and more deeply into community with others".

While Western individualistic values have been criticised for translating into competitiveness among members of a society (Khoza 1994b; Prinsloo 1996), *Ubuntu* values emphasise co-operation. Ndondo & Mhlanga (2014) have blamed societies which emphasise individualism for being prone to produce societal members who are egoistic and have no feeling for their fellow community members. Egoism is the view that a person morally ought to maximise the satisfaction of her or his own long-range interests rather than counting on others to do so (Brandt

1972). In contrast to a person who is "socialised to think of himself, or herself, as inextricably bound to others […]" (Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009), respecting individuals' rights to live how they want to live without external interference is highly privileged by those operating within a Western individualist cosmology (Metz & Gaie 2010). The individualist considers his or her own interests in isolation and regards others as nothing but a means to individual ends (Khoza 1994b; Prinsloo 1996).

In contrast to the Western aphorism, "I think, therefore I am" (Hailey 2008), placing much emphasis on humaneness is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the concept of *Ubuntu* (Dandala 1996). For those operating within an *Ubuntu* frame of reference, those who pursue self-interest are considered to be disloyal and betrayers of the whole community (Praeg 2014). *Ubuntu* ethics are anti-egoistic: individuals do not live for themselves nor seek their own good without regard for, or to the detriment of, others and the community (Munyaka & Motlhabi 2009). An individual has a moral obligation not only to identify with others, but also to think of oneself as bound up with others within a common group and to participate in its practices (Metz 2007b). Therefore, to embrace the values of *Ubuntu* is to seek to minimise individual self-interest in a society and it offers a counterweight to dominant ideas of individualism (Hailey 2008). As the chapter illustrates, SWDs are often seen as inferior by their non-disabled peers, as well as by DUSMs who may question their social skills and their ability to form and sustain friendships with non-disabled peers.

Proponents of *Ubuntu* have criticised individualism for leading to people living solitary lives, as they do not feel bound to have harmonious relationships with other community members in line with the spirit of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* frowns upon an individual who leads a solitary lifestyle (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). Such a solitary individual is criticised for contradicting the *Ubuntu* value of working for the common good (Tutu 1999). Individuals who maintained solitariness were cast away in traditional African societies as they were seen as non-persons or socially "dead" (Chabal 2009: 47).

Ubuntu philosophy foregrounds the fact that a human being is a "social being" (Prinsloo 1998: 43). In traditional African communities an individual was defined according to the environing community (Ndondo & Mhlanga 2014). *Ubuntu* articulates that an individual has a responsibility to all the members of a community in which they are embedded (see, for instance, Bongmba 2012: Bessler 2008; Whaley 2016). To paraphrase Kamwangamalu (1999), nobody should live for oneself, but rather everyone should live for the community.

Thus, *Ubuntu* begins with community and moves to individuality, whereas Western individualism moves from individuality to community (Battle 2000). *Ubuntu* places great value on community members' conformity to the community's values and expectations (Mthembu 1996). *Ubuntu* also places great value on being loyal to the group (Louw 2001). This could be through promoting social harmony and being friendly (Tutu 2003). Individuals are seen to have a collective "moral obligation to conform to traditions and conventions and override any desire for change or nonconformity" (Keevy 2009: 29). In settings governed by *Ubuntu* ethics, non-conformity on the part of any members of the community is prone to be met by harsh punitive measures (Mbigi & Maree 1995; Sono 1994; Van Niekerk 1994). Individual members of a community are expected to accept the duties and obligations the community imposes on its members (Coertze 2001). Individuals who accept such duties and obligations are recognised as "having *Ubuntu*" — that is to say, acting in line with the norms to which every member of the community is expected to conform. According to Gathogo (2008: 46-48 see also Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013; Gyekye & Wiredu 1992), those who do not conform are seen as "behaving like animals". Examples of conforming to the values of *Ubuntu* would be to avoid participating in wrongful actions such as theft, deception, exploitation and cruelty (Metz & Gaie 2010). Also contrary to the values of *Ubuntu* would be anger, resentment, lust for revenge, and even success achieved through aggressive competitiveness at the expense of others (Tutu 2003).

Metz (2007b: 240) views *Ubuntu* as "a theory of right action" which historically guided African communities to reduce discord in favour of producing harmony and solidarity between people. Discord or disagreement between people among other undesirable actions are viewed as wrong

not merely because they harm other members of the community or degrade an individual's autonomy, but rather because such actions are unfriendly and do not respect friendship or the capacity for it (Metz 2011b). Thus, individuals who perpetrated those undesirable actions were seen as unconcerned or malevolent and lacking positive attitudes toward their fellow community members (Metz 2011b). An individual is never expected to be independent, but subordinate to the interests of a group in a society at large (Kamwangamalu 1999). But one could argue that this absolute expectation on all community members to conform to societal interests may well be oppressive, especially when denying some community members agency or subjecting them to oppressive practices without allowing them a voice to question such practices. Thus, being truly human from the perspective of *Ubuntu* requires one to know that one is bound up with others in what Tutu (1999: 196-197) refers to as "the bundle of life".

Ubuntu values are normally centred on social relationships. The importance of social relationships in the well-being of people has long been acknowledged. Individuals who are embedded in affirming social networks and who have friends, regardless of their age, are said to be more likely to lead socially, psychologically, and physically healthy lives in comparison to their counterparts (Antonucci & Akiyama 1987). Yu & Xie (2017: 3) highlight that "human beings are social animals and as such have an intrinsic need for association with one another". Friendship is one particular form of social relationship that has been theorised extensively. Following Claes's (1992: 40) definition, friendship "can be viewed as a relation of sociability that involves a selective process which is not based on blood ties or sexual considerations". There is an abundance of literature on friendship which points to the significance of social relationships – particularly friendships – for both PWDs and non-disabled people. For example, Mackie (1998) found that most students who left or dropped out in the early part of a course frequently had challenges associated with a failure in relation to social integration, such as difficulties with making friends or homesickness. In addition, Thomas's (2002) study demonstrated that new social networks at university often provided students with support to overcome such difficulties. Despite making resources and various supports available for SWDs, HEIs continue to struggle to increase the retention and throughput rates of SWDs (Ju *et al*. 2017: 180). There is a need to place greater emphasis not only on how these students can be

successfully integrated into their institutions academically, but also socially. Social integration is essential to successful adjustment to university life for first-year students transitioning to university (Wilcox *et al*. 2005).

McGivney (2004) stresses the importance of student-peer friendships, particularly on the part of minority group students in the learning environment. This is especially true of SWDs who frequently encounter discrimination in such aspects of life as friendships, thus denying them a sense of belonging (Reinders 2008). Hence, as Maruzani *et al*. (2014: 1) have pointed out, "the issue of disability cannot be looked at in isolation from other important issues of social relations" including friendships. Friendships are central to the well-being and life trajectories of all students regardless of disability status (Shokoohi-Yekta & Hendrickson 2010).

Despite the importance of friendships in giving students a sense of belonging, there is a dearth of research investigating how SWDs develop a sense of belonging as they transition to HEIs. The minimal available literature within the HE context has only associated a sense of belonging with academic motivation, success, and persistence (Freeman *et al*. 2007; Hausmann *et al*. 2007; Hoffman *et al*. 2003), and not with social inclusion. This research misses the important point that students spend a great deal of time in informal peer interactions in the home and neighbourhood environments rather than only in the regular classroom environment (Geisthardt *et al*. 2002). Given this, Stoneman (1993: 242) states: "it is of little value to facilitate interactions in the classroom if [those] with disabilities spend the rest of their time socially isolated in their homes and neighbourhoods".

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings regarding the *Ubuntu* value of communalism in relation to friendship formation and sustenance between SWDs and their non-disabled peers on South African campuses. The chapter argues that friendships grounded in the *Ubuntu* value of communalism are likely to be more genuine and lasting because they are based not on chance individual encounters and choices, but on community norms dictating "right action". Central to

this chapter is a critique of the conventional view that inclusive education automatically results in friendship formation between SWDs and their non-disabled peers (Bunch & Valeo 2004).

Here I advocate for a paradigm shift in response to this narrow understanding of friendship from the dominant view of inclusive education – for programmes and practices at universities to be informed by the communalist ethics of *Ubuntu* — which frowns upon individualism and emphasises social relationships and friendships among people as imperatives of right action (Punt 2004). Through group affiliation and interaction, humans develop such positive attributes as caring and sharing, and above all they become more human and accepting of others (Jolley 2011). Central to communalism is the idea that the community "defines the individual and gives people their worth-ness" (Okoro 2015: 1). Taking the value of communalism as a starting point would mean creating an enabling environment for a web of reciprocal relations and would imply a paradigm shift from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, and from individuality in tension with community to community as a starting point for individual growth and fulfilment (Louw 2002).

From solitary to solidarity

Within some university settings the framing of SWDs as the only ones eager to make friends with their non-disabled peers automatically creates an unequal power relation between both parties with the former as inferior and the latter as superior. For instance, Mitchell's positioning of non-disabled students as superior is evidenced by referring to them as "cool people" which advantageously positions this group as not lacking any form of qualities, including social skills assumed necessary for friendship formation and sustenance in comparison to their disabled peers.

> So what we do during […] first-year orientation as the Disability Unit, [is that] we get a chance to address most first-years and apart from telling them what services we provide, I always say to the students: "Disabled people also want to hang out

> with the cool people, but the cool people don't necessarily want to hang out with us". Somehow, I think it's easier for me to talk to the students because I have a disability and because I really relate. [….] I can remember what it was like when I was 18 or 19 and I wanted to belong and wanted to be included and wanted to be part of a group. That is a strong desire in kids that age especially, and it's not that easy. A lot has to do with an individual student's level of socialisation: to what extent they have developed the kind of skills, the social skills that will make them acceptable to the group. So […] whenever I get a chance to address the first-year students during Orientation Week, I try and make them understand that you know disabled students want exactly what you want. […] Don't think that they want anything different. They are not different; they are just like you (Mitchell).

Multiple studies on friendship have confirmed that reciprocal peer friendships have a positive influence on the acquisition of social skills and personal adjustment to educational institutions for adolescents (Claes 1992; Collins & Steinberg 2006). Rather than acting in isolation, *Ubuntu* philosophy encourages people to continually acknowledge an individual's web of rich interconnection with others in a community and people are encouraged to lead collectivist and family-oriented lifestyles (Stoyko 2005). *Ubuntu*'s encouragement of family members to always be ready to cooperate and communicate with others within a community (Magesa 2013) is an example of how reciprocal social relationships among community members, and not solitariness, are valued. Social relationships among people who embrace *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism are manifested in how "they sympathetically view another's struggles as theirs and subsequently try to find ways to share the burden" (Jolley 2011: 7). Individuals know that they belong to a greater whole and they are "diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed" (Magesa 2013: 13).

In contrast to an ethos of solidarity, the participants' responses suggest an attitude of forcing SWDs to fit within an ableist environment, often blaming them for failing to create an environment of solidarity which would benefit them. SWDs are expected to bear the onus for friendship formation, and when coming from special schools educational backgrounds they are blamed for not having good enough social skills to enable them to form and sustain friendships with their non-disabled peers.

Below Lebogang advises non-disabled students in her residences on how to approach their SWDs peers and of issues they ought to be aware, especially the use of disabling language which equates disability with incapacity as this can have far reaching negative effects.

> You must be very careful as to how you talk to them [*referring to students with disabilities*]. Look at how you view everything around them. In my view, [*referring to a student with a disability*] would feel like they are now discussing me, maybe they should participate in awareness raising activities […] [T]o take a study like this to her may make her feel free but not to that extent that she is free. It may feel like you are isolating her or him, like now […] [s/he has] to be part of that study because […] [s/he is] disabled. That's their way of thinking so sometimes before you try and talk to them, […] you must try and think about what you are going to say and how it is going to sit with them (Lebogang).

The literature on disability inclusion in South African HE and elsewhere has mainly associated the transition from high school into HE from an academic inclusion standpoint through highlighting teaching and learning barriers in the classroom setting. In this study, however, some participants have noted that the transition from high school into HE also has social implications on the part of SWDs. For example, Elna points to trust issues as one of the challenges with which SWDs grapple during the early phases of their transition from high school into the university environment.

> They don't want to be a hassle, they don't want you to go out of your way to help them and they [also] want to be independent […]. I mean they don't want to ask all the time. So, they would rather not do it than be a bother to someone else, that's all. I've experienced it, especially in the beginning of the year when everything is new they are very shy, but as they get to know the people, the students and us, they do tend to grow and that's nice to see (Elna).

Steeped in assumptions of the value of individualism and autonomy, it is difficult to move away from the idea that to be reliant on others in some way, is to fail or to be perceived as weak.

Claudine's comments, in the following interview, point to the sense of shame that can be occasioned by an absence of bodily autonomy in a society in which to be an autonomous individual is the goal.

> One of our quadriplegia students, […] when he started his first year it was so strange. Somebody mentioned it two weeks ago. She said she remembers he was like this (participant bowing her head) coming [into a room]. […] He's staying in a home for people with physical disabilities. When he came in, he would just say "hello", looking down, and now [that] he is in third year, you can't believe the difference. The change in that person […] the head is straight and smiling and [we are] greeting each other and that is what we want. That is social inclusion, all the people around him, he's part of the team. They don't see the disability anymore. They see the person (Claudine).

What Claudine does, at least not explicitly, is to question the goal of autonomy itself. A paradigm shift towards the inculcation of the values of *Ubuntu* would mean that the very idea of self-sufficiency is called into question and the recognition of our inherent interconnectedness is fostered. Rather than inhering in individual choice and achievement moreover, the understanding is that values — whether of autonomy or relatedness — emerge from social expectations, norms and practices.

Within the dominant individualist paradigm, social relationships and friendships in particular are often seen as a matter of interpersonal chemistry (Campbell *et al*. 2015). The concept of interpersonal chemistry as defined by Campbell *et al*. (2015: 239) "refers to a connection between two individuals that exists upon first meeting". Friendship formation seen within a framework of interpersonal chemistry is about two individuals who, upon their first encounter, experience an emotional and psychological connection (Ceccoli 2004; Swann *et al*. 2006). Campbell *et al*. (2015: 2) speculate that "during the initial moments of an interpersonal encounter, individuals are already making decisions about which relationship type – friend or acquaintance — to pursue".

Working with this set of assumptions, SWDs like Thandolwethu experience negative reactions from peers on their first encounter – a lack of "personal chemistry" due to her disability.

> As I said, non-disabled people are sceptical of blind people. They have this thing […] if you are disabled: you can't do this, we must do this for you, we must think for you. I have experienced this when I walk with someone who can see and another person approaches me, they won't ask me directly, […] "how is she? What does she want to eat?". Instead of asking me, it's like I can't think for myself. I think people's mindset needs to change. That's the challenge that we face. That thing of shame […], that person is disabled: they are unable to do anything. That's frustrating actually (Thandolwethu).

Jones & George (1998) assert that liking and affection towards one another are some of the central characteristics of high-quality relationships that prevent both parties from being harmed or exploited within a friendship. Within this individualist paradigm, if these characteristics are absent, it would be absurd to expect the formation and sustenance of high-quality friendships. Friendships, in this paradigm, are a matter of individual choice and preference so DUSMs or their institutions cannot be blamed for not facilitating the formation of friendships between SWDs and their disabled or non-disabled peers.

> You know we encourage students with disabilities to be socially included, [but] in the end that is a very individual thing. You can't really force people to be friends. That's the bottom line. They will only be friends with you if they want to be friends with you. Even on the playground as a child, there is always a child that gets left out, […] [and] you don't have to say to the other children, "Why aren't you playing with Susie?", because they don't want to (Mitchell).

> I think, you know, social inclusion from a student's perspective is […] really what you make of it. You can't expect […] the university to be solely responsible for making you feel welcome and being part of the university as a whole (Deidre).

> I think a lot […] is dependent on the students themselves. […] [I]f the students themselves are proactive, then the main goals can be achieved, but it depends on […] [what] the students […] want, and it is also important that they take control and they take charge of their own inclusion and that is not my, our Disability Unit's responsibility (Debbie).

What these views overlook is the fact that they are steeped in a particular (individualist) paradigm which sees social relationships as emanating from individual choice. An alternative would see social institutions taking responsibility for fostering and inculcating desired values in the members of a community instead of assuming that individuals are responsible for assimilating and incorporating themselves, and for their own retention (Rendón *et al*. 2004). From this standpoint, HEIs, as powerful social institutions, are to be held responsible for social and cultural integration as well as for the retention of minority students (Tinto 1987).

Similarly, those in leadership positions on campuses can take the initiative to actively foster friendships rather than treating friendship as a matter of individual preference or choice. The Gateway programmes described by DUSMs, Tumelo and Elna, are one example:

> What I can say is that in the beginning of the year, more especially for first-years, there is a gateway programme. We normally introduce the students – maybe target ones that stay at the hostel. We look for […] buddies for them. That friend will take them around and show them the university and they will come to us after evaluation of the university to let us know […] [about any disadvantages for them, such as], "I will need your assistance", "the venue for the class is not accessible or accommodative of me" (Tumelo).

> At [the] beginning of the year, we have a gateway programme that we have for first-years [and] we make sure that they interact. The students will have to interact with that specific student. They can take him with wherever they go when they have a dance or something social on the calendar. In the hostel student committee, take the student, they look for him and they take [him] by the hand and say, "You must come with us". So, beginning of each year, the first-years are targeted by us and we make sure that there is a definite interaction between SWDs and their non-

> disabled peers in the hostel, because SWDs are very shy at the beginning of the year and they don't want to be a hassle. So, they rather stay in the hostel [and] […] won't go to the student activities, so now we follow-up with the hostel constantly throughout the beginning of the year to make sure that this student is taken with (Elna).

In contrast to seeing relationships as a matter of individual preference, the *Ubuntu* worldview offers the prospect of fostering a culture of interconnectedness and interdependence among community members (Msila 2008). Interdependence and a spirit of group solidarity within an *Ubuntu*-oriented society is manifested through acting in ways that are expected to benefit each other as well as sympathising with others and helping them in times of need (Metz 2010). This is not to ignore the possible barriers associated with achieving interdependence and group solidarity-oriented friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. For example, we see peer marginalisation and unfair treatment of SWDs in groupwork and SWDs being denied opportunities to make friends or socialise amongst themselves.

Some campus residences have made significant strides in fostering an inclusive culture where SWDs and their non-disabled peers could form interdependence and group solidarity-oriented friendships.

> Our strong emphasis is on them to build strong friendships, a sisterhood, friendships that will go beyond their years in university, […] formulating bonds. So, we create those platforms by having […] social activities [where] they get to know one another [and] they get to build friendships that last […] a lifetime. It's all about building that bond [of] friendship, sisterhood that is going to last them […] for a lifetime. […] So that's why we're having such events as well, social events, because one thing that I have noticed about students [when] they come to university, they just tell themselves, "Okay, I am just going there because I want to get my degree or whatever and just leave, nothing else is important". They don't realise that it's not just about that piece of paper. At the end of the day, you have to offer something more when you leave this place, so that's what I'm talking about. So, our vision is mainly empowerment of the ladies that stay here (Nthabiseng).

Central to friendships which develop from residences' social activities is that such friendships are grounded on interdependence and on trust; both of these concepts could be said to be powerful pillars for the longevity of such friendships.

> There are activities whereby we try and get involved, like community service. We do go to leadership skills sessions and seminars with them. [Also] there are cultural and sport things. For instance, sports day [and] inter-residence activities, […] where they get to know each other. They get to meet and do their thing. It builds a relationship where there can be trust and reliance in terms of helping each other academically (Lebogang).

As Bryan & Myers (2006) argue, cooperative learning is relevant to how universities can meet their obligation to create conducive environments in which non-disabled people can learn from SWDs. The literature indicates that promoting cooperative learning has great potential to facilitate the building of friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers (Jenkins & O'Connor 2003; Kagan 1994). This research contradicts the idea that relationships are purely a matter of personal choice and preference. However, despite these well-documented benefits of cooperative learning, its actual implementation has always been a challenge as many educators find it difficult to accomplish practically (Cohen 1994). The professional commitment and active role of educators are important as "getting cooperative learning up and running in a classroom requires a commitment to embedding the procedures into the curricula and in implementing, monitoring, and evaluating it" (Gillies *et al*. 2007: 3).

Lecturers who are uninformed about principles of cooperative learning are more likely to unconsciously exclude SWDs from the groupwork experience and in so doing, miss the opportunity for fostering relationships of mutual respect and interdependence.

> The other thing where you have lecturers or people who think that because you are Deaf maybe you should do this assignment on your own. So, they exclude the student with a disability from a group experience, [from] being part of the learning experience, [and from] being part of the other students. So, what I'm talking about is that they are not […] only excluding the student with a disability from the group but they are also denying the experience to the able-bodied students; the experience of working with a disability, because they can learn things from each other. So, when a lecturer makes a decision like that, then you exclude both parties from the learning experience. It's like that lecturer is telling hearing students that they cannot experience working with a Deaf student (Lilian).

Denying Deaf students interpersonal contact with their hearing peers, defeats the whole purpose of cooperative learning by compromising one of the basic elements of cooperative learning, which underscores the need to enable all group members' equal participation through affording each member of the group equal shares of responsibility and input (Dotson 2001).

From independence to interdependence

Many commentators (see, for instance, Bove & Johnson 2001; Jones & George 1998; Demerouti *et al*. 2001; Niven *et al*. 2012) see high-quality friendships as those grounded in trust. While trust may not be highly prized if the goal is independence, when interdependence is valued, trust is essential to building relationships and to individuals' well-being and flourishing within communal relationships (Dutton & Heaphy 2003). Although people are often thought to strive to create reciprocated relationships – relationships in which both parties trust each other (Heider 1958) – this is often not the case with regard to relationships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. Abina recalled facing peer rejection as non-disabled peers mistrusted working with her:

> I think it's because they have a perception of disabled students. I think people have this perception that they are sort of a lower kind of group in society; they can't achieve as much as abled students can. I often face discrimination and I think that's why […] I'm saying we feel misunderstood because we feel

> discriminated against often. I've also had it in class where people refuse to work in a group with me because they think that I can't think for myself. They think that because there is something wrong with my eyes there is something wrong with my brain. So, in terms of that I mean we feel discriminated against and that sort of makes you angry and that makes you not want to participate. Because what is the use of participating if people […] are discriminating [against] you anyway (Abina).

It has been pointed out that community members in traditional *Ubuntu*-oriented societies were expected to reciprocate unconditional trust if they were to recognise each other as equals (Jolley 2011). This is because "*Ubuntu* promotes trust that should serve to increase individuals' productivity in organisations and in society" (Brooks & Nafukho 2006: 410-411). To increase this productivity, for example, the traditional members of Zimbabwe's Shona ethnic group engaged in various kinds of collective works (Mbigi 1997). One such was "*jangano* where two or more families decide to work in each other's fields based on mutual trust" (Mbigi 1997: 4). Seen in this light, while trust is central to building communal bonds, distrust of PWDs can emanate from the suspicion that a person with a disability will not be of a sufficient calibre to contribute to the success of the group. Thus, PWDs are often denied a sense of belonging (Morris 1991).

The exclusion of SWDs from full participation in group assignments is another indication of how non-disabled students mistrust SWDs; this exclusion also deprives non-disabled students of the benefits of a full learning experience.

> You know other students on campus don't know how to behave around students with disabilities. Non-disabled students always pity students with disabilities. They always say, "No, you can't do that, I will do it for you". When it comes to assignments, "No, just give me your student number, I will put […] your student number in [the] group assignment – you don't have to do anything". They think that they are not able to do it themselves. It's so bad; it's so wrong. Rather ask, "What can I do to help?". It's really sad actually (Boitumelo).

> From my personal experience, I did a course years ago at Damelin College and because of my disability, well not my disability, but my appearance, people judged me. The other students judged me on what I looked like and […] I was sitting by myself and nobody ever talked to me. And obviously [at] that time I was still not okay with me, […] who I am, […] so I certainly wouldn't have gone out and spoken to people. […]Then we had our first test and I did the best of everybody there and we were about 40 people and only then [did] the other people come to me because now they […] could ask me things. [such as], "How did [you] do so well?" (Deidre).

In Deidre's case, barriers were broken down because her exceptional ability dispelled prejudice about her. However, rather than seeing mistrust as an outcome of personal prejudice or preference, one of the sampled institutions in this study has successfully mediated this mistrust through making groupwork compulsory for both SWDs and non-disabled students and also expecting all group members to make a substantial contribution to the given group project or assignments.

> One thing about [this university], […] one of the […] good things I would say [is] about the teaching method. […] At [this university], a lot of the work that the students do is group based. So, […] in the classrooms they are forced to belong to a group. […] I think that helps a lot, especially the students with disabilities [so] that they don't feel excluded. They [are] never excluded because in order for you to get a mark for your assignment, every person in the group […] [had to] participate in the[…] finished product. So, I often see them […] as part of groups, […] [and] at the same time it's raising awareness because now the friends or the classmates […] see there is a Disability Unit […]. So, I think in that instance the groupwork that the […] students have to do [as] […] part of the curriculum […] sort of helps with the social aspect, […]because they have to […] exchange cell phone numbers and they have to be on Facebook with the other students […]. So, they have that social interaction. […] Even though, from our side, from the Disability Unit's side, we don't have particular events for our students. They [are] all actually part of the [university] community as a whole […].They don't feel excluded (Deidre).

Within an *Ubuntu* African-oriented family structure, the elders, especially the parents, play a major role in passing on to children essential knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values concerning how to live, behave, and function in society (Nafukho 2006) and this relationship and binding ties endure throughout life. This is in contrast to Western individualist culture which places

emphasis on the notion of an "age of consent" which, once reached by the child, automatically legally liberates them from the guardianship of parents. For many students, including those with disabilities, transitioning to university coincides with the "age of consent". Informed by the notion of an "age of consent", which is a central precept in Western individualism, some participants called for parents to be hands-off on their children's educational affairs. Framing their remarks within taken-for-granted assumptions about the inherent value of the right to autonomy and self-determination as adults, participants spoke of the involvement of parents of SWDs from special school backgrounds in particular, to be problematic.

> The biggest problem for me with these special schools is [that] […] children are removed from society; they are not being mainstreamed. They are not learning all the social skills like other kids from other schools; they are being isolated. Many children come to us with that kind of state from these special schools. And we try to teach them that if they act appropriately — if they learn these skills to empower themselves — they [will] […] see results. And we see these people […] climbing out of their shells when they come to see us. I have a student who comes from a special school [to] come see me for a MBT test, the National Benchmarking Tests. And he came to see me with his father. […] A good example of […] how these form a negative place where they are at the moment is [when] you ask a student a question, […] for example, […] "What kind of assistance […] do you need? […] Do you need large text, or a computer?", and the father will answer me on the student's behalf. So, the student shuts himself off and he just believes that everyone knows what's good for him and he doesn't have a voice. And we try to make sure that by the time they are finished with us they have a voice. That same student has now been with us for two years and I always say that he will someday be our PR Manager here, because he is Mr Social. Everybody loves him. He is very social-able. He is always having parties and he is very popular with everyone around here. [He is] always with friends all the time which is the complete opposite of how he was when he started here last year (Francois).

Informed by values of individualism and autonomy, Francois sees a parent talking on behalf of their son as inherently problematic since it is an indication of a parent still claiming ownership over an autonomous adult. Similarly, also informed by values of individualism and autonomy, Claudine sees living off-campus as an indication that SWDs have overprotective parents who are an obstacle to the social inclusion of SWDs:

> I think it's because with our blind students they are first-years and their moms and daddies are very protective and don't want them to live on campus. You can understand why and that is one thing that we are working on with the first-years. Therefore, we give them mobility training, so that they can go on their own to the classroom and also ask people [for directions] […] because that is also socialising […] (Claudine).

Both the above participants are oblivious of an alternative *Ubuntu* family system in which parents have the right to be involved in teaching their children, from birth to adulthood, the values which will make them acceptable community members. In this paradigm, social inclusion has to do with becoming a person who relates well with other community members. Also overlooked is the fact that many non-disabled students also live at home, often due to the high cost of residence accommodation. In this sense, SWDs are held to a different standard — their independence is questioned, and they must demonstrate it in order to be acknowledged and accepted.

Participants routinely insisted that the only form of social inclusion that was acceptable to them was inclusion in the mainstream. Special schools, for example, were criticised for failing SWDs by discouraging them from being self-advocates and having the social skills needed to help them navigate the university environment successfully. The goal often seemed to be acceptance of SWDs by their non-disabled peers rather than the reconstruction of the social norms that advantage the non-disabled and the expectation that inclusion means being included into the existing practices and expectations of non-disabled society.

> Special schools education in this country is bad, not because it's necessarily second grade, but because the teachers aren't trained to teach disabled children. They aren't motivated, they have low expectations of the children, they don't expect the children to be successful and they don't expect them to one day have a job. And so, they just do the minimal and these kids come out of schools with minimal social and other skills. Yet, one of the important skills [that] you need to learn as a disabled person is precisely that ability to make other people feel okay to have you around. […] I'm not sure [how] you teach it, but I'm sure a child who

> has had [a] good education would have learnt it. […] I think a lot of it happens around good role models (Mitchell).

Missing here is an appreciation of the deficiencies, not just in the special schools system, but in the education system as a whole, which values individual success and competitiveness above interdependence and solidarity. For some, like Julia, the answer lies in the abolition of special schools:

> I don't like special schools. I wasn't in a special school. I was in a mainstream school. To me [..] a special school […] is a very closed off environment, first of all. So, a lot of students who are in special schools [struggle] when they come to university, […] because they are not used to being around able-bodied people. They are only used to being amongst other students with disabilities. You have to think about yourself and your future. You can't always be surrounded by people with disabilities. You need to be able to cope (Julia).

What Julia does not acknowledge is that those who are schooled in isolation from the disabled are equally lacking in exposure to the full range of humanity. Education taking the values of *Ubuntu* as its starting point would seek connections to encourage an attitude of interdependence of *all* members of a community. Within the educational context, Mpofu (2000: 4) argues that this could take the form of encouraging both the educators and learners to co-operate for purposes of reflecting "the collective solidarity values of *Ubuntu* in their day to day experiences" in the classroom setting. Central to this form of co-operation is that it will also encourage everybody to feel as if they are "part of the team and no one will wish to let the team down" (Mpofu 2000: 4).

Individuality vis-á-vis community to individuality á la community

As argued by Ferraiolo (1996: 71), "Descartes is generally presumed to have been one of the foremost proponents of the doctrine of individualism of the mental" or mind. Here, individualism is defined as the "thesis that the context of a mental state is fixed solely in virtue of states internal to the agent of whom the mental state is predicated (or to the mind of that agent)" (Ferraiolo 1996: 72). According to Nagel (2013: 186 see also Macquarrie 1972), within this Cartesian framework an "individual exists prior to, or separately and independently from the rest of the community or society". Thus, making the rest of society to be "nothing but an added extra to a pre-existent and self-sufficient being" (Macquarrie 1972: 104).

In contrast, the individuality that *Ubuntu* respects is the opposite of Cartesian thinking. *Ubuntu* ethics directly contradict the Cartesian conception of individuality (Nagel 2013 see also Louw 1998). Hence, "*Ubuntu* unites the self and the world in a peculiar web of reciprocal relations in which subject and object become indistinguishable. *Ubuntu* claims that the self or individual is constituted by its relations with others" (Nagel 2013: 186). Given *Ubuntu*'s "extreme emphasis on community" (Louw 1998), the proponent of Cartesian individualism would have to make some major adjustments to conform, if they were to live in an *Ubuntu* communitarian society:

> This is all somewhat boggling for the Cartesian mind, whose conception of individuality now has to move from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality *vis-à-vis* community to individuality *à la* community (Louw 1998: 4).

Ubuntu, in other words, can provide another alternative that may be useful within certain settings in the South African HE context. For this reason, following Hailey's (2008) suggestion, *Ubuntu* can potentially offer a counterweight to the dominant Western individualist orthodoxy. Elize, for instance, sensitises SWDs under the assumption that they come to university with negative

preconceived notions about non-disabled students as people with whom they cannot form and sustain healthy friendships.

> Also, the fact that students must […] be desensitised because they come here with […] this feeling that […] no one cares about [them] […] and there's lots of stigma where they come from, at the schools, and they grow up […] being oversensitive about their condition […] so that can also be a barrier [that] can be overcome with […] the desensitisation workshops with the students and involving them in stuff like […] the Disability Awareness Symposium of last year. I involved students with disabilities. And then personally as well emotionally, […] you have to work with students to […] desensitise them because sometimes they come from different environments where stigma was prevalent. […] Then when they enter here, they think […]: "I am not worthy, I am not valuable" and […] feeling sorry for themselves. […] [That] can also be a barrier that needs to be removed by sensitisation and desensitisation workshops with the students (Elize).

In her study, which explored the experiences of SWDs at one South African university, Miranda (2013) concluded that although friends are necessary support to assist with participation in student life, making friends is subjective and dependent on the personalities of individual SWDs and this influences the depth of their social interaction. As for Deidre, she frames campuses as ableist spaces which are only accepting and tolerant of SWDs who have officially disclosed their disability. Thus, she encourages SWDs to follow suit, if they are to increase their self-awareness.

> I think the reason is some people are not comfortable about the fact that they have a disability or a different ability. […] Some people haven't accepted that they have a disability and for those reasons they might not want other people to know that there's something wrong […]. Years ago, before I had kids, I was very shy and as I said I wasn't okay with who I was, […] I had problems, […] because my family are coloured people and here I am […]. I think […] the inclusion or the acceptance of society [towards] a person with a disability, comes when you have accepted yourself. Once you've accepted yourself, who you are and [of] what you are capable, and once you know that you have certain limitations, but you are as able as the next person or even more in some cases. Once you have found the place where you've accepted […] yourself and you've accepted that you are different, but you are okay with it, then it becomes easier for other people to

> accept you. You need to be the one. People need to know that it's okay to approach you. And when you are shy then people won't approach you (Deidre).

Drawing on her personal experience, Mitchell finds the discrimination against SWDs in general as something that cannot easily change as it is engrained within societal ableist norms. Thus, Mitchell expects SWDs to also come to terms with this reality, especially the fact that a sense of belonging and being fully included by their non-disabled peers will not fully be guaranteed to SWDs when they transition into universities.

> To me, for students that is the hardest part of being disabled, whether it's in an inclusive school setting or a university or in any sort of public environment. I mean I've been blind all my life and I've had 63 years to learn to mediate social situations when it comes to people responding to the fact that I can't see. And there are some days when [I think], "Oh dear, I don't belong here, I'm invisible, I'm sticking out like a sore thumb, people are walking around me, [and] they are not talking to me". I mean even in our society it's like that. We discriminate, we choose, we say "yes" to some people, "no" to other people. Whether you are short, or ugly, fat, tall, […] whatever […] group decided you don't fit in, people say that. Disabled students feel that sense of exclusion (Mitchell).

Other participants believe that a sense of belonging and full inclusion can be guaranteed to some SWDs, at the cost of others, depending on one's category or type of disability. Claudine, for instance, assumes that Deaf students who cannot lip read, as well as students with visual impairments are being incapacitated by their disabilities in friendship formation and sustenance, an assumption which takes away any form of responsibility from non-disabled students.

> Deaf students […] can communicate with other students because they are doing lip reading. If they do sign language interpreting, then it would be a problem for us because we don't have people going around with them the whole time […] to sign language and talk. […] That is the person who is the link between the other

> students and that one. Therefore, I know it's their human right to have a sign language [interpreter], but I think that is also a barrier. I really want to mention that […] if a Deaf person can do lip reading then he can be socially included because all the other students can understand him and if they don't understand, he can write [words] down and they can write [words] down. […] If that student can only use sign language interpreting [then] that is going to be a problem because other students […] don't know sign language […] and […] it can be a problem (Claudine).

> I think we have talked about the physical, now the sensory, and I think the sensory, specifically the partly sighted and the blind students, they've got a quite a problem with […] socialising. […] They've got friends and so on but are not [very] open [to] socialising with the other students (Claudine).

These conclusions are drawn from a non-disabled standpoint — from the viewpoint of what is most convenient for the non-disabled. However, if SWDs are to see their membership of, and involvement in, wider society as essential to their ethics and human flourishing, then they need to be able to see their own visage reflected in the norms of such communities. This requires social institutions to adapt what is understood as the norm to accommodate and reflect human diversity.

As Claudine commented, this does sometimes develop. SWDs at her campus are socially included with their non-disabled peers and they have healthy reciprocal relationships.

> You don't see SWDs in corners, even […] in the library spaces they will be part of teams. They are part of groups. They do groupwork with students without disabilities. You see, we have such a small population of SWDs here. He has […] five big tall guys taller than him. They are part of the team, there's no difference. You see blind students who are also part of groups (Claudine).

Campbell (2001: 44) has defined ableism as "a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human". Campbell (2008; Campbell 2009) further

argues that one of the negative consequences of ableism is encouraging the distancing of PWDs from each other. In Campbell's (2008) view, when SWDs are discouraged from socialising and making friendships amongst themselves this can reinforce ableist norms. Participants in the present study nevertheless were not very affirming of the idea of SWDs isolating themselves in any way from the non-disabled dominant society.

> Some of the SWDs when they come to the university there is this Disability Unit, so they end up isolating themselves from other students because they get more comfortable here through interacting with other students with disabilities and [then] […] they don't want to socialise or interact with other students. So, I don't know how to work that out so that we can have the Disability Unit, but at the same time, discourage these students with disabilities from only socialising amongst themselves here at the Unit. […] We have the lab with special computers […] [that] they should use […] only for academic purposes, but socially they have to go out, they must not [only spend time with] this group of students with disabilities […] (Richard).

> In terms of inclusion, […] we [have] tried to include our students in the main activities because that is really what we want. We do have a facility, the computer lab in the Disability Unit, where the students will come and meet and work here […]. So sometimes we'll just tell them, "No, go out! Go talk to other people" [*laughs*] (Joyce).

> We don't want a situation whereby it's going to be, "Oh, disabled students they go to the Disability Unit to get training in whatever". No, I am here. Yes, we will help them with the academic support, but as far as possible, they need to be out there with the other students […] (Debbie).

Studies have found that due to social exclusion faced by SWDs in HEIs some of these students see their Disability Units as safe havens where they can have meaningful interactions with peers with similar experiences. SWDs sampled in FOTIM's (2011: 77) study "indicated that the respective Disability Units have become a social meeting place for students with disabilities and social networks often develop in this manner". Also, as Deidre pointed out, having a safe haven can

sometimes have the knock-on effect of bringing non-disabled students into the Disability Unit space with positive implications for building bridges across the two communities.

> Often SWDs would come here because we don't allow other students into the lab. But often our students would come here, and they would ask for permission […] to take a friend or the study group into the lab to do work (Deidre).

Stokes *et al*. (2013: 5) have commented that "young people with a disability are not properly involved in decision-making at crucial points in their journeys to adulthood". Arguably, DUSMs' denying the capacity of SWDs to make informed choices regarding with whom they should or should not make friends is an example of treating PWDs as if they are not able to think for themselves. The expectation is that the person with a disability will be an autonomous, independent individual and any evidence of needing to be part of a group in one's likeness, is frowned upon. Ableism is reinforced by expecting SWDs to only make friends with non-disabled peers under the assumption that the former will learn good social skills from the latter (Battle 2000).

What privileges non-disabled people to thrive within this system is what Loja *et al*. (2013: 193) have defined as "the non-disabled gaze".

> Education is important in changing peoples' mindsets. I think […] also allowing them into our space because sometimes […] people say that they are just going to be interfering in your life and stuff like that. If someone asked me, "Do you need help going somewhere?" and I said, "No, I'm fine but if you want to walk with me you can, I don't mind". […] I think it's for them to just to be included so that we can also open up […] our lives so that they can be included in the activities that we do and teach them something new as well. I think it's only the fear. They are scared to approach us. I know there are many people that are very rude towards other sighted people who want to help […] and I don't necessarily agree with that. […] Some people are not friendly, they […] [refuse assistance by saying], "Don't help me, I'm fine" (Thandolwethu).

Apart from marking out the contours of ableism, this non-disabled gaze also invalidates impaired bodies as imperfect and abnormal (Hughes 1999; Mairs 1996). The resistance of non-disabled people to making decisions for PWDs resulted in the birth of the social model of disability through the hands on contributions of PWDs activists, who aimed to change the status quo by emphasising that "disability [has] nothing to do with the body. It is a consequence of "social oppression" (Oliver 1996: 35). In other words, through the social model of disability, PWDs had to join forces in collectively fighting against the oppression they had endured from the non-disabled community (Vehmas & Watson 2014). Sharing of experiences is one of the central elements of friendship formation and fighting a common struggle has had a unifying effect on PWDs (Annis 1987). The following participants embrace friendships among SWDs based on the (non-individualist) understanding that being in need of support is not shameful.

> So, we have a day house for disabled students where they can go with their friends or go and make some coffee or chill out. […] You didn't get an idea of what the campus is like because it's the holidays but during the term, if you went downstairs to the cafeteria it's a madhouse. It's hundreds and hundreds of people and they are all queuing for different things. If I were to go down there by myself as a blind person, I wouldn't know […] which queue was which. Later when I found the queue and I bought my sandwich and coffee, for instance, then I would need one hand to hold onto my dog or my can. How would I carry my coffee? So, it gets problematic from that [view]point. Or if you are in a wheelchair, […] you must wheel yourself while holding your coffee and your sandwich. So, we have a day house where there is a fridge [and] a microwave, and they can go and make their coffee, have their lunch, hang out with each other, work [or] just chat, [basically] do whatever they like (Mitchell).

> Our students get bored, […] you should see them when they are not here at the Disability Unit. Look at these [many] computers, […] they are so big, so you find them here. They always come here to the Unit because here they feel safe; they are around people who understand them, who know their needs and support their needs (Boitumelo).

As Turnbull & Ruef (1997) caution, without social interactions or friendships, people may experience isolation and loneliness. Social exclusion faced by SWDs results in the Disability Unit

becoming a place where SWDs can feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. This is a source of strength and comfort rather than needing to be interpreted as weakness or failure. Social relationships between PWDs have in fact given rise to considerable achievements. Ben-Moshe & Magaña (2014: 108), for instance, applaud PWDs for single-handedly playing an important role in the "historical emergence of the disability rights movement; a movement that also gave rise to the field of disability studies in terms of understanding disability as a form of identity and culture, and not a pathology or lack".

Ghai (2006) raises concerns about how non-disabled people not only silence the voices, but also ignore the presence of PWDs in social spaces. For Barnes (2017: 155), this shows how non-disabled persons' "reasoning about disability is clouded by a poor understanding of the lives of disabled people". The discrimination against SWDs in HEIs has partly been attributed to this. SWDs face many significant structural, cultural and attitudinal obstacles as a result of myths and ignorance concerning disability on the part of able-bodied people (Disability Rights Commission 2007). This places hurdles in the way of the formation and sustenance of friendships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers with the latter lacking insight into the lived experiences of the former. Abina alludes to this:

> I think what counts as full participation for me is being able to participate equally with any other student on an extra-curricular and academic level and I think the biggest barrier is the mindset of everyone involved. I think we as disabled students are misunderstood. Other people don't want to be open minded enough to […] try and understand, so I think for me that is the biggest barrier (Abina).

This lack of being open-minded on the part of non-disabled people has also been noted in the literature as evidenced in "personal questions asked by strangers, for instance, 'What happened to you?' or 'What's the matter with you?'" (Poore 2007: 329). Poore (2007) goes on to argue that this puts PWDs under pressure to constantly have to explain their difference and it explains

why SWDs may use their opportunities to build friendships in environments where they are shielded from these intrusions.

SWDs are often victims of what Campbell (2008: 1) refers to as "disablism" which is "a set of assumptions (conscious or unconscious) and practices that promote the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities". "Disablism" is a barrier to the formation of social relationships between SWDs and their non-disabled peers. For instance, as Tumelo notes below, non-disabled students who associate the academic success of SWDs with being spoon-fed by their lecturers reinforce disablism.

> The quality of education is the same, but the thing is that people know that if you are from the Martie Du Plessis Special School […][they think] this one has […] a problem and some people act like it's a disease or something […]. The quality is the same but the mentality of the people are not the same. They think that teachers from the inclusive schools are lenient to these students with disabilities […] [more so than] in normal schools. […] Even here at university they still think that the students with disabilities are getting things easier than them. It's the mentality. It's true facts because the students with disabilities come to me to complain: "[Do] you know what the students are saying out there? [They say] that you are giving us the questions prior to writing the tests. They feel like we are not studying; we are getting things easy and they are studying hard to make it but we [as disabled] […], we are getting things for free". It's not true because I am the one handling the exams and tests. How can I let papers leak before the test? I can't because there is confidentiality; they write at the same time with other students (Tumelo).

Ware (2003) is of the view that those who identify as non-disabled, naturally have what she calls "nondisabled privilege and power" which results in imbalanced power relations in their interactions with PWDs. As such, Ware (2003) calls upon non-disabled people to actively utilise strategies to release their power which emanates from their "expert" and/or nondisabled status. Nevertheless, as the data from the present study shows, non-disabled students' actions in their interactions with their SWDs peers reveal the former are not yet prepared to relinquish their power emanating from their non-disabled identity as evidenced below.

> It's also the perception of people, who deal with […] or see people with disabilities, even in universities […] we [are] struggling […]and I'm sure even everywhere else, where you look at a disabled person, you don't know what to do with them [because] […] you don't know what their needs are. […]Some people even think [that] if you [are] disabled […] you are intellectually impaired as well. And it's not true (Elizabeth).

> Inclusive education to me is […] involving the students with disabilities, […]seeing them, seeing the person before you […]see their disability. Because I think in most cases the way people treat the students with disabilities, it's like they are focusing on their disabilities rather than the person as a student (Deidre).

The above participants' remarks show how the non-disabled university community who operate from an individualistic standpoint find it difficult or even impossible to come to terms with how they can best relate to SWDs on an equal basis as the former tend not to see the latter as full humans whose needs are worth addressing.

African societies which might uphold *Ubuntu* values, are not immune to these failings. For example in Zimbabwe the Shona and the Ndebele ethnic groups' cultures associate disability with "witchcraft, promiscuity by the mother during pregnancy, punishment by ancestral spirits or by God, evil spirits, etc." (UNICEF 1997: 78-79 see also Department of Social Services 1982; Addison 1986). These beliefs lead to the perpetuation of "a culture of exclusion" (Barton 1997: 232) through exacerbating the isolation, discrimination and prejudice against PWDs. This is especially true when non-disabled members of societies react with "with horror, fear, anxiety, distaste, hostile and patronising behaviour towards children and adolescents with disabilities" (UNICEF 1997: 79). Participants in the present study noted that these negative beliefs are also prevalent in South African HEIs and are upheld by non-disabled students. As Claudine's comments highlight, the disabled person evokes fear in the non-disabled when the latter sees the prospect of themselves in that person.

> Well, if you see that person, […]the quadriplegia student, he was a boy in grade 11 – a healthy boy and he dived into the swimming pool and he broke his neck and he was a quad after that. Some people don't even want to think of that – that it can also happen to you. You can go walk outside and a car can run you over and then you can be disabled. Therefore, they fear that person [because they realise it] can also happen to them. […][…] That is the reason why some people don't want to be friends with a person with disability. [At] our disability events we give that information to people so that they can have the knowledge, so that they can see [they can] be friends with a person with a disability. You don't see the disability anymore, [you see] a person, that's all about awareness (Claudine).

Yet *Ubuntu* values call on us, precisely, to see that regardless of what we may *want*, we *are* "part of that person". This is the fundamental recognition that *Ubuntu* ethics calls us to acknowledge. The interpretation of disability "through the dominant culture's non-disabled lens" (Biklen 2010: 338) leaves no room for non-disabled students to hear this call to recognition of the self in the other and to discard negative assumptions about disability in order to gain a full understanding of the lived experiences of SWDs.

Globally, PWDs have struggled with a corporeal identity that is predominately defined by a medical model that reduces the disabled body to abnormality (Zitzelsberger 2005). In many societies, this has been attributed to the non-disabled who misuse their privilege to create, validate and perpetuate attitudes, beliefs and stigma that position PWDs in a negative light (UNICEF 1997). Thandolwethu highlights the importance of the non-disabled university community to also take the initiative of learning and broadening their knowledge about other diverse categories and types of disabilities, if they are to avoid reinforcing the distorted representation of all disabilities as abnormal and physical in nature.

> Lack of education, I think people just assume things about us. I don't know if they are scared of asking or what, [but] they just assume. I think they think that all disabled people are from the same branch, because the person is in a wheelchair,

> they are all in a wheelchair. I don't think they understand the concept of disability. […] There are different forms of disability. They probably think that they are all the same and they can do nothing for themselves. That's what I think (Thandolwethu).

As the social model of disability proposes, the meaning of disability is socially constructed (Oliver 1990). By this social modellists mean to say that PWDs do not necessarily see themselves as abnormal nor disabled, but rather as "individuals who are different by virtue of an impairment" (Llewellyn & Hogan 2000: 160). Thus, for PWDs, disability only actually comes about following their interaction with an oppressive society (Llewellyn & Hogan 2000). Within South African HEIs, some non-disabled people are part of this oppressive environment and are the ones who are imposing a disability on SWDs by not wanting to make reciprocal friendships with them. Rieser (2006) cautions that these attitudes can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, acting as a barrier to the full participation of SWDs on campuses.

As Annis (1987: 349) observes, one of the important epistemic aspects of friendship, is that "a friendship requires getting to know the person". Some DUSMs hope that awareness raising activities which involve both SWDs and non-disabled students can create an enabling environment for both parties to get to know each other better, thus potentially resulting in friendship formation.

> So, with Casual Day we try and do a fun [activity] […]. This year we are going to do a fun walk where we are asking everybody to join in on the walk but they must walk with a student with a disability to see it as a learning experience, [so that they may] spend time with a student with a disability, [be able to] ask questions [and] […] learn like that (Lilian).

In contrast, some participants are sceptical of the effectiveness of awareness raising initiatives in guaranteeing reciprocal friendships between SWDs and non-disabled students as evident from the latter's low turnout rates to these events, unless there are incentives.

> I would not say it is [about] students with disabilities. I would say it's a student thing in general. If you have an event and it's not a bash, it's very difficult to get them there […]. If the students know that they might get a free t-shirt and hat, [and] something to eat for "mahala" (meaning "for free"), then they might attend. Otherwise, it's not easy to get students [there]. I don't think there is any other reason. [The reason] could be […] that they are afraid of stigmatisation [because of their disabilities]. […] We try and be open, as much as possible, to de-stigmatise how disabled students see themselves […] [and] we [also] try […] to respect confidentiality. It's very important (Timothy).

> I don't even know, if there would ever be a day when you would have a disability and you would just be included in everything and nobody would look at you funny or say something funny about you. […] When [an invitation] says disability awareness, we find that people don't come. We literally have to go and ask people to please come because we've invited an [external] speaker […] and […] it's embarrassing to have invited somebody and […] [there is no audience]. So, the thing is once it says disability, then the other people, the ones without a disability, they're not interested [to attend] because […] it's not something that affects them (Deidre).

Central to caring, within friendships, is that it involves "caring for our friend and being concerned about his or her welfare" (Annis 1987: 349). Beverly narrates how she benefited immensely from having a former university friend whom she learnt a lot from and whom also rightfully reciprocated this friendship through absolute caring, as follows:

> I've got a question for you: "Do you have a friend with disability?". If you have a friend with a disability you should know what we are talking about. The power of giving back and you seeing that person develop into a grown-up person, a mature person, to have a fulfilled life. I think there's nothing more that you can offer when you are students. You see that person from a first-year [student]. I was lucky to have a partially sighted friend as well in my class more than 22 years ago. We didn't have all the support that we have now and taking that person through a four-year cycle of my life really had an impact. If you see it once and then you feel it, giving that back to somebody else who does not have that is difficult to talk about it, because it might be writing that and propagating that into your life (Beverly).

Although some friendships amongst SWDs happen for legitimate reasons mainly associated with how these students are excluded by their non-disabled counterparts, this is not to say that friendships and solidarity between the former and the latter cannot exist. As argued by Bryan & Myers (2006), universities have a responsibility to create conducive environments in which non-disabled people can learn from SWDs. This is because friendships, interpersonal connections and belonging between PWDs and non-disabled people are critical to a fulfilling life for both parties (Pottie & Sumarah 2004).

Conclusion

Although discarding solitariness in favour of solidarity is necessary in achieving a society grounded in *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism, my findings have shown how most participants shift the blame on SWDs for failure to form friendships and fruitful relationships with their non-disabled peers. Informed by Western values of individualism and autonomy, SWDs are expected to conform to oppressive HEI environments by bearing the onus of initiating friendships. *Ubuntu* values suggest that, "an individual realises her true self by respecting the value of friendship" (Metz 2007b: 540). This shows how every member in an *Ubuntu* communalist society has the responsibility for cultivating friendly and reciprocal relations with other fellow-community members for the sustenance of harmonious ties within the community. In contrast, the framing of friendship in the Western individualist paradigm gives precedence to such concepts as personal chemistry, individual choice and autonomy, thus giving more power to non-disabled people to normalise their discrimination against SWDs and their individual choice to form or not form friendships with SWDs.

Some non-disabled persons, informed by the Western value of independence, are not encouraged to challenge their mistrust of the ability of PWDs to make valuable contributions to the success of social endeavours. From a Western individualist standpoint, this does not necessarily mean that an individualist person is passive, but rather that they are socialised to view and conduct

themselves as an autonomous, self-reliant, responsible human being who should always be competitive in order to make achievements (Ho & Chiu 1994). Hence, this chapter has shown that non-disabled persons' negative attitudes serve to exclude and marginalise SWDs from participation with success in HEIs (Chivers 2009). In traditional *Ubuntu* societies, those with power (as in the sense of possession of material and other resources) used it for the benefit of their less advantaged or able fellow community members. It is against this background that I call for a paradigm shift which moves away from a Western individualist understanding of social inclusion of PWDs towards an *Ubuntu* communalist mindset relating to SWDs. To achieve this paradigm shift, I propose that *Ubuntu* communalist values can offer a new lens through which to see the work of creating enabling campus environments.

Chapter 7: Human Dignity, Respect and Acceptance

Introduction

The development of the modern concept of human dignity from a Western individualistic standpoint owes a great deal to the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant (Bayefsky 2013). Within a Kantian worldview, every individual should "act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end" (Kant 1785: 429 see also Hakim 2015). Central to the Kantian understanding of human dignity is the "idea of dignity as autonomy; that is, the idea that to treat people with dignity is to treat them as autonomous individuals able to choose their destiny" (McCrudden 2008: 659-660). In other words, the Kantian view holds that "humans have a dignity insofar as they are capable of autonomous deliberation" (Metz 2010: 85). Thus, within Kantianism, actions are wrong to the extent that they degrade a person's capacity for autonomy (Metz 2007b). In other words, Kantian ideals place significance on the form of human dignity which enjoins individuals to avoid simply using, or rather abusing, each other no matter what the cause may be, and it places moral obligations on people to respect each other's right to autonomy.

Kant's contributions have influenced the dominant Western normative human rights discourse (Metz 2010 see also McCrudden 2008). Because of Kant's contributions, human dignity is now recognised as an important human right (Baillie & Matiti 2013). The protection of human dignity has its roots in such international human rights instruments as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations 1948). It is argued that the UDHR draws heavily on the Kantian conceptualisation of human dignity (McCrudden 2008). Article 1 of the UDHR recognises the inherent dignity of human beings, stating that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (United Nations 1948). The UDHR provisions have been built into the laws of many countries (Baillie & Matiti 2013). Through relevant state authorities, these laws acknowledge the duty to recognise, respect and protect inherent human dignity as an inalienable right for their citizens (Shah 1998).

The statement "someone has dignity" implies that that particular person ought to be recognised as a bearer of human rights, and thus that their human dignity ought not to be violated (Graumann 2014: 484). This is why one's human dignity is often referred to as an inviolable or inalienable right (Shah 1998). Human dignity is presented in literature "not as an individual attribute or a special right but as the founding moral principle of an adequate human rights framework that is truly inclusive and universal" (Graumann 2014: 484).

The quest for PWDs to be treated with human dignity is well documented. At the centre of the rise of many social movements, including the disability rights movement in the US, for instance, is the struggle for PWDs to have their dignity respected and upheld in mainstream society (Winter 2003). What sustains these movements is the aspiration amongst members to dismantle oppressive and marginalising societal practices towards PWDs, and subsequently attain integration and full inclusion into mainstream society (Winter 2003). Among other things, disability activists and advocates associate the exclusion of PWDs from mainstream education with the violation of human dignity (Graumann 2014). Through its *White Paper 6,* South Africa's Department of Education makes a commitment to implement the country's Constitutional "values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms" in order to achieve an inclusive twenty-first century education and training system which creates an enabling environment where "all learners, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest" (DoE 1997: 11).

The fact that many PWDs do not have equal access to education and experience worse socioeconomic outcomes and poverty than their non-disabled peers necessitated the call for disability to be understood as both a human rights and development issue (WHO & the World Bank 2011). For the UNCRPD, discrimination against any person on the basis of disability amounts to a violation of the inherent dignity and worth of that person (United Nations 2006). The promotion and protection of PWDs' rights to human dignity by states aims at enabling the equal participation of this group in all aspects of mainstream society in both developing and

developed countries (United Nations 2006). Central to this Convention is Article 7 which aims to ensure that PWDs have full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers (United Nations 2006).

Additionally, one of the guiding principles that underlies the UNCRPD is obliging States Parties to respect the "inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons with disabilities" (United Nations 2006: 3). By placing emphasis on individual autonomy — the pillar of a Kantian worldview — it follows that the UNCRPD embraces the individualistic human rights perspective (Chataika & McKenzie 2013). Skarstad (2018: 30) argues that, under this perspective, the UNCRPD "sees all individuals as having autonomy". This might have negative implications for the full inclusion of PWDs, as, for them, meaningful inclusion or participation is achieved through the removal of societal or institutional disabling barriers. This requires some form of interdependence through cooperation of the whole society, particularly non-disabled people whom the UNCRPD seems to relegate by emphasising that PWDs can fully exercise their autonomy without any constraints which might not always be true.

Arguing from an *Ubuntu* standpoint, Jolley (2011) notes that every individual's human dignity should be valued and respected for their own sake regardless of their social standing, gender, or race. The African *Ubuntu*-oriented approach offers a useful augmentation to the Western Kantian conception of human dignity (Metz 2010 see also Metz 2007a). As Taylor (2011: 25) explains, "*Ubuntu* does not rely on people being worthy but merely on a person being a person whose 'personhood' is validated within the context of relationship with all other people". In an *Ubuntu*-oriented society, one's human dignity emanates from the network of relationships within one's entire community (Botman 2000). One's dignified existence emanates from leading a genuinely "communal — way of life" in which one exhibits solidarity with others (Metz 2011b: 544). This imposes an obligation on all community members to enjoy their rights with responsibilities as well as honouring their mutual obligations to do good to other community members (Taylor 2011).

Furthermore, as Bennett (2011: 48) argues, the "Western conception of dignity envisages the individual as autonomously the right-bearer, whereas *Ubuntu* sees the individual as embedded in a community". *Ubuntu* therefore challenges the Western individualistic positioning of an individual as the primary focus of ethical attention (Mbiti 1992). Seen in this light, *Ubuntu* rather favours paying more attention to "balancing the contesting values of community and individual autonomy" (Van Niekerk 2013: 68). This is why, under an African *Ubuntu*-oriented society, "what is right is what connects people together; what separates people is wrong" (Verhoef & Michel 1997: 397).

The conventional Western individualist understanding of the right to human dignity as universally applicable ignores the important reality that the exercise of a right is something that is context-specific, varying significantly from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (McCrudden 2008). *Ubuntu* values offer a context-relevant approach to realising the rights of PWDs' to human dignity within the South African setting. As others have argued, "various approaches to disability that may work well in the Western world may not apply in an African setting" (Chataika & McKenzie 2013: 161). In this chapter I argue from the point of view of an African conception of human rights embedded in the spirit of *Ubuntu,* therefore departing from the Kantian individualised conceptualisation of human dignity rooted in a Western individualist discourse of autonomy (Chataika & McKenzie 2013). Although both *Ubuntu* and conventional Western individualistic human rights approaches recognise the value of human dignity, *Ubuntu* ethics offers something new and important by moving away from an individualised conception of the person. The focus of the chapter is on *Ubuntu*'s values of human dignity, mutual respect and acceptance. The chapter asks what makes SWDs feel disrespected and/or accepted and welcomed on campus. The finding is that the undermining of a person's dignity and being disrespected play themselves out in two specific, although highly related, ways. Firstly, disrespect manifests in concrete realities, such as the lack of appropriate toilet facilities, and the way in which artefacts such as wheelchairs are treated by the non-disabled. Secondly, disrespect arises from prejudiced attitudes and erroneous assumptions about PWDs which often go

unchallenged. The value that an *Ubuntu* ethic places on mutuality and interaction offers a framework for ableist world views, assumptions and practices to be challenged and eroded.

Disrespect in concrete practices

Inaccessible toilets

Francois Strydom, director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at UFS, which offers a range of academic support services for staff and students, has called upon South African universities to create what he refers to as "equitable university environments" (Dell 2018). Achieving such environments requires these institutions to design their physical, social and intellectual architecture "to provide all students with an environment in which they feel at home and are able to reach their potential" (Dell 2018).

Central to any human being's ability to function in a public institution without having their dignity compromised is the need for accessible toilet facilities. Under South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act*, provisions 4.12.1 to 4.12.4 provide for toilet facilities in public buildings and educational and workplace environments that are accessible to wheelchair users. Despite these provisions, most educational institutions in South Africa still do not provide toilets that are accessible to wheelchair users (DoE 2007; Losinsky *et al*. 2003; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017; Chiwandire 2017).

Participants in the present study criticised the poor design and construction of toilet facilities on campuses that make it difficult, for example, for wheelchair users to have access to dignified toilet facilities.

> If a wheelchair user person can't get to the toilet, then nothing is accessible, whether it's in a hotel or in a campus dormitory or anywhere else, and that's not universal accessibility. For most universities to change or to build a wheelchair accessible toilet is a battle, like a battle from hell. Even if you go to your university you will see, if there is a ramp, most students will walk on the ramp than the stairs. You go to a hotel there are only 4 rooms that are wheelchair accessible. It is so stupid to have that because if I have a team of 8 wheelchair tennis players or 12 it means now I have to put them in different hotels because only 4 can stay in one hotel, so very few people understand universal accessibility. [Universal accessibility means that] you don't have to build a toilet for a person with a disability, a wheelchair accessible toilet with a room that's 3 by 3 metres. [Rather], you can take that 3 by 3 metres and every toilet you build instead of making it 90 cm and 1 and a half meter so that any wheelchair person, including non-disabled people, can also use that toilet. Why do you [*referring to a university*] have one toilet for disabled people? Why can't you [*referring to a university*] have 10 toilets for everybody and anybody to use? (Elizabeth).

As noted by Agarwal (2012: 56), "access is the key to inclusion". Without access to appropriate facilities, wheelchair users face being inconvenienced by having to wait for a long time to use the one accessible toilet that might be on offer, which would not be the case if universities adopted the principle of universal design: toilets that are accessible to both wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users as a matter of principle.

> No new building should be built without 10 wheelchair accessible toilets. To have one disabled toilet where somebody sits and smokes for a half an hour already, listening to stories, or sleep, or the domestic workers or cleaners put their cleaning stuff in there because it's a nice storage place [inconveniences wheelchair users who need to use such an accessible toilet most]. This also makes it difficult for two wheelchair users to use one accessible toilet at the same time, yet 10 non-wheelchair users can easily walk into any toilet. It's the perception, it's how you plan it, and how you execute it, and that is the most important thing (Elizabeth).

South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act*'s Part S2 on facilities to be provided for PWDs provides that:

> Where, in terms of regulation P1, toilet facilities are required and the building is one requiring facilities for persons with disabilities in terms of regulation S1, an adequate number of such facilities shall be suitable for use by persons with disabilities: provided that toilet facilities shall not be required in any such building classified as H3 in terms of regulation A20 (Keuter 2008: 121).

In light of these obligations, some participants voiced their concerns about how the unavailability or inadequate number of wheelchair-accessible toilets on campuses violates the rights of wheelchair user students, thus contravening the provisions of South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act*.

> There are many new Further Education and Training (FET) college campuses that are being built now in various places, and it will be interesting to go and see if any of them have wheelchair accessible toilets. If they only have one wheelchair accessible toilet, then that's disgusting. Just so they can say: oh, we've got a wheelchair accessible toilet. Just one, really? Even if there's two wheelchair user students, it doesn't really matter. You're going to be in trouble if you have 10 wheelchair user students wanting to use that one wheelchair accessible toilet at the same time. Then we actually have a case against the government, [because] that's the discrimination. Why can't all the campus toilets be accessible, because it's not going to cost you more. It's going to cost you less, because the approach is wrong from the beginning. That is why it's costing them [*referring to universities*] more (Elizabeth).

> Old buildings should be renovated in such a way to make them more accessible, [and this could include having more] ramps, enough parking, rest rooms facilities, and really accessible rest rooms facilities, not stupid stuff, because sometimes [*laughs*] I've seen in some places that they take a normal bathroom and they stick a disability thing on it and put a railing or something and it's not wheelchair accessible at all (Andries).

Not building adequate toilets on the assumption of low future prospects of enrolling more wheelchair users forces the currently enrolled wheelchair users to have undignified experiences on campuses. Accessible toilet facilities "can make a college accessible to the prospective disabled student, the absence of which denies them that education and their later employment

opportunities" (Agarwal 2012: 56). The availability of such core facilities as modified toilets is central in achieving inclusion for SWDs in educational institutions (Konza 2008).

Disablist assumptions

Van Aswegen & Shevlin (2019: 638-639) discuss how the concept of disablism "relates to the construction of disability, whereby everyday practices of society are seen to perpetuate oppressive structures upon those who identify with or are categorised as being disabled". In this study, some of my participants warned the university non-disabled community against reinforcing disablist assumptions, especially against wheelchair user students. Fiona cautions against pushing PWDs on a wheelchair without their permission as possibly being demeaning.

> We shouldn't feel sorry for persons with disabilities. I'm very involved in disability sport so I spend a lot of time with athletes, and when I walk with wheelchair user students I just walk next to them. I don't push them, I don't touch their wheelchairs unless that person says please push me. If you start pushing the wheelchair without the wheelchair user asking you, you are saying to them I don't believe you can push your own wheelchair. [I recall] at the Berlin games in China, we were on the Great Wall of China, — we had one day to go and relax a bit and go do tourist stuff. And there was one girl in a wheelchair and this other guy started pushing her, and she literally turned around and she smacked him on his hand, and she said to him: don't touch my wheelchair. She was really angry with him, and this guy was just like, 'woah!' (Fiona).

As Caiola (2018) notes, non-disabled people's "drive to be helpful [without being requested by PWDs], may not always jive with the definition of dignity in the world of a person with a disability. Managing as much as possible on their own is often one of the ways individuals with disabilities feel empowered".

Respecting wheelchair users for Catherine should start with little things, such as not treating one's wheelchair as a mere object or mobility device, but rather as the actual user's body, and then act with respect accordingly.

> We also work a lot with Faculties, so we will go and do disability training with lecturers not just on how they should support students with disabilities in classrooms, but even that you don't touch someone's wheelchair, because it's actually like leaning on someone's body (Catherine).

For Joyce, assuming that wheelchair users do not want to attend social events amounts to disrespecting this group, with non-disabled event organisers on campus holding events in venues which are not wheelchair accessible.

> Recently we actually spoke about the one person, it was a lecturer. She said she attended a conference organised in one of the venues right at the bottom of the Sports Admin. She is a blind wheelchair user and she laid a complaint to the university about the venue [not being] wheelchair friendly. Subsequent to that complaint, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) sent a communication advising future event organisers to ensure that all events should be held in wheelchair accessible venues (Joyce).

Signage

Article 9 on Accessibility of the UNCRPD oblige state parties "to provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms" (United Nations 2006: 9). As Thandolwethu pointed out, universities in South Africa have on the whole not met this requirement. To have to ask the non-disabled what the name of a building is constantly undermines the dignity of the person with a disability. Signage that cannot be read by a blind person, for example, is a good example of an environment that disables.

> I'm not sure if you've been around the university, but there is a lot of things that are not in Braille for blind people. Like the signs, especially lecture halls, or lecture names, are not in Braille, so they are not accessible for blind students. So [as a Disability Unit] we are pushing for the university to provide Braille signage in lecture halls and other buildings because it's an issue for blind students to hav[e] to ask directions to their class from sighted people. If you don't know the

> directions, you can end up being in the wrong class. We want our blind students to have a sense of independence so that they don't have to rely on others (Thandolwethu).

As Miles (2002: 118) comments, "difficulties arising from impairments are largely due to the oppressive way in which society functions and environments are (mis)designed".

Language and terminology

According to Kuppers (2004), PWDs are often vulnerable to the misuse of language and terminology that labels and stereotypes them. Such disempowering language is often referred to as "ableist language", defined by Grey & Bischoff (2016) as "any word or phrase that devalues people who have physical or mental disabilities. Its appearance often stems not from any intentional desire to offend, but from our innate sense of what it means to be normal". Seyama (2009) cautions non-disabled people against using words that emphasise the inabilities of PWDs, as these words inadvertently lead to categorisation, stigmatisation and discrimination which subsequently results in PWDs being seen as different, abnormal or inadequate. Similarly, Oliver (1996) warns non-disabled people to be careful of the language they use, to avoid using negative terms as language has disabling effects on PWDs. In the South African context, Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) has also warned that terminology can reinforce discrimination against particular groups in society (DPSA 2001).

Kasiram & Subrayen's (2013) study of students with visual impairments at a South African university found that these students were labelled as fools and incapable human beings by the non-disabled university community. According to Caiola (2018), one of the best ways in which non-disabled people can successfully interact with PWDs in a manner which respects their dignity is for the former to learn to use empowering language. To learn such empowering language, non-disabled people need to let PWDs "lead the way by defining how and when help would be appreciated. Ask what kind of language they prefer in reference to themselves, and remember that their identity extends beyond the disability" (Caiola 2018).

> We have a student with albinism [who] has only been here for a week. I do believe that there are a lot of cultural stereotypes against her, but I've spoken to her guardian, I've spoken to her lecturer, I've spoken to her as well, and made her feel welcome. I've told her to please come and see me as I'm in charge of students with disabilities, but she personally doesn't see herself as disabled, so I can't force her to come and speak to me. I can't force her to be part of my little chickens that I look after so it's up to her (Amanda).

Here Amanda describes her positive contribution to trying to dispel cultural stereotypes and be an advocate for SWDs, referring to SWDs as her "little chickens". This form of language could be said to be empowering, especially if one looks at the extension of this metaphor in how a hen looks after its little ones. Given that *Ubuntu* places emphasis on extended family structures, Amanda's narrative highlights how some DUSMs are playing a parental role to ensure a barrier-free environment for the social inclusion of their SWDs. In most of my interviews with both Heads of Disability Units and DUSMs, this was evident through how they kept on referring to SWDs registered with the formers' Disability Units as "my students". Given the potential ambiguity presented in the above Amanda's narrative, this statement could also be interpreted negatively especially taking into consideration of how this participant is referring to SWDs as her "little chickens" is not respectful. Davis (1997: 1) reminds us that the viewing PWDs as not human beings, but possession has historically seen the dignity of this group being violated through being "isolated, incarcerated, observed, written about, operated on, instructed, implanted, regulated, treated, institutionalised, and controlled to a degree probably unequal to that experienced by any other minority group".

Disrespectful attitudes and assumptions

Drawing on her lived experiences, Morris (1991) discusses how persons with visible disabilities, including herself, often face stereotypical assumptions from the non-disabled people, whom, she argues, do not want to relate to the former as equal members of society. To elaborate on this, she argues that "disability frightens people. They don't want to think that this is something which could happen to them" (Morris 1991: 192).

Research has shown that the majority non-disabled people imagine the experience of PWDs, particularly wheelchair users, to be much more negative and difficult than it actually is (*Disabled World* 2012). The majority of these non-disabled people seem to erroneously assume that a wheelchair user leads a "completely dependent and extremely difficult" life, although in reality this is false (*Disabled World* 2012). Tumelo and Julia, for instance, deconstruct the common myth held by non-disabled people of associating wheelchairs users with incapability. For both these participants, the wheelchair alone is rather adequate in giving wheelchair users the independence they require for being able to be mobile in the first place.

> Being in a wheelchair does not mean that I am unable to do what non-disabled people do. I'm also able to do what non-disabled persons can do (Tumelo).

> So, to me, that always comes back to the independence part, because I feel as a person with a disability, you don't want people to feel sorry for you. Because then the mindset will not change. Once they feel sorry for you, they want to do everything for you, push your wheelchair and all those silly things. It's that stigma that people with disabilities always need help, and they can't do stuff by themselves — that kind of thing. I don't see the point. Don't you want people to see you as a functioning person? Why do you want people to feel sorry for you? I am disabled, [but] it's just [that] I can't walk. I've got my own way of getting around. So why are you feeling sorry for me just because I can't walk? (Julia).

Haskins (1999: 122) defines culture shock as "a feeling of impotence that results from the inability to deal with the environment because of unfamiliarity with cognitive aspects and role-playing skills". Culture shock in the context of educational settings "might occur when one has expectations of one behaviour and gets something completely different" (Zhao 2007: 129). Non-disabled people respond with culture shock when they first encounter a person with a disability. Mutual respect is undermined when the non-disabled are ignorant of the fact that PWDs "consistently report a quality of life as good as, or sometimes even better than, that of non-disabled people. Impairment usually makes little difference to quality of life" (*BBC News* 2014).

According to the *BBC News* (2014), the interactions between PWDs and their non-disabled peers are mainly characterised by the concept of "disability paradox" which is evident from the way non-disabled people often feel sorry for PWDs because they imagine it must be miserable to be disabled.

> Because of their poor understanding of the lived experiences of PWDs, in their everyday thoughts non-disabled people seem to associate disability with failure, dependency and not being able to do things (*BBC News*, 2014). It is not uncommon for the non-disabled to go as far as to say they would prefer to be dead rather than being disabled (*BBC News*, 2014). I've seen it many times where there is a fear of people who just don't know how to handle certain things. You know like that lecturer I spoke about who doesn't know that there is a blind student in his class and didn't know what to do (Francois).

For Francois, the negative attitudes and assumptions in some universities are so engrained in the non-disabled community that respecting and celebrating SWDs' differences and individuality is a challenge.

> When each and every[one] who is having an issue with a disabled student, like a lecturer, they jump and get frightened: how can I help this student? No, Sir, just relax, they are just like any other students. You even get some designers, management staff who do not understand that students with disabilities are just the same as us. It's just that they do things different (Tumelo).

Tumelo's view can be open to criticism, because in reality it is not true that SWDs are like any other students. Rather, I believe that differences do exist, but the question is how the non-disabled community respond to them, in which in this case non-disabled people respond to PWDs from a medical deficit approach.

Rather than feeling uncomfortable around PWDs or feeling sorry for them, the more productive approach of relating to this group with dignity would be for non-disabled persons to treat PWDs just like they would treat anyone else, as doing so will make PWDs feel honoured and respected

(Caiola 2018). Below, it appears that Claudine finds this difficult or impossible as she focuses on the presumed limitations of SWDs' lack of independence which her Disability Unit has to fix first in order for SWDs to be on the same level of functioning as their non-disabled peers.

> There are students with disabilities who really need support to get to a level of independence, and we have already helped them to that level of independence, and that is our motto. We have to help our students with disabilities to get independent so that if they leave the university, they can be able to cope on their own. First and second years are so depending on us, and we are trying to get them to a point that they can say: 'oh I can be one of the big group because I'm independent. I believe in myself' (Claudine).

Claudine's putting so much emphasis on focusing on "helping" SWDs to be independent to the extent of making this the motto of the Disability Unit is disabling in the sense that it creates and reinforces an erroneous assumption that all SWDs come to HEIs lacking independence, and thus giving DUSMs credit which they do not deserve. Similarly, Boitumelo seems caught between "spoon feeding" and "going the extra mile" when describing how her institution's Disability Unit supports students with visual impairments as follows:

> I work closely with visually impaired students, and they will say that at other universities you don't get your study material in Braille, they only edit the material and there is a printing room where you have to do everything yourself as a student even from like scratch. Here at the Unit we prepare all their study material and it sometimes makes me feel like we are spoon-feeding them. I think it stands out, like we go [the] extra mile for them. Last year we won an award as one of the best Disability Units in South Africa, so currently we are the best in South Africa (Boitumelo).

When the non-disabled responds with pity, this further disempower SWDs.

> You know other students on campus don't know how to behave around students with disabilities. Non-disabled students always pity students with disabilities. They always say: 'no you can't do that. I will do it for you' (Tumelo).

The unfair discrimination against PWDs in mainstream society stems mainly from widespread ignorance and stereotypes held by non-disabled people which subsequently imposes barriers to participation on the part of PWDs (Pathways 2018). Deidre describes the double-discrimination that she is subjected to by non-disabled people who fear that her disability is contagious and prevents her from functioning independently.

> You have to consciously and constantly work at being included in things when you have a disability. It's almost like they're scared that either your disability would rub off on them, or they think that you're not capable of doing anything. And so, you know, when you do something, then it's like: 'oh, it's amazing that you have this problem, but you are still able to do this'. I find it really exhausting (Deidre).

An aspect of the colonial legacy in many African countries has been the provision of inferior education for learners with disabilities rooted in a medicalised approach to disability (Giffard-Lindsay 2007; Fidzani & Mthombeni 2009; Obuye 2014). The demise of colonialism did not mark the end of this approach to addressing the needs of learners with disabilities. In many countries, religion plays a role in shaping dominant attitudes towards disability. In Nigeria, for instance, a study by Etieyibo & Omiegbe (2016) found that disability beliefs and attitudes towards PWDs are influenced by the country's dominant religions, namely — Christianity and Islam. Both religions still "exert powerful influence on many Nigerians not only when it comes to negative attitudes towards people with disabilities but also in their engagement in highly discriminatory practices against them" (Etieyibo & Omiegbe 2016: 5). Makamure (2017) criticises Zimbabwe's Christian community for perpetuating negative attitudes towards PWDs by associating disabilities with sinning. Likewise, a study of 31 individuals with epilepsy or physical impairment in Guinea-Bissau by Otte *et al*. (2013) reported that attitudes towards disability among these participants was predominantly shaped by their Christian and/or Islamic religious backgrounds.

While people coming together in a shared religious context might provide valuable support for students at university, as Francois's comments pointed out, such communities are not immune to prejudice, and can therefore serve as yet another platform for exclusion and the perpetuation of harmful assumptions about disability, such as that disabled people need to be "fixed" or "healed".

> So, my understanding of inclusive education is about creating an environment that is welcoming and conducive for all students, especially those with disabilities. So non-disabled people are helpful as well, and then there are other people who are just trying to pray for them [*students with disabilities*]. Many students with disabilities will tell you that someone has stopped them wanting to pray for them. It's people who are religious that want them to be healed (Francois).

Ubuntu and mutual respect

Ubuntu is manifested in one's actions when interacting with others (Chibba 2013). Central to *Ubuntu* within these interactions is "when we approach a person and ask ourselves how we can act in a way that will increase their humanity and in turn our humanity too" (Chibba 2013). Nutbrown (1996) associates respectful educators as those who respect their students and will make efforts to make it easy to work with these students. From an *Ubuntu* standpoint, mutual respect is realised through acknowledging each other in mutual interactions: "people are distinctive beings, able to recognise and acknowledges one another through mutual encounter and cultural integration" (Cilliers 2008: 4). Ngubane-Mokiwa (2018: 1) argues that "*Ubuntu* concerns the way in which people treat each other". In light of this, one of the ways in which one could see if there is an *Ubuntu* ethic among community members is by focusing on their social interactions.

Mutual encounter

One of the ways in which universities can foster mutual respect is by facilitating, rather than shying away from, occasions for mutual encounter. Fiona recalls how one residence Head was

not only concerned about how a new SWD would adjust to residence life, but with how the non-disabled majority would cope with having a student with a disability in their midst.

> I've had residence Heads [who] when they had students with disabilities for the first time have had to call me nervously saying: 'how is this student going to cope in the residence, what are the other students going to do?' And at the end of it, without exception, the residence Head will come and say we learned so much from this student, for other students to live with a blind student for the first time, for the other students to live with a deaf student, to live with somebody who has dyslexia, to live with somebody who is in a wheelchair, to live with somebody who doesn't have all of their limbs, that's how you learn really, is to move amongst them. So for us to place them in residences all around campus is good for them, because they socialise and they are involved with other students. But it's even better for those students to learn from them (Fiona).

By "moving amongst them", as Fiona puts it, the non-disabled are able to humanise the "other" and to contest their own false assumptions — thus becoming more humanised themselves.

Self-advocacy

According to Chataika & McKenzie (2013), self-advocacy is seen as something that is positive in many traditional African societies. Traditional forms of African democracy operates in the form of a (sometimes extremely lengthy) discussions by a group of people (with some or other common interest), whether it be an *indaba* (open discussion by a group of people with some or other common interest), a *lekgotla* (discussion at a secluded venue), or an *imbizo* (mass congregation for discussion of issues of national concern) (Louw 2007 see also Bennett *et al*. 2018).

Ideally, leaders in traditional *Ubuntu*-oriented African societies provide an enabling environment for their people to be able to self-advocate for their needs and concerns through these inclusive platforms. As far as the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream society is concerned, self-advocacy guided by *Ubuntu* values can help PWDs to raise their voices to be heard and to

participate in decisions that affect them directly (Chataika & McKenzie 2013). Although this shows how important self-advocacy is for those with disabilities, the Western individualist conceptualisation of self-advocacy places more responsibility on SWDs to self-advocate independently if they are to make their universities' discriminatory environments more enabling. In contrast, in traditional African societies it was leaders who had a responsibility to make their communities enabling in the first place by convening inclusive platforms. It is these platforms where all members of the community, regardless of their social status, were given a voice and could even criticise their leadership. In other words, *Ubuntu*'s self-advocacy approach does not place the onus solely on the self-actualised individual to demand recognition of their rights, but rather places the individual in the communal context and sees all, but particularly those in positions of power, as responsible for the realisation of the good.

Internalising the negative reactions of non-disabled people towards PWDs can have enduring devastating consequences for SWDs. However, many of those in positions of power and responsible for programmes and policies related to disability in HEIs place the emphasis on SWDs themselves becoming self-advocates if they are to contest the negative attitudes held by a majority non-disabled university community.

> I don't know why non-disabled people are scared of people with disabilities. The solution to that is you must change your mindset, but that's much easier said than done. But I think students with disabilities need to lead by example, like the girl in the Student Representative Committee (SRC). She is very assertive, and she knows what she wants, and has a very strong personality (Julia).

The conventional Western individualistic self-advocacy approach that Julia recommends can be disempowering to many SWDs who lack self-advocacy skills and who face stigmatisation and discrimination. This situation often sees SWDs relying on one prominent peer who is vocal and confident to lobby their institution to remove disabling barriers. In other cases, participants may take it upon themselves to be advocates for SWDs, as Thandolwethu and Elizabeth describe:

> I think it's time for us disabled people to remain positive, that's all. People think I'm the loudest mouth of this Disability Unit. They say I talk a lot, but I tell them that I have learned in my life that if I'm not happy about something, I complain and speak my mind until I see results or something happening. So whenever there is a problem, other students with disabilities come to tell me, and I just speak and speak and make noise until something is done about it. I believe that as long as you have a mouth to complain, you have a right to complain if you notice something is not right (Thandolwethu).

> I'm a great advocate of disability rights and [therefore] in my input to the recent Ministerial Task Team I recommended that all university students must take a compulsory semester course [on] disability. They should learn about the different types of disabilities as they will always encounter people with disabilities in their [lives]. Non-disabled students ignore students with disabilities because they don't know how to react to them. What you don't know, you're scared of. You don't care and you don't even want to care (Elizabeth).

The adoption of *Ubuntu* ethics in contrast would see those who, like Thandolwethu and Elizabeth, are in positions of influence, creating the conditions for self-advocacy on the part of SWDs — seeking to change the debilitating barriers that can preclude SWDs from speaking on their own behalf, representing their own interests and having power and influence over decision making.

Collective responsibility

> Inclusive education cannot just lie with one stakeholder. Inclusive education should not only be driven by the Disability Units, it should be driven by the university. So, our university has a commitment of supporting students with disabilities not only through academic support, but also social support. If you're going to implement inclusive education within an Organisation, it needs to be a foundational concept that is understood and practiced not just from legislation, but by all individuals (Catherine).

Ubuntu calls upon all community members to have what Himonga *et al*. (2013: 381) refer to as "the collective respect for the dignity of personhood". Without this collective respect for human dignity HEIs are more likely to marginalise SWDs. Marginalisation is defined by Moabelo (2012) as making a person or a group of people appear unimportant. What makes PWDs feel

unimportant is being systematically excluded from meaningful participation in forms of human activity in their communities, thereby denying members of this group the opportunity to fulfil themselves as human beings (UNESCO 2000). It is against this background that some scholars have called for disability mainstreaming if HEIs are to make SWDs feel fully accepted and meaningfully included in institutional life.

It has been suggested that mainstreaming SWDs has the potential to influence institutional practices in HEIs (see, for instance, Badat 2010). In recent years, the mainstreaming of PWDs has come to be seen as an important human rights issue particularly in educational settings (WHO & the World Bank 2011; UNICEF 2013). However, although it was hoped that the move away from segregatory special schools to mainstreaming SWDs would increase the participation of these students, this has not been realised in practice. According to Munyi (2012), this is because the mainstreaming approach has had little impact on changing the negative attitudes of non-disabled people towards SWDs, making it impossible for educational institutions to address the needs of SWDs upon accessing HEIs effectively. These negative attitudes are prevalent not only among peers, but lecturers as well.

South African studies have criticised lecturers in particular for failing to execute their responsibilities in relation to the creation of environments that foster, through practices and pedagogies, equal respect for all students, including those with disabilities. These research findings suggest that lectures instead often tend to transfer their responsibilities related to addressing the learning needs of SWDs to their university's Disability Unit (Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015). Howell (2005) found that South African lecturers are resistant to providing reasonable accommodations for SWDs, reinforcing negative perceptions of Disability Units as "dumping grounds" for any disability-related matter that emerged on campus.

Similarly, Myers *et al*. (2014: 4) found that despite recognising the existence of disability legislation which must be followed, some lecturers still transfer their responsibility to support SWDs to "disability services, human resources, and affirmative action offices". Guided by

Ubuntu values, lecturers would not shy away from teaching students with needs that are different to those of the majority. African *Ubuntu* morality emphasises the need for an individual to help others as a moral obligation (Metz 2007b). In contrast, university lecturers often draw on Western individualist values, citing the right to academic freedom when designing curricula whichever way they choose — these attitudes continue to be a hurdle to the mainstreaming of disability in South African HE (Lyner-Cleophas *et al*. 2014).

Mainstreaming disability should go beyond lecturers' involvement in supporting the rights of SWDs, to incorporate the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in achieving the rights of SWDs as is summed up in the African saying: "It takes a village to raise a child". *Ubuntu* values emphasise the need for caring for each other (Nafukho 2006 see also Mungai 2009). There is, moreover, a sharp distinction between Western individualistic and African communalist approaches to the family (Wiredu 2008). Unlike in Western individualistic societies, bringing up the child in traditional *Ubuntu*-oriented African societies "was a corporate responsibility belonging to all and not just to the parents of the child" (Mpofu 2002: 1). All adults participate in rearing children, especially orphans in the village (Mungai 2009), and every adult has a responsibility for all the children of the village.

The idea of collective responsibility finds itself in tension with the Western individualist mantra of "academic freedom" — a right protected by the South African Constitution and numerous HE policies (DoE 1997: 9). Academic freedom is defined as the absence of outside interference, censure or obstacles in the lecturer's pursuit and practice of academic work and advancement of intellectual inquiry and knowledge (DoE 1997). South Africa's *Education White Paper 3 — A Programme for Higher Education Transformation* also reaffirms the commitment to uphold the academic freedom of HEIs (DoE 1997). As noted by the *National Commission on Higher Education Report*, giving South African lecturers academic freedom is important in ensuring autonomous academic inputs and discretion (NCHE 1996).

Within a Western individualistic society, each individual pursues their own self-interest, leaving the weak to their own fate. In collectivist cultures, in contrast, group members have an obligation to care for those in need (Meyer 2010). Seen in this light, Jolley (2011: 16) cautions that "the removal of *Ubuntu* from a culture inevitably makes the children vulnerable". Lecturers functioning from a more individualistic framework invoking the right to academic freedom assume a narrow sense of responsibility to others in contrast to the wide ambit of *Ubuntu* obligations. Lecturers may justify their failure adequately to engage with and support SWDs on the basis that they are ill-prepared to teach SWDs. Referring SWDs to Disability Units does not amount to full inclusion, as Tumelo and Elize point out:

> I am dying to see, maybe in 2020 or the years to come, where there is not going to be a Centre or Disability Unit which provide[s] disability support. This is because the university is only relying on us, if they do something new they always come here to ask. I want to see that mentality gone; I want everyone to understand that they should be involved (Tumelo).

> Disability must be prioritised. I want to see disability-related services being centralised to my office so that whatever is disability-related must be coordinated from this Office, but then everyone must be involved. We want to mainstream it. It must not be separated from all the other things. If lecturers have to deal with a student with a disability, they don't have to refer that student to our Disability Unit. They have to handle it themselves in conjunction with my office, so we want to make disability part of everyone's duties, because in many cases students with disabilities are just being ignored (Elize).

As Julia points out, the issue of disability inclusion does not only lie with Departments and academics relegating student support to Disability Units. The same is true of staff appointments.

> We don't always want people to come to us. We want to create the mindset of 'I don't want to refer this all the time'. We don't want everything to be referred to us all the time. We want other Departments and their staff members to also be prepared and involved as well in dealing with these kinds of issues (Julia).

As Fiona points out, through awareness raising and advocacy, the goal is to broaden the university community's sense of responsibility to all its members. Importantly, Fiona invokes notions of empowerment and ownership which reflect the *Ubuntu* ideals of joint ownership in a common humanity in contrast to the individualistic notion of self-ownership.

> Well a lot of it has to do with awareness raising and making the university community aware of the fact that putting more responsibility in other Divisions' hands, because what happens when you have a separate support division like this [*Disability Unit*] is that it very easily becomes almost like a special school again. It very easily become[s] like, just send it [that is anything which involves supporting SWDs,] to the Disability Unit, they will sort it out. So a lecturer wouldn't take responsibility themselves to figure out how [they] can teach this student with a disability, how [they] can support such [a] student, because [they do not] have to take ownership, because [they] can shift it to the Unit. So that's one of the things we are working with the Faculties themselves, as well as with the teaching and learning managers, and [we] educate and empower them on how they can take on more responsibility and ownership in terms of supporting SWDs (Fiona).

This holistic form of mainstreaming proposed by the above participants could be said to be akin to the *Ubuntu* value of collectivism, which "aims at community building, bonding people in a network of reciprocal relationships" (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho 2013: 234). In addition to this value of collectivism is also an important aspect of achieving solidarity among community members (Seroto 2016). Hence, if guided by collectivism, most community members can potentially build strong families which adhere to such *Ubuntu* values as love, care and respect for all, including people outside the nuclear family unit (South African Government 2012). *Ubuntu* is particularly in consonance with both the values of the South African Constitution as well as those of the Bill of Rights (Keevy 2009).

> We are of the firm view that we need to create an environment which provides reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. We get our mandate from Section 9 (on Equality) of the South African constitution. So, we take issues of non-discrimination seriously in this Disability Unit (Olwethu).

> I think our university is following the mandate of the South African constitution that people with disabilities must have equal opportunities to education (Richard).

Another way in which some universities have sought to extend the idea of communal responsibility of all members of the university to one another is through the role played by student volunteers in achieving inclusive education. Volunteers render their services as scribes, note takers, peer tutors and buddies for first year SWDs.

> During our days as a student, the Rack Office, I'm not sure if you know rack, it's like a volunteer [group that] collect[s] food and give[s] it to the needy. That programme worked wonders for the students with disabilities. Now we don't see students coming here [*referring to the Disability Unit*] to offer their help. People don't know about us (Boitumelo).

On the other hand, reliance on volunteers has been criticised as too haphazard an approach for the execution of such an important institutional obligation. Lasting success stems from the mainstreaming of disability which is central to enabling HEIs to address the needs of SWDs (particularly black, previously disadvantaged, or first generation SWDs) more holistically.

Seeing the "whole person"

Hunger

Traditionally, community members had an obligation to reach out to disadvantaged members "in times of pain and sorrow" as a way of practicing *Ubuntu* (Mungai 2009). One of the ways in which communities that embrace *Ubuntu* would show the full acceptance of community members was by preventing them from being undernourished. In some societies, community members would work in their kings' fields to produce surplus that the king would then distribute to those in need, especially during times of drought (Magumbate & Nyanguru 2013). Samkange & Samkange (1980) argue that all community members in general had an obligation to share food not only with their family members in need, but most importantly with visitors or strangers.

Providing such visitors with food was viewed as an important way of not only protecting them, but also making them feel comfortable during their stay at the host's home (Samkange & Samkange 1980).

Recent research in South Africa has pointed to the fact that particularly poor, first-generation, black, African students are undernourished. The Financial Stress Scale Data included in the South African Survey of Student Engagement in the wake of the 2015 #FeesMustFall protests identified food shortages as an additional barrier facing these students in universities. The data "show that 36% of Black African male first-generation students and 34% of Black African female first-generation students say they run out of food and cannot afford to buy more on most days or every day" (Dell 2018). Related to this are high levels of stress on the part of first-generation black African students with regard to financing their education (Dell 2018).

> It's because here, I will say in terms of assisting students with disabilities all the way, we are like their parents. They don't even need to call home. If they have a problem with food the Disability Unit will take over. If they have a problem with books, the Unit will cover that. We even cover students with their fees. The parents at home are a last option — only if we say 'this one we can't handle'. So, this Disability Unit is their second home (Tumelo).

In the wake of hunger challenges facing SWDs, another example of the holistic response taken by some Disability Units is the provision of "food bursaries for students who literally cannot afford to feed themselves" (Dell 2018). One such university is the UFS which initiated the food bursary scheme called "No Student Hungry" (NSH) (Dell 2018).

As Debbie pointed out, the greatest hunger burden is seen at HBIs.

> We still have many students who are first generation. For us, many students are hungry, how can you work if you haven't had anything to eat? [Neighbouring universities] as well, but not as many. Our students have [many] more financial problems and our university does not have the resources to support them. I know

> at [a neighbouring university], if students ha[ve] a financial problem, they're given a stipend. I'm not talking about a bursary. They get given say a R300 stipend to buy food. We can't afford to do that (Debbie).

In this context, Disability Units provide food parcels to SWDs. While a narrow conception of the role of these Units might see this as outside of their mandate, the *Ubuntu* approach widens our understanding of what it might mean to uphold the dignity of a person holistically.

Healthcare

One of the ways in which HEIs can mainstream disability is through addressing the health-related needs of SWDs through the availability of sensitised health professionals who can help facilitate the acceptance of these students. Article 25 of the UNCRPD on Health imposes an obligation on states to "[r]equire health professionals to provide care of the same quality to persons with disabilities as to others" (United Nations 2006: 14). Article 25 further views the provision of dignified healthcare as an important human right for PWDs. In this light, it is important to train health care professionals on the rights of PWDs if these professionals are to provide dignified quality healthcare rooted in a human rights approach (WHO & the World Bank 2011). Research into the experiences of SWDs on South African campuses has shown that very few students can afford medical aid, thus resulting in these students, particularly black SWDs, relying on their campus's health care services (Dirk 2016; Chiwandire 2017).

Some DUSMs liaise with relevant health professionals to ensure the delivery of high-quality dignified care to those students who require it.

> We also work with professionals in the university. We have an occupational therapist, a speech pathologist … so if there is a gap we usually consult with a specialist to help students in need (Francois).

> I would say students with psychological disabilities face more challenges, because if they don't have a medical aid then they have to go to the government hospitals,

> and you know how tough it is to sit in the queue and wait for medication. It's a problem we are working on to try and resolve. The best thing would be to have a psychiatrist to come to visit our students on campus once a month because we don't have one [at the moment] (Timothy).

As regards female SWDs, it is important for HEIs to cater for their sexual and reproductive health needs through making sensitised health professionals available who can provide these services. Research has shown that women with disabilities face barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive health related services, particularly contraceptive methods (Council of Europe 2017). A common finding is that women with disabilities are not routinely offered contraception or educated about contraceptive options thoroughly, because they are erroneously presumed to be asexual (Lipson & Rogers 2002; Thomas & Curtis 1997).

Women with disabilities are often seen as not having "the same emotional needs or desires as persons without disabilities. Getting married and creating a family are seen as 'extraordinary', and partners are considered to be 'heroic or special'" (Council of Europe 2017). Kasiram & Subrayen's (2013) study of 15 students with visual impairment at the University of KwaZulu-Natal found that health professionals who held the view that students who are visually impaired are asexual denied prescribing contraception to these students.

> I think disability support is more than just equipment. It's about having a personal touch and really wanting to see your students with disabilities succeed in everything they do. Not just on an academic level, but also in sport, because I think sport is also one of the aspects of social inclusion. How they interact with each other, who they date. For example, we had [a] campus health profession come and speak to our girls around contraception. Our students have sex lives too. So, I think we need to conceptualise all of those aspects when we support our students (Catherine).

Ubuntu and budgetary constraints

While financial challenges experienced by South African HEIs are often cited as a barrier to mainstreaming disability in these institutions, *Ubuntu* ethics requires our institutions to overcome these barriers. The lack of disability funding causing Disability Units to operate under budgetary and other resource constraints has been documented in a range of South African studies (Howell 2005; Chiwandire & Vincent 2016; DHET 2013; Matshedisho 2007). This lack of government funding to HEIs should not mean however that these institutions' obligation to uphold the dignity of all their members fall away.

Mbigi (1997) defines the *Ubuntu* value of "survival" as the ability to live, despite difficulties, by virtue of brotherly care featured in African communities. This makes survival to be at the heart of *Ubuntu* through presupposing the sharing of resources in spite of difficulties (Poovan *et al*. 2006). DUSMs with the quest to ensure *Ubuntu*'s value of survival are planning ahead and coming up with innovative ways of addressing architectural barriers to ensure that accessibility rights for SWDs prevail despite budgetary constraints.

> So, we are systematically making the campus more accessible, and I found out recently that as from 2015, for the next 3 years, we have a R15-million budget to concentrate on prioritising older buildings which have to be made more accessible [to PWDs] (Francois).

Mace *et al*. (1990: 2) argue that "universal and adaptable features are generally no more expensive than traditional features if incorporated by the designer at the programming and conceptual stages". These scholars further argue that institutions wanting to make their built environment more accessible to PWDs should consult cost-conscious designers or architects who can best advise these institutions concerning not only construction costs related to accessibility, but also the long-term costs of ignoring the rights of PWDs (Mace *et al*. 1990). Some DUSMs are working closely with experts to find ways of making their old buildings more accessible in compliance with the country's N*ational Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act*.

> We invite all the people with expertise [in universal design/accessibility] to come and audit our university building so that we can determine whether or not are we responding to the needs of all people with disabilities. This is very crucial as it help[s] us to see whether we are there yet or not (Mthobisi).

Other participants enjoin their institutions to be careful with how they utilise their limited financial resources, and to employ principles of universal design as a cost-effective approach to avoiding possible future expenses of having to retrofit inaccessible features of their built environments.

> One new residence built two years back, they installed the ramp to get into the first floor where there is a lift and everything, but the ramp gradient, was incorrect. It was too narrow. It was basically [*laughs*] a service ramp. It was good for [*laughs*, *laughs*] getting fridges up and down. We put in a complaint and they had to build a new one. We were like 'now you see what happened. In future see to it that if you do something, do it right the first time otherwise you waste money' (Andries).

Mace *et al*. (1990: 2) highlight the importance of institutions being "aware of the trend toward stricter accessibility standards in employment, housing, education and public services". In light of this, Andries holds South African HEIs which ignore the voices of SWDs, the principles of universal design, and the provisions of the country's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act* when building ramps to account for incurring both unnecessary and avoidable financial costs.

Despite budgetary constraints, DUSMs in some institutions are aiming to implement best practices in order to improve the participation of SWDs. However, as Fiona and Beverly's comments make clear, often the search for best practices looks to the Global North. Missing is the sense in which a different worldview rooted in the African context might also provide new insights into what constitutes cutting edge practices for SWDs in African universities.

> I'm going to the US soon to do my PhD in Disability Studies, you know, so that I can bring that knowledge and that experience and all of that back to South Africa. And so that I can be part of the solution and not one of the guys that's sitting back saying inclusive education is never going to happen. Because it's easy to do that, it's easy to be asking the questions. It's easy to be the one finding all the problems, but it's more difficult to find the solutions, but that's what we should be doing. We shouldn't be stuck looking at the disabilities, we shouldn't be stuck looking at the challenges, we shouldn't be stuck looking at what's [it] costing us. We should be finding solutions. I'm interested in being part of the solution, I'm not interested in being part of the problem. There's already lots of people in that group (Fiona).

> Three years ago, our Head of the Disability Unit attended a scholarship exchange programme overseas where she did research and brought all that information back. So, we are sending our staff away for a period of time to learn, as well to bring those international ideas and best practices back. The Head was the right person to attend, and I think it made quite a big impact, because we could see the ideas, specifically with universal access. At that point, we noticed how that visit influenced the design of new buildings across different campuses of this university (Beverly).

While it is true that Global South countries mostly lack protective disability policy to support inclusive education (Simui *et al*. 2019), and that Global North countries started along the road of disability inclusion initiatives earlier than the former countries. Rather than simply grafting practices and approaches from a completely different context onto South African HEIs, *Ubuntu* offers a way of making these practices relevant to local values, purposes and outlooks.

Ubuntu and holistic consultations with SWDs

The key slogan of the international disability rights movement, "Nothing about us without us" (Swartz 2004: 3), highlights the importance of consulting with PWDs on issues related to their affairs. This makes consultation an important strategy if institutions are to place the multiple needs and lived experiences of PWDs at the forefront of their policies and practices (Shildrick 2000). Educational institutions which endeavour to achieve equality should not just rely on what

experts have to say about issues of disability inclusion, but also need to consult with PWDs themselves (Snyman 2009; Young 1997).

Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning literature that emphasises the need for HEIs to consult with SWDs on matters related to their inclusion. A culture of consultation with all members of a community — in this case with SWDs — aligns well with *Ubuntu* values. However, to date the focus has predominantly been on *academic* inclusion, and particularly on issues related to the curriculum. Bruch (2003: 96-97 see also Takaki 1993), for instance, suggests that SWDs themselves should be consulted with in the decision-making processes of designing curricula rather than only relying on the non-disabled "all knowing expert[s']" views. In South Africa, similarly, literature emphasises the need for HEIs to consult with SWDs on issues related to academic inclusion. Howell & Lazarus (2003) have, for instance, called upon HEIs to consult with SWDs on issues relating to the delivering of flexible and accessible curricula if these institutions are to redress the historical marginalisation of this group from participation. In pre-democratic South Africa, SWDs were excluded from debate and discussion related to institutional planning and resource allocation, decision-making processes, and structures within their institutions (Howell & Lazarus 2003).

This focus on consultation regarding academic inclusion is narrow from the perspective of *Ubuntu* values, which rather favour a holistic form of consultation which sees leaders not making important decisions amongst themselves without consulting their people. Proponents of *Ubuntu* argue that traditional societies placed emphasis on the notion of consulting with all community members. Traditional leaders were expected not to be selfish nor abuse their power and traditional norms obliged decision-makers to consult with members of their community on most if not all-important decisions regarding their societies (Samkange & Samkange 1980; Gathogo 2008; Prinsloo 1998; Sindane & Liebenberg 2003). It is only recently that a move away from the conventional view, focusing narrowly on consultation with SWDs regarding academic inclusion, to a more *Ubuntu* holistic approach to consulting with SWDs has begun to be realised. For instance, Israel (2017: 14) proposes that one of the ways in which HEIs can

practice *Ubuntu* is through striving "to create harmonious and equal … power relations between the institution and its subjects".

This widened conception of inclusion enjoins educational institutions "to have the interests of people with disabilities at heart" (Culham & Nind 2003: 67). These values, while not yet inscribed in all the practices of universities, are embodied by some DUSMs who seek actively to engage SWDs holistically in their consultative initiatives throughout the year. Mthobisi alludes to this as follows:

> What we normally do to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are being met, we invite them to this office to share whatever challenges they are encountering so that we can find ways to support them (Mthobisi).

By constantly consulting with SWDs, Mthobisi's institution seeks what Fielding (2001) has termed "mutual responsibility" between HEIs and their students, with the former taking the initiative to invite the latter to share their views and perspectives about their daily needs, with policy making and institutional practice flowing from this engagement. Universities can thus benefit from deliberately seeking to inculcate in decision makers the *Ubuntu* approach which sees community members seeking to achieve consensus through dialogue (Cilliers 2008; Louw 2002). What the participants here refer to as their "open door policy" sees them adopt an attitude welcoming and accommodating those in need, as Pula describes:

> No challenge up to so far. It was just an open-door policy Unit. That is why we are in and out. We don't have any challenges around. [By open door policy] I mean that students are welcome anytime. At our university, from 8 o'clock until 12 o'clock, they are in the classrooms, so our lunchtime is 1 o'clock until half past. Sometimes, immediately after their class, they come here during lunch time seeking some clarity or information. I mean, we cannot just close the door for them. We accommodate them because at half-past one the academic classes start again (Pula).

In Catherine's description we find embodied the *Ubuntu* values of building relationships and responding to each person as a human being with their own rights, choices and desires.

> We also have an open-door policy. When we speak to them in the initial intake interview we encourage them that if something's not working or someone is upset or something has happened, we have such a relationship with our students that we get to know about it and then we're able to intervene. We can't presume what our students need or their social needs. So I think it's a very individual thing as every human being has a right and a choice on how they want to get involved or how they wish to contribute. And we really wish to encourage that because they're going out into the big wide world where they have to make decisions for themselves all the time (Catherine).

Disability inclusion through an ableist lens

> Most of our buildings are quite old. Like in this residence, for example, we don't have an elevator we have few bathrooms that can be used by disabled people. I think there are only 2 in this building. I think there is a lot of catching up to be done in terms of being up to standard where disabled students can say 'yes, I can really feel like part of the community', because there are places that they can't access. Honestly, they can't access such spaces, and there haven't been a lot of activities around campus that really try to bring them in and involve them (Nthabiseng).

When SWDs are not consulted and fully included in decision making, disability discrimination is normalised, forcing SWDs to adjust to HE environments in which they feel unwelcomed, which are physically inaccessible, and where their right to dignity is infringed upon. As noted in South Africa's *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System*, HEIs often cite the "cost implications" of enrolling SWDs as a major challenge, arguing that they do not have adequate financial resources to cater for these students once enrolled (DHET 2018: 47). Often, even disability rights advocates accept this reasoning, suggesting that their frame of reference continues to be "ableist" — that is to say, taking the non-disabled as "normal", rather than having a sense of communal, mutual and reciprocal ties and relationships to all who make up a polity or community or institution. Thus, some participants seemed to be endorsing their institutions' reluctance to comply with international and national minimum

accessibility standards despite this discriminating against students on the ground of physical disability.

> The physical access challenges will always remain, because you can't ever really get a place that is 100% accessible everywhere. I don't know of any campus that is going to do that. I mean, we've worked very hard to get here. I mean, we've worked over the past 5 or 6 years and we've spent an amazing amount of money to make sure that lifts are installed in the buildings and that they are accessible and so on (Fiona).

> Not all the buildings on the campus will ever be fully accessible. It's just too expensive, but we have lots of conference venues that are fully accessible (Joyce).

The acceptance that achieving fully physically accessible institutions is never going to happen sheds light on how the idea that architectural barriers will never be eliminated has become normalised. It seems easy from a non-disabled standpoint to invoke cost implications without realising that to do so assumes a particular physical embodiedness as the norm, leaving SWDs, particularly wheelchair users, to endure navigating inaccessible environments. A number of South African studies (Losinsky *et al*. 2003; Howell & Lazarus 2003; FOTIM 2011; Ntombela 2013; Buthelezi 2014; Engelbrecht & de Beer 2014; Maotoana 2014; Mantsha 2016; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017) document the profound negative consequences for full participation on campus life that are occasioned by challenges relating to the physical inaccessibility of the built environment faced by students with physical disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, on campuses. Rather than advocates challenging this, the attitude is often one of acceptance on grounds of cost and the adoption of a "slowly but surely" approach which reinscribes ableist assumptions.

> We also lobby for our institution to make at least the new buildings accessible. It's hundreds of millions to make everything accessible, so we have prioritised a few buildings and it's been included in the maintenance plan. For the old buildings, we rely on the maintenance plan. And if money comes from somewhere, or if there is a crisis, then someone will make a plan. But yeah, slowly but surely. In the past 10 years of this university, a lot of things has

> happened, especially regarding accommodation of students with disabilities. I just want to reiterate that though not everything is accessible, there isn't a resistance to what we want — it's just circumstances we have. We have to deal with budget constraints; we have to deal with this and that. Given that, we are making headway. We are working well with that which we have. And we are making progress slowly but surely with the little that we have. We started small and we have grown (Andries).

> I think if people remember to take kind of small steps at a time in addressing the physical environment, the teaching environment and the attitudinal environment. When you start to address that and you start to make small changes over time and then one day you are going to wake up and realise 'ahh, I'm inclusive now!' But I think it has become a big elephant that's just standing there. And my mom always says that eat the elephant one bit at a time. So, in terms of making the environment accessible and in the process it will become more inclusive, that's what I believe. That's how I see it, and that's how I've been trying to practice it here (Fiona).

South African universities continue to respond to the needs of SWDs informed by a medical model of disability which "emphasises the ways in which a disabled person lacks the capacity to fit into the existing institutional framework or environment — and so needs to be accommodated" (Chiwandire & Vincent 2016). People, often unknowingly, reproduce this way of thinking about disability by expecting SWDs to "fit in" rather than expecting the environment to change.

> Students with disabilities will need to wherever they can to "fit in" and then the students in living our residences or their roommates, their classmates will then understand that students with disabilities are also part of the university (Debbie).

In addition to funding, the preservation of heritage is often cited as a reason for institutions failing to make changes to older buildings to provide full access to PWDs. As Fiona points out, there is a clash of interests between historical preservation — an important public good — and access for PWDs. In the case of such tensions between two valued goods, there are no easy ways of prioritising outside of the *Ubuntu* ethic of consultation, engagement and reciprocity.

> If people keep on using excuses of historical buildings, and denying them access because of history, it will get to a point where disabled students demand the breakdown of historical buildings, because you are not giving them access, because that's where we['re] going to go to at the end if they keep on using that excuse. So, negotiate and find […] solutions together with them, otherwise you [are] going to get a Rhodes Must Fall type of situation where the disabled students will say 'we are fed up now, you [are] saying it's because of this historical building. What is more important, the […] historical building or the fact that as a wheelchair user I can't get to my class?' (Fiona).

While many take the view that change will be incremental and slow, but steady, the fact that incremental change does not alter the fundamentally ableist world view which informs much of day to day practices in social institutions like universities is unrecognised. Although Article 8 of the UNCRPD forces States Parties to raise awareness regarding PWDs as a way of fostering respect for the rights and dignity of PWDs (United Nations 2006), SWDs continue to be excluded, and a lack of funds and resources continue to be cited as a legitimate reason for this exclusion.

> Look, everything costs money. Students don't come to functions unless you feed them. Speakers don't come to give a talk for nothing. You know whatever work we put in, […] resources are a big challenge (Mitchell).

> And then, when it says disability awareness, we find that people don't come. Yeah, so, that's partly why we have decided not to really have awareness campaigns because we spend a lot of money and then people don't attend it. So, that's why we now have a blog on our website where we post things about disability. We also send the information to our Marketing Department so that they can post to the whole [university] community. So, in that way it comes as an email, and if you want to read the email you can click on it, you know. We also have Casual Day, obviously, and that's the one event that we make a fuss of and it's fun. You know, the focus isn't that much on the disability. It's more on the fun aspect, you know, so then it attracts more people (Deidre).

As Julia points out, what is required is a "mindset" change.

> We also have regular workshops [where] all of our colleagues here give presentations regarding different disabilities in order to raise awareness. Some of the workshops are very positive and have changed some of the mindsets, but not with others. You know sometimes in life you get people that are just not interested. However, we constantly try to raise awareness (Julia).

Missing from Julia's account is a sense of what the mindset change should entail and the institutional collective responsibility for inculcating a new set of values in its members. As Hayes (1997) argues, working cooperatively is a starting point. Here Mitchell speaks to the value of collective responsibility, cooperation, concern for those in need and a holistic view of the person which are some of the fundamental lynchpins of the *Ubuntu* value system.

> We have a very, very closely-knit team that work very well together. We are all very goal centred and student centred. So, I can say that we work as an oiled machine. In our staff meetings, if we notice that a student is at risk, whether its financially, we brainstorm solutions and come up with a plan because we are very solution driven. My motto is 'don't ever just say I can't or we can't or se don't have money or we won't oh no!' Those are the words that we don't say because it's just too easy to say 'no'. [Rather,] we have to say 'look it's difficult, but look we can do it this way'. Among the staff there is a very good working and respectful relationship. There's no factions, back fighting, gossiping or choosing sides. I can honestly say it's a very professional team and it's a very good spirit (Mitchell).

Conclusion

Zireva (2017: 27) has defined *Ubuntu* values as "things worth striving for or the ideal of what ought to be in particular social interactions. Without striving for values, one develops nihilist tendencies". Hence, in order for one to be afforded human dignity in a community grounded in the values of *Ubuntu* one, always has to fulfil the obligation of observing the values of one's community (Zireva 2017). This indicates how *Ubuntu*'s form of human dignity is afforded to individuals who are part of and respect the values of their community. In contrast, within the conventional Western Kantian individualistic framework, human dignity is afforded to every individual merely on the grounds of them having the right to autonomy. Seen in this light, this chapter has critiqued South African HEIs for responding to the needs of SWDs from the Western

Kantian conception of human dignity, and as a result failing to create an enabling and welcoming social milieu in which SWDs are able to flourish. Under a Western Kantian conception of human dignity, we continue to see societal practices that are disabling, and which preclude PWDs from full participation (Oliver 1993). Some of these societal disabling practices are manifested in concrete forms, such as non-inclusive signage and inadequate toilet facilities. Others are evident in how non-disabled people react with horror, fear, anxiety, distaste, hostility and patronising behaviours in their interactions with PWDs (Coleridge 1993).

The building of ramps with improper gradients was also raised as a matter of concern by DUSMs who felt this the result of reckless decisions made by those responsible for infrastructural accessibility. Those who make such decisions without consulting DUSMs imposes a further financial burden on HEIs when they have to rebuild such ramps. Given this, I recommend that one of the ways in which the South African HEIs can prioritise the little funding they have is to build accessible and appropriate ramps right from the beginning, and this can only be possible if relevant authorities consult experts from outside the university, including DUSMs. This is because "a ramp is not difficult to build, yet it takes some careful calculations, measurements and planning to ensure that it in fact enhances accessibility and does not create further hazards" (Equal Access Monitor 2016: 5). In light of this, participants spoke about how ramps with improper calculations and measurements have been demolished and reconstructed, which imposes a financial burden on these universities which are already underfunded.

Upholding and practicing *Ubuntu* values suggests a move away from the idea of the individual person with a medical "problem" — that is to say, a disability, to a social model of disability which places the onus for the well-being of each person in the community and in communal relations and social practices (Chibba 2013). Education and awareness raising in *Ubuntu* ethics would help to ensure that those in positions of influence stop treating SWDs as an afterthought (Higbee 2003).

Despite the fact that the notion of human dignity forms an important foundation of international human rights instruments such as the UNCRPD as well as South Africa's Constitution and numerous disability policies, in practice this concept seems consistently to be violated by people of influence in HE. Mutual respect requires that non-disabled people question their own assumptions about PWDs, for example, as always in need of assistance in order to function. As Healy *et al*. (2002: 3) observe, "it is easy to make erroneous assumptions about what students with particular impairments can or cannot do, when usually the best thing to do is simply to ask them". The findings indicate that HEIs which could be said to be achieving the full acceptance of SWDs are those which are holistically addressing the daily non-academic needs of particularly black, previously disadvantaged or first generation SWDs through providing food and health care services for them — that is to say, seeing the "whole person" as is in keeping with the values of *Ubuntu,* rather than focusing on individual academic achievement and academic inclusion alone. Non-disabled people can cultivate reciprocal relations if they personally engage with PWDs in order to understand how to behave in ways that are respectful. However, this would require a paradigm change on the part of institutions to inculcate in their members a new set of non-individualistic values.

Ubuntu values provide a useful platform for re-evaluating social relationships and institutional practices that continue to denigrate those most in need of acceptance and having their humanity acknowledged and recognised. By respecting and accepting SWDs, some non-disabled university community members such as DUSMs, those occupying leadership positions, and non-disabled students could be said to be upholding *Ubuntu* values, and this positively contributes to ensuring SWDs live dignified lives on campus. Among other examples, this is evidenced by DUSMs who implement an *Ubuntu*-oriented approach through holistic consultations with SWDs through their "open door" approach and through their holistic addressing of the "whole person" needs of SWDs.

Chapter 8: Hospitality

Introduction

As Mbaya (2010) observes, the value of African hospitality emphasises the ways in which Africans are engaged in networks of human relationships — mostly stemming from family, clan and tribal ties in the spirit of *Ubuntu*. African hospitality was historically important, especially as a mechanism of inclusion of marginalised minority members in traditional societies. Contemporary proponents of *Ubuntu* ethics have called for a move away from confining the rendering of African hospitality only to one's family members, but also to strangers in order to achieve what Karsten & Illa (2005: 612) refer to as a "spirit of collective hospitality between people". Similarly, Gathogo's (2008: 275) definition of African hospitality goes beyond catering and kind reception of guests in the host's family, clan or tribe homestead, in the event of them visiting — in favour of also catering for strangers.

Given the underrepresentation of SWDs on South African campuses, SWDs could be said to be occupying a position similar to that of the stranger. *Ubuntu* ethics requires an attitude of hospitableness to those who might be seen as "strange" or "other". As Hammond-Tooke (1993: 99) argues, strangers are more likely to be isolated from their kin, thus leaving them vulnerable and having to defend themselves, which is why in traditional societies they always found refuge in the chief's homestead who had the obligation not only to protect them, but also to be afforded special privileges as strangers. Central to why strangers were afforded this equal recognition is because *Ubuntu*-driven hospitality emphasises the African sense of communality or interdependence: "no one is an island on himself or herself; rather, each and every one is part of the whole community" (Gathogo 2008: 275).

One of the ways in which South African HEIs can embrace African hospitality is through fostering "non-marginalisation, respect for minorities and appreciation of human diversity" (DoE

2008: 37). Most HEIs have attempted to fulfil this duty through ensuring that the *learning* needs of SWDs are addressed as a way of achieving inclusive education which has conventionally been defined as ensuring that the classroom setting is conducive enough for SWDs to have equal opportunities to learn and achieve academically (Education Review Office 2015). In the present chapter, this narrow emphasis on academic inclusion is critiqued. *Ubuntu* ethics calls on us to see our obligations to one another more holistically to incorporate the "whole person" (Trani *et al*. 2011). The chapter also argues that hospitability in *Ubuntu* ethics is not about physical access alone. It is also about an *attitude* of welcoming the stranger — making sure that they feel "at home" and have their needs accommodated and catered for. Participants in the present study spoke at length about the value of hospitality in relation to residence life and SWDs. In this chapter, I ask whether South African campus life could be regarded as hospitable to SWDs.

Attitudinal hospitability

> We have programmes that accommodate all students who stay in residences. These programmes are driven by the residence management and they encourage residence students to embrace each other. The programmes also create a sense of belonging for all students to live as brothers and sisters (Yolani).

Research indicates that HEIs should not limit the promotion and protection of the rights of PWDs to the provision of disability-related services, but these institutions should also introduce measures to change attitudes and practices that stigmatise and marginalise PWDs (DSD, DWCPD & UNICEF 2012). One such measure is awareness raising or sensitisation workshops targeting the non-disabled community, including management, which could bring about positive change in the lives of SWDs.

> We try and engage the top management as much as possible, as that then automatically trickles down from top management to lower management like a pyramid. So, if the boss is aware of that, then his department will also become aware. So, that's one of the measures we are taking (Elna).

> We're also lucky enough to be part of many committees, so once you raise awareness with your higher management, it automatically filters down into what everyone does. So, from accessible web designing to accessible curriculum design, hopefully they [*lecturers*] would also at the back of their minds think 'what about disability, how can this be adapted etc.?' (Catherine).

> Although our Office for Students with Disabilities is very involved with sensitisation workshops, […] I really think that we still lack in creating awareness about disability on a[n] [...] Executive and Management level. They don't understand the various disabilities, because they've never encountered them. So, if you don't understand disability, you won't understand that you need to have a ramp at your door for a [person in a] wheelchair (Elizabeth).

As recommended by Opini (2012), HEIs should introduce disability awareness campaigns if they are to address the problem of ableism and assist the non-disabled university community to debunk their ableist ideologies. Central to *Ubuntu* is the concept of empathy, which requires one "to imaginatively entering [*sic*] into another subject's feelings and to identify with it" (Prinsloo 2001: 59). Some awareness raising activities try to put management personnel in the "shoes of SWDs".

> What we normally do is Casual Day. Now it's September: its Deaf Awareness Month. We will be celebrating Casual Day this Friday. During last year's Casual Day, we invited other Organisations, we invited our lecturers on campus, top management and other staff members, and educated them on how to support persons with different disabilities (Tumelo).

This form of intervention is aimed at moving away from the conventional situation in which "able bodied people think about disability from their abled perspective" (Hosking 2008: 12).

However, it cannot be taken for granted that generic programmes of this nature will automatically cater for the needs of SWDs. Cultures of inclusivity can only be promoted by including the perspectives and voices of PWDs when they are designed and implemented. In situations where some residence staff members as well as House Committee members are less

informed about the individual needs of SWDs, Disability Units are sometimes able to intervene successfully, as Elize explains:

> I also target non-disabled students as well, because they need to be aware of their fellow students with disabilities. Because, remember, not all disabilities are visible. We also target the residence hostels, but it's mostly after hours that we do stuff like that where we do short presentations and then questions and answer sessions. If we know that prospective students for next year are going to a certain hostel, […] we definitely target a year before the student arrives and inform students in that hostel that they will be expecting a new student with a disability, and encourage them to be supportive. So, we also give sensitisation workshops to the House Committee so that they know that when students with disabilities come at the beginning of [the] year […] they will be sorted, as there will be someone to support them (Elize).

Additionally, newcomers to campus residences are also conscientised with the hope of helping them to discard their preconceived conceptions about their disabled identities, and rather encourage them to feel welcomed as full members who should equally have a sense of belonging in their residences.

> Normally, before the academic year starts, we sit down and we do Orientation outside of this residence and other residences. We make sure that they [*SWDs*] understand that number one, it's not your disability that brought you here, but it's your abilities that brought you here. Number two, when you are living in this residence, it's not a disability residence, or residence for disabled. It's a residence for all students (Thembani).

Although the inclusion of all students in campus life is mainly formally dealt with by such departments as the Division of Student Affairs and the Residences Operations Department, DUSMs sampled in this study felt they have a responsibility to intervene in residences which accommodate their SWDs who have self-disclosed their disabilities. As noted by these DUSMs, they start rendering their support and services as early as the beginning of the year during the Orientation Week, and then throughout the year on an annual basis in order to make residence life hospitable for these students.

> We contact the residence Head in advance and inform them about the student with disabilities who are residing in that residence in order to ensure that they know how to include these students within activities. So, it's basically the Department of Student Management which helps with that procedure by coordinating […] communication with residences where student[s] with disabilities resides [*sic*]. So, it's very important that we communicate with the residence that there is a student with disabilities, so that they can be involved in activities, because they do a lot of the social, cultural events and those kind[s] of things (Lilian).

> First thing that is very important: when a student comes here, they usually stay in a hostel, so we make the hostel Head aware that there is a student coming, and this is the impairment that the student has, and this is what he will be needing. And the Student Hostel Council, or the students in the hostel, [and the] House Committee, they will also be made aware of the student with a disability (Elna).

For their part, non-disabled students being receptive to SWDs through initiating reciprocal friendships are able to make a significant contribution to the inclusivity of residence cultures.

> I doubt he [*referring to a student with a physical disability*] feels otherwise. So, he is part of them [*referring to non-disabled students*]. One thing I like as well, whenever there are bashes, you will see even in other groups within the residence some guys will even quarrel over who is going with him. So, there is that element of brotherhood (Thembani).

Being fully accepted and forming fruitful and respectful friendships with their non-disabled peers is a key marker of inclusivity.

> One thing I always pride myself about this residence is the custom of inclusiveness and brotherhood. So, you would not feel excluded [because] of your disadvantages. I'm talking about students who are from poor families, others who are from well-off families do not brag over that. There is an element of 'I don't have bread, no its fine let's go and eat'. We are promoting that idea of 'my neighbour is my neighbour because he is my neighbour, and if my neighbour is going through something, I must take care of my neighbour, because you never know what tomorrow will be like'. I'm telling you that those who are struggling now - in future they won't [be struggling]. Those who are having it nice now, often that is not the case in [the] future (Nthabiseng).

Previous South African literature has shown how SWDs are appreciative of different kinds of support rendered to them by their DUSMs on various campuses as helpful in contributing to their academic support (FOTIM 2011; Moabelo 2012). However, DUSMs sampled in this study wish they could do more to achieve fairness for their SWDs but raised concerns about how some of their goals are being compromised by their inferior position over their management personnel. The extent to which measures like those described above are widely implemented and taken seriously at universities has a great deal to do with the attitudes informing leadership practices. Responsibility for creating cultures of inclusivity must lie with those who are in a position of influence — as *Ubuntu* ethics teach us, hospitality means that the stranger must be welcome in the home of the chief in order to be safe and secure in the community.

Leadership attitudes

Some of my participants noted that relevant stakeholders in leadership positions can play an important role in making campuses more inclusive if they are to be involved in disability rights activism on behalf of SWDs. One of the barriers to achieving this, as argued by Francois below, is when fear for management take precedence over the realisation of rights of SWDs to participate in a barrier-free university environment.

> I've had problems where the university failed to accommodate a student with a disability. I've told the top management that we need to address these issues, because it's a human rights violation. It's against the constitution of this country, and then that person will be too scared to become involved. People just don't know the extent of the things that you can and cannot do. You know people don't know the laws. They don't know the legislation. They don't know, and being in contact with people with disabilities for the part of my life […] I know these issues. I know its people's ignorance about certain things. So, problems are not being solved because people are scared to tackle these things head [on] (Francois).

Young (2014: 4-5) defines "oppression" as the "exercise of tyranny by a ruling group". For this reason, oppression becomes a useful tool in analysing the injustices suffered by minority groups, including persons with physical disabilities. Young (1990) conceptualises oppression as having

five faces which include exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. DS scholars have employed Young's five faces of oppression in exploring the experiences of PWDs (Charlton 1998; Gleeson 1999; Linton 1998). Young (2014: 4) suggests that oppressed groups are likely to suffer "some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings". Essed (2013: 1395) has written of "normalised practices through which inequalities are maintained".

The position of DUSMs in many HEIs is what Fraser (2003 see also Fraser and Hrubec 2004) refers to as "status subordination". DUSMs, for example, hesitate to confront their Vice Chancellors directly when they observe disability being marginalised in transformation agenda initiatives.

> With regards to transformation, the recent statement that went out from the Vice Chancellor's office didn't include people with disabilities. So, we as a Disability Unit and the Disability Interest Group sent out a response to that on the [university] website in order to make sure that disability is recognised, but he [*the Vice Chancellor*] didn't actually respond. So that's something we need to keep an eye on — that disability is included in the transformation agenda (Roy).

The unequal power dynamics between university management and DUSMs means that those charged with protecting the rights of SWDs do not have the authority to do so. As Elize and Fiona's comments acknowledge, it is the attitudes and involvement of the top management structure in creating inclusive environments for SWDs that really matters.

> Our management is involved. Although they can't transform the university totally with regards to infrastructure, […] I do get the support from management (Elize).

> There is a lot of work that still needs to be done with that, but we have the support from the Rectorate and the top management of the university. We have the university support of the Deans of the different Faculties. We have the support of the teaching and learning managers in terms of the academic part (Fiona).

Participants pointed out that if the management personnel are genuinely concerned with supporting the full participation of SWDs, they should earmark disability funding for supporting both the academic needs and social needs of SWDs. However, in reality, this seems not to be the case on many campuses. Nthabiseng, for example, described her subordinated status position as a "normal staff member" which leaves her powerless to protect the interests of SWDs.

> Our institution's buildings are very old and in terms of funds they are not willing to spend money to renovate these old buildings. These buildings need to be improved, but the management are hesitating. It might be the lack of funds or maybe the funds are prioritised for something else, but honestly speaking at the moment I don't think it's a priority from where l am standing as a normal staff member (Nthabiseng).

Several participants spoke of their powerlessness to negotiate effectively with university management to put in place effective measures for making campuses welcoming spaces for students with diverse disabilities.

Instead of lobbying the management to provide disability funding, some DUSMs have rather resorted to coming up with alternative solutions aimed at compensating for their managements' failings and the lack of disability funding.

> The former Director of Finances did not want to put the lift in our building which was inaccessible for staff and students with disabilities […] because he is one of those [people] who squeezes a Rand until it starts to cry. I actually took a chance, and sent in a request to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and that's why those lifts were installed. If it wasn't for that all [that] those lifts wouldn't have been installed, because the university wouldn't have budgeted for it. It's frustrating, because everything is money, money, money, especially with the infrastructure stuff. That's the reality, but we are building up allies as we go to change mind-sets, especially of the management (Andries).

> So yes, we do have challenges around funding, but then we find solutions. [W]e don't run away from it, we find solutions, we go look for external funding. So, financial challenges do remain (Fiona).

> As for general disability support, funding is always a challenge. I would be glad to know if there isn't another institution that doesn't face funding challenges. We always need more human resources, more assistive devices to adequately support our students. But I think at the end of the day, you need to do what you need to do with what you have. […] S,o we try and find external funding sometimes (Catherine).

However, as Joyce pointed out, Disability Units which rely only on funding from external sources alone are likely to put the educational experience of SWDs in jeopardy as receiving such funding is not always guaranteed.

> So, we're not getting funding to pay for staff members or to pay for assistive devices that belongs to the university or to the Disability Unit. So, universities need to pay for that themselves. So, from time to time, we will do fundraising. It is not that easy to get funding anymore. We've put in a lot of different proposals, but we've had a lot of "sorry we can't this year" responses (Joyce).

Thus, reliance on external funding due to management's lacklustre approach to disability funding and inclusion initiatives leaves SWDs in a precarious position on many campuses. DUSMs, however, often seemed resigned to the inevitability of disability not being a budgetary priority.

> The other problem is budgeting. Say, for instance, I submit a report for a few buildings which need to be adjusted and maybe it's not a building that needs to be prioritised according to our management. They prioritise this building about five years back, so now they are working on those buildings, and now I come with a different building. They must see where to fit it in, so it's a whole prioritising thing (Elize).

As Young (1990: 5) observes, given the structural nature of oppression, this means its causes are "embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules" which subsequently impose systematic constraints on marginalised groups. Some DUSMs

spoke in ways that suggested they have internalised the idea that SWDs' needs will not be prioritised, as normal.

Some smaller HEIs, especially those without fully-fledged Disability Units, have little awareness about the needs of SWDs, thus leaving these students vulnerable to social isolation.

> Honestly, to be frank with you, we haven't really done much in having campaigns to raise awareness about people with disabilities (Nthabiseng).

> We don't run awareness raising activities in this residence. Maybe we tend to be, [and] some people will think that we are harsh. No, maybe it's a shortfall from us; maybe we never saw a need for that. We still need to raise awareness on that aspect (Thembani).

In many cases, however, Disability Units have sought to intervene in order to achieve a sensitised management through awareness raising initiatives to make management more well-informed about disability issues, and to act accordingly.

> Our top management [...] is definitely so much pro-awareness raising. They talk about it; they invest in these labs and in the staff and so on. So, there's never where disability is not something that's mentioned. It's not that you need to inform them about disability issues. It's just there (Beverly).

Having SWDs in leadership positions such as the SRC plays an important role in making awareness raising activities effective in transforming attitudes.

> And then other things that do happen on campus, is the SRC member on campus with the accessibility and student support portfolio, and this year, for the first time, was a blind student, and she went to great lengths to create awareness. She has raised awareness in every single meeting she has attended. She went out and she took the Rectorate one day, and she told them assume you are blind, you are in a wheelchair, you are deaf, you are not allowed to speak to anyone, you have to sign, I mean the person doesn't even know how to sign. She forced them to spend

> their normal working day as a deaf person, a blind person, a person in a wheelchair. So, the Dean for Student Affairs was asked to be in a wheelchair and this is when she realised that […] her building didn't have a wheelchair accessible toilet. She cannot go to the bathroom, she cannot enter the building, and the lift is not working. And then she realised that students with disabilities don't feel welcome here. And then she […] changed her bathroom to a wheelchair accessible bathroom. She has now put in a new lift in her building. She has now changed her door because she experienced it herself (Lilian).

However, conventional awareness raising activities are not uncontroversial. Some see them as reinforcing medicalised conceptions of disability, and constructions of disability as personal tragedy. Mitchell, for example, argues that activities of this kind do little to dismantle negative attitudes towards SWDs, but serve rather to perpetuate the stereotype of the person with a disability as helpless.

> In terms of awareness raising, we get a group of disabled people […] and we invite people usually […] at lunchtime [to] come and have a conversation with our students. We encourage people to come and ask those questions that they've always been too embarrassed to ask, so we give them that chance and people talk frankly and openly, so normally we will have very good conversations. I think one has to be careful as well. I don't believe, for instance, that blindfolding sighted people, and saying that['s] what it's like to be blind, because it's not like that. If you blindfold a sighted person, they become completely helpless. They are too scared to put one foot in front of the other. That's not what it's like for the blind person. Because as a blind person you've developed a wide range of skills and other ways of getting information, so actually what you are doing blindfolding a sighted person is making them even more terrified and thinking 'Oh, my God! It must be terrifying being blind!', and the same [when] putting someone in a wheelchair (Mitchell).

What is not in doubt is the need for SWDs to be putting themselves forward for leadership and decision-making positions and to take part in day-to-day campus activities.

> I know that one of our wheelchair students is part of Hall Committee in her residence. We've had our students compete in Sari competitions. You know — they just normally integrate into the normal social gatherings in general. So, we try and encourage them to participate in all things on offer on campus and almost

> all of them are taking part. I know that our students are at Student Forum regularly and we have students on the debate teams. You know, as far as the social activities go that's like any other student. You know there is absolutely no exclusion because of the disability, and as far as events are concerned, they attend all the parties and everything (Francois).

Self-representation of SWDs in central governance structures, such as the SRC and House Committees, is important in fighting for rights which non-disabled people might take for granted.

> So, we place them as much as possible in residences where they can participate actively, and we motivate them. I mean, we've had students who are on residence committees and they really become involved, specifically with their residences (Fiona).

> We do have quite a few of our students or disabled students also on the House Committee and the SRC as well. So, they're always integrated with the events and things like that (Jarome).

> We've been very fortunate, in the sense, that for many years we had students with disabilities in the SRC and in the different House Committees, which means that their voices will always be heard (Joyce).

Within the South African HE context, there have been calls for "substantive representation of different population groups in governance, management, decision-making bodies, faculties and administration" (DoE 2008: 37) if these institutions are to prevent the exclusion of marginalised members. Underrepresentation in decision-making positions perpetuates the lack of responsiveness and effectiveness of leadership to the needs of marginalised groups (Philips 1991). In order to avoid this, SWDs are taking the initiative to contest for House Committee and SRC positions. The fact that they are successful not only indicates that they have good campaigning skills, but that they are trusted to be good leaders by those who elect them as well. As Abina pointed out, seeing SWDs in leadership positions has the potential to change stereotyped ways of seeing disability.

> I think the big thing is sort of the advocacy aspect of it. So, when people see the SRC, they see me, and they will believe that there are students who are not just sitting in a corner waiting for things to happen to them. They can get out there and sort of advocate for their rights and their minority group. Also, I think changing the minds of the people within the SRC body itself, because if they didn't have open minds, I would not have been able to achieve what I've achieved (Abina).

One of the practical gains Abina was able to achieve for SWDs was the provision of cafeteria menus in Braille. It is unlikely that a campaign like this would have been possible without a person whose first-hand experience made it possible for her to have insight into what needed to be done. Through her leadership position on the SRC, she not only changed people's perceptions about disability, but represented the interests and perspectives of blind students, thus enhancing their capacity for independent living through not having to rely on their sighted peers when ordering food.

Previous South African studies have shown that non-disabled SRC members can also represent the perspectives and needs of SWDs. Howell (2015), for instance, discusses the critical role of the SRC in reaching out to SWDs on campus. As Pula pointed out, making venues, such as cafeterias, *physically* accessible to SWDs does not amount to making these places more hospitable. Pula commended the role played by leadership in ensuring, for instance, that SWDs get first preference when buying food.

> The SRC members are very involved, especially when it comes to the cafeteria. They are the ones that see to it that the disabled people are the ones who are getting service first. Sometimes, during lunch time, [when] the queue is long the SRC members ensure that disabled students stand in front of the queue. Even the cafeterias. They know that 'oh [they're] disabled', so they give them service first before any other student (Pula).

On the other hand, Morris (1991) has criticised non-disabled people who offer to help PWDs, arguing this only serves to make non-disabled people feel unique and "special". Similar scepticism was voiced by Fatima:

> The minute the new SRC is elected we link up with them […] We make it clear that the students with disabilities are part of the wider student population. It doesn't always result in implementation from the SRC. When they are lobbying, they get quite excited, because now disability is a transformation issue, and it's something that is being side-lined in universities. So, they feel like if they bring that in, people are going to say: 'here is someone coming with a different angle'. You know, so there is a thing of 'I would rather vote for that person'. So, they use it to suit themselves, so it doesn't always translate into implementation (Fatima).

Following Plotke (1997: 19 see also Urbinati 2000), central to representation is the important role it plays in "constituting democratic practices". A notable example of such democratic practices is the formation of public opinion and judgment, and this makes representation an important tool for avoiding the exclusion of marginalised members in the society (Urbinati & Warren 2008). In the context of PWDs, South African disability policies have noted that giving this group representation opportunities is a necessity, as members of this group are best equipped with developing effective strategies aimed at changing perceptions and attitudes of the non-disabled community towards disability (Office of the Deputy President 1997).

Academic hospitality

> Our academic programmes encourage students here to participate and live with others. So, it's through residence programmes that we can make students say that when we produce or release them to the labour market, we release well-rounded students. A well-rounded student is not just a student who is doing well in class, but it's a student who is also able to socialise with other people and can participate with confidence. So, this makes our residence programmes very important (Yolani).

While academic programmes offered in residences are designed to improve the academic success of SWDs, these programmes have enduring positive outcomes, such as building students' social skills, thus making their lives easier when they transition to the labour market environment. It has been argued that one of the biggest challenges facing new students "is finding a balance between the academic and social spheres of university life" (Pit 2014). While a narrow approach

to academic inclusion might regard these collateral benefits as less important than initiatives that help to ensure academic success, *Ubuntu* ethics help to shift the focus to the "whole person", enabling policy makers to see such collateral benefits as central, rather than incidental. Thus, rather than academic inclusion, I refer here to academic "hospitality", suggesting an environment that makes it possible for SWDs to achieve their full academic potential, but not to the exclusion of acknowledging and addressing the full range of their human needs. Lebogang captures this idea in the phrase "living and learning", which suggests a move away from the compartmentalisation of life into "social" and "academic" aspects to reflect the fluidity and continuity in life as it is lived.

> There is this program called a mentorship programme. That's where we appoint mentors within the residences. For instance, we group them according to courses that they do. For instance, the first-year engineering students get a mentor who also studies engineering. I will have a mentor and mentees that are in the same course, and we will have sessions after class to help them with the workload and even with class material. So, residences are no longer only for living and going to class every morning. There is also that element of living and learning in the residences (Lebogang).

The rationale for mentoring programmes is to help first year students, including SWDs, to cope with the challenges of transitioning to university life. The effectiveness of these programmes is usually judged by whether or not they play a role in improving pass rates. Whether or not generic programmes of this nature can cater adequately for the diverse needs of SWDs is often unscrutinised, and the collateral benefits of such programmes from the perspective of social integration are not easy to measure.

It is not surprising that universities value academic excellence. What this focus means, however, is that inclusion tends to come to be framed narrowly to focus only on supporting SWDs academically, and not in other spheres of life. For example, the participation of PWDs in sport is not regarded as of fundamental importance within the education context (Kiuppis 2016). Therefore, non-participation in sport is not equated to social exclusion or a violation of rights (Spaaij *et al*. 2014). DUSMs often perpetuate, rather than contest, this focus on academic

inclusion. SWDs who are doing well in their academic work are celebrated by DUSMs, but the subtext is often an element of surprise that a person with a disability does well at "difficult subjects". There is also an underlying assumption that a person with a disability should not be spreading themselves too thin by becoming involved in other facets of life, such as sport or socialisation.

> At the moment, we have got two visually impaired students. The one is doing his third year in Sports Psychology, and we have got another visually impaired student with albinism. He studies sciences, some sort of Math. Extremely, extremely difficult course, and he is doing very well, and the last time I saw his marks were in the average of 70s and top 70s. For a person who is visually impaired, I think it's exceptional (Elizabeth).

> We have blind students, and one of them is doing a BSC in Genetics, and he has completed subjects like Physics, Chemistry you know, Mathematics all difficult subjects. He is in his Third year now and he is getting distinctions for every subject (Francois).

> Our students come here, they become lawyers, they graduate *Summa Cum Laude*, they do their Master's in Law, they do their Master's in Public Administration. So, the students that come here, the biggest proportion already have that in them; that 'I'm going to make a difference, I'm going to change my life, I'm going to do this'. Obviously with help, but they have shown the courage to take the first step already […] So when they go out, they are good representatives of the university and they have grown and [are] able to do lots of things, and then be role models [for] other people with disabilities (Debbie).

The legitimisation of the focus on academic inclusion means that institutions can get away with providing for the (narrowly conceived) academic needs of SWDs which require SWDs themselves to work hard for themselves without their institutions having to spend more money on creating campuses that are fully accessible to all, including, for example, with respect to sporting infrastructure.

> I know that there are some Disability Units who have enough staff members to provide extracurricular activities to involve students with disabilities in sport, but this Disability Unit concentrates only on academics (Debbie).

What this narrow focus does is to refuse the person with a disability the multifaceted identity that non-disabled people take for granted. As Thandolwethu's remarks make clear, SWDs are entitled to be seen as "whole people" with diverse interests, passions and motivations — just as any other student would routinely be seen.

> I think the sporting thing also discourages disabled people to come to the university as well. It's not only academic. I'm not going to lie — it's not only academics that got me here. You know, for me, [this university] was the university to be, like the social, the vibe, the party vibe besides the academics. They host the best parties, you know what I mean. And I also came here because in my first year I studied sports science. I got a certificate in sports science because of the high performance as well. That also drew me like 'wow, okay!'. Because I did judo when I was at school — I was like 'I'm going to study at [this university], can you imagine! I'm going to study there at the sports centre'. So, besides the academics, the sports, the sporting part of it. […] That actually motivated me. I looked forward to coming here because I knew that there was something I could do sporting wise. Sport is actually my first passion, understand. So, I was like 'yeah, I'm going there', [kind of] hoping. Yeah, I'm still active in sport. I still do judo. I do dance now […] I used to do swimming. I stopped now. I do blind cricket and I do goalball (Thandolwethu).

Participants pointed out that participation in sport benefits students in many ways, — for instance, inculcating self-discipline and leading to friendships — which can have knock-on effects for academic achievement and other aspects of life.

> It's not even about disabilities. I find that any student who really plays sport, whether for a social club or on national level, excels in academics as well. There is a sense of discipline that runs through your sport into your life and into your studies. They make better friends, they get their own support structure, they even contribute to the awareness of other people to see them as people playing like they do, so it's not only for the disabled, but any and every student who plays sport instead of just hanging around the TV. To me, it's like almost building himself a better life and a more adjusted and balanced life (Elizabeth).

Thus, to deprive SWDs of opportunities to participate in sport is to deprive them of much more than access to a trivial hobby. Hospitable academic environments are those that treat students holistically, rather than focusing narrowly on academic needs as if these can be isolated from the wider student experience. A lack of appropriate sports facilities means that in many cases SWDs discontinue participating in sport.

> Prioritising academic inclusion over social inclusion is what is happening at this university, but it's killing the students' talents in sport because they come here good at sport after high school. Students from special schools are good at cricket and athletics and they come here and it's like zero! I have been here since 2005, and I saw so many students with disabilities coming here after high school wanting to participate in sport. But they did not get support, and then it goes like zero! They want to get involved, but they don't know how, because it's like they are expecting us to do something about it, but we are not doing anything about it. They will even go to Further Education and Training (FET) colleges to join the blind cricket club. It's like their dreams die because there is no club for them, no team for them. There is no support for them here to continue their sporting activities. As long as you are fine academically, you will sort yourself with other stuff — that is what is happening here. I'm not saying it in a bad way, but that is the reality of what is happening here (Boitumelo).

Hospitable social environments

> Apart from our internal activities and programme, we also have a combined program that we do together as all campus residences every year, and it includes, for example, the beauty pageants, talent shows and music shows (Nthabiseng).

Hospitable social environments are those characterised by a wide range of ongoing social activities that SWDs can choose from either as participants or as spectators. Inclusive education initiatives often focus on the classroom setting, but the provision of a wide range of social activities in residences not only help SWDs to discover their hidden talents, but also equips them with other practical skills, such as fundraising skills, which they can use post-tertiary education. Universities often talk about priding themselves on holistic graduate attributes, but then, through a narrow focus

on academic inclusion, deny SWDs access to the full range of campus experiences that foster these attributes.

> In fact, now we even coin it as holistic education. Here we pride ourselves in having a holistic student or graduate through our graduate attributes. You know what builds a student is in not only a classroom. We need a student that will be said 'here is an ideal student from [this university] who will be tight with others when they vacate the university'. Inclusive education must be the one that will also build a student beyond the borders of the university. That will always remember that before I am a student, I am a member of a community. I come from somewhere, and I must acknowledge the problems that are there in the country (Thembani).

> For most students, afterwards, when they are finished and graduated, they will call me and tell me 'you know, we are so grateful, you know all the things that you have been doing in residence, you know, now I can see that those things are becoming very useful for me. Those things are becoming useful for me' (Nthabiseng).

SWDs who live off-campus are often denied access to a wide range of opportunities to participate in the social life of the university. Outside of residence life, most universities find it difficult to support the inclusion of SWDs.

> Firstly, when our students start here in their first year, we encourage them to be part of the university by attending the activities arranged by their residences. That's where they will learn about different activities that are happening here on campus. They also learn about events through the student association which is our link between us and the students. We use this association in that regard to encourage them to be part of the university community and to be involved in the activities as well. It's easier for students that stay on campus to be part of the activities. We have some that are staying out of campus which is a bit difficult to encourage them to be part of these activities (Lulama).

The creation of hospitable social environments on campus, as Catherine suggests, is as much about assumptions and preconceptions as it is about facilities and equipment.

> I think disability support is not just about equipment, without having a personal touch. It's really about wanting to see your students succeeding in everything they do. Not just on an academic level, also in sports as one [the] aspects of social inclusion. I think we need to conceptualise all those aspects when we support our students (Catherine).

Non-disabled university community members often unwittingly make erroneous assumptions about the capabilities of SWDs to participate in SARAs.

> The barriers are still there. People should learn more about disability, because if, for example, a student with a disability says 'okay, I want to take part in athletics', some people will say 'how will that blind student take part in athletics?' They should remove that mentality. Even if you are a blind student and you want to be an athlete, you can. That student who is blind, that I told you about, […] she is part of the Student Representative Committee. She is an athlete. I think we have got two other students with disabilities who are also athletes here. So, we as [the] Disability Unit […] are engaging our students. So, if the other side says 'no' we normally ask 'why?' Then they say 'because he is blind,' we say 'no, no, blindness is not going to prevent this person from being an athlete. Instead, you can assist this person like this [...] If a blind person is running and is next to a person, [they run] as long as there is nothing in front'. Even basketball. The wheelchair users can play basketball as well (Tumelo).

Disability is often equated with vulnerability (Bryan 2000). This could result in PWDs being treated as alien based on their physical characteristics (Morris 1991). Some educators view sport as "nothing more than leisure" and downplay the responsibility of educational institutions to provide opportunities for all to engage in these pursuits (Churches 1980). Research finds that PWDs routinely face exclusion from sporting activities in educational settings, and that both non-disabled peers and teachers have low expectations of pupils with disabilities who are seen as "unlikely to do well, or worse still, get physically or emotionally hurt while participating" (Musengi & Mudyahoto, 2010: 14).

Ubuntu ethics encourage community members to be considerate in the sense of being "thoughtful towards other people", as opposed to ignoring the needs of others (Prinsloo 2001: 59). As Myers *et*

al. (2014: 60) argue, "labels have often been cultivated by those with privilege as a way to collectively marginalise and oppress certain identities". Central to these labels is that the targeted groups are often deemed as deviant from the norm, and incur negative labels despite this being harmful to their full participation in mainstream society (Myers *et al*. 2014). Seen from this angle, encouraging SWDs to participate in sport therefore becomes critical, especially given the prevalence of negative attitudes that aim to disqualify PWDs for not meeting the guidelines of the ideal, capable sporting body (Hardin 2003; DePauw & Gavron 2005). Research has called for South African HEIs to encourage their SWDs to participate in SARAs, which are beneficial to these students' holistic development (Roux & Burnett 2010). When the person with a disability is labelled as frail or incapable, this becomes a way of justifying non-consideration of that person's need to participate and be seen as a full member of the community.

> I think there are sporting events that [our students] could participate in. But I think, if you have a disability, you already have so much to deal with. I'm now talking especially about students with physical disabilities. They have a lot to deal with. They have to get up very, very early in the morning to catch the municipal transport to bring them here, and then they are in class the whole day. Their bodies don't deal with stress the same way that our bodies deal with stress, so they easily get tired. They get sick easily, and when they get sick, it takes them longer to recover than it does for the rest of us. So, for me, I think if they want to participate, then they can, but we are certainly not forcing them to participate unless they are passionate about it, because then they have to go home. They have assignments and stuff (Deidre).

Assumptions about the frailty of physically disabled bodies as a barrier to participation have been contested by SWDs themselves. For example, Bukhala (2009) found that physical discomfort, medical problems and medication were the least mentioned (4%) hindrances to PWD's participation in sport. Rather, participants pointed to "inaccessible facilities, lack of encouragement, lack of information, lack of equipment, inappropriate activities and lack of skills" as the actual barriers (Bukhala 2009: 33). While Deidre focuses on physical frailty, her remarks suggest that the real problem lies with the lack of adapted convenient transport for SWDs which leaves them with no time to participate in sport.

Wheelchair-adjusted transport is central to campuses being able to realise the rights of SWDs to participate in sport meaningfully, as Elizabeth pointed out.

> We don't have a swimming pool here at [this university]. So, Mandeville Sport Club has hoists to get the disabled guys into the pool and the coaches etc. Then we provide transport for you there, whether you are a national swimmer or not. If you want to do swimming you have the right to go and swim, so that's how we see it (Elizabeth).

The accessibility to adapted transport for wheelchair users is provided for in Article 9 of the UNCRPD. South Africa's NSFAS caters for SWDs by providing non-means tested financial support to SWDs to study at one of the country's 23 public HEIs (NSFAS 2012). Included are transport costs to and from campus (NSFAS 2013). However, DUSMs pointed out that in many cases, flexible and suitable transportation simply does not exist, which makes it difficult, particularly for wheelchair users, to socialise with other students or to access campus at all after hours.

> Our students are not on campus […] A lot of our students are in private accommodation and that makes it very difficult for them to be part of the university's social clubs, because, you know, transport for them is quite a challenge. Therefore, if you want to have an event with all students from various campuses, you can't. The transport is coming to pick them up at the specific time of the day and therefore they are not here in the evenings. If they can't socialise, they can only socialise between breaks of classes, which is a problem. And we don't have a shuttle service, you know, we don't have that. The other thing is that we are having a challenge with starting a social group and get[ting] students with disabilities involved, because we don't have transport and students are in different campuses (Claudine).

As participants pointed out, wheelchair users cannot simply "hop onto" public transport. Lack of appropriate transport can leave these students socially isolated and unable to access basic services that others take for granted, such as shops and entertainment. Lack of suitable transport undermines SWDs' independence and full participation in community life.

> Look, the challenge is not only for students with disabilities, but it's the same for all our students as it is for our non-disabled students at the residences. They are far from anything, okay. It's even worse for our students with disabilities, because they can't hop on public transport, taxis, because we are far and isolated from shopping areas and the CBD. […] So, for them to get to those areas, accessible transport is a problem. It just makes it difficult for our SWDs to get out there and go to a movie, or to go shopping. The other students can hop [on] a taxi to go out. SWDs might find it difficult, because we don't have accessible transport for wheelchair users and that's also something we are looking at (Debbie).

> I think it happens most at residence life, so it's very important that we communicate to the residences where students are involved to include them in activities, because they do a lot of cultural and social events and those kinds of things. But I do know that sometimes for our students it might feel like more effort. For example, if you take a blind student who goes to a residence function or maybe a formal or something that happens at a different venue. A blind student needs transport to get there. Okay, while it does not mean that a blind student has a friend who gives them a ride or, and, maybe, they do. They get to the function and maybe they are not enjoying themselves, and they want to leave, but they are dependent on somebody else to take them. So, it might be beneficial to have a transport arrangement on campus for students who are blind. For example, after they have been to a function, there is a driver to take them when they want to go home. So, they don't really have a choice. They are forced to be stuck there until somebody takes them home (Lilian).

Participants from campuses where flexible and appropriate transportation does exist commented on how significant this is for fostering inclusion in practice for SWDs.

> Even ensuring that there is accessible transport for SWDs, because we have four sites. SWDs may wish to visit other students on other sites, just like any other student would do. So, we have a transport system — a little shuttle service provides them with that access. The transport is for any academic-related activities, or if they have interviews or internship placements, or even if they want to go shopping to our nearest shopping centre, or they have to go to hospital for physiotherapy or chemo (Catherine).

> Whatever we plan on campus: it's open to them. We have the bus that transports students with disabilities, not very far, but around different campuses (Joyce).

Ubuntu ethics instructs community members, and particularly those in leadership positions, to assume responsibility for removing all possible disabling barriers. *Ubuntu* calls for the needs of the minority to always be prioritised. Community members are expected to exhibit a caring attitude and show "compassion by being troubled or concerned about someone else's condition" (Prinsloo 2001: 59). Fatima's comments evince this approach.

> At this university, we encourage our students to participate in every activity. Every student must be equal to everyone. They should be doing anything that they want without any obstacle. So, students with disabilities should let us know about each and every activity that they want to participate in, so that we can inform them on how to assist them to be part of these programmes. All students are the same and should be treated the same (Fatima).

However, an ethics of mutual care and concern cannot be expected to emerge organically. Sport may itself be a mechanism for the inculcation of a spirit of *Ubuntu* on South African campuses. The idea of "teamwork or work as a team" is central to *Ubuntu* (Brooks & Nafukho 2006: 412-413). Mbigi (1997) argues that, in pro-African communities which embrace the values of *Ubuntu*, the spirit of solidarity was harnessed through various collective works. In Shona culture, reference is made to "*nhimbe* where a family may call for help from other villagers and provide food and beer" (Mbigi 1997: 4). In the contemporary university environment, sport provides an opportunity to teach members of a community the value of teamwork and interdependence. Instead, though, our universities are often places where SWDs encounter significant barriers to full participation and where many opportunities for inculcating cooperative values are lost as a result of framing sport as a matter of individual preference and achievement.

> I noticed, like, especially, this university focuses only on individuals, on sporting for individuals. It's a thing if, like, you are well-off and can afford so much money to be an athlete, obviously you are going to pay that money. But they don't focus on team sport. So, if I want to play, like, team sport, let's say blind cricket, there's no club or facilities for that here. I have to go out of the university system and go look elsewhere, when, instead, they could change their way of thinking and start focusing more on team-oriented sports, because not all of us want to be athletes. I prefer playing cricket, for example. I'm a team person. I don't play for myself. I think 'yoh! They should do that!' Break down that barrier and focus

> more on team sport and you will see more and more people coming to participate, and more and more people coming to the university, because they will be, like, 'they offer that kind of sport, so we [are] going there' (Thandolwethu).

As Myers *et al*. (2014) argue, the covert attitudes of non-disabled people within HE are some of the most difficult to address since such individuals often do not understand the challenges brought about by their perspectives. Harmful covert attitudes contribute to the creation of inhospitable institutional cultures from the perspective of SWDs, and are sometimes held even by DUSMs who are meant to be champions for SWDs. An example of such an assumption is the idea that a person with a disability has to work harder to keep up academically with everyone else.

> The involvement of students with disabilities is a challenge. The work pressure is a lot. They have to work that much harder than other [non-disabled] students. Even setting up a society for students with disabilities — we don't pressurise them. We know that the work pressure is really hectic for them. So, student involvement is minimal because of academic pressure (Deidre).

As Nicolson (2008) argues, individuals who embrace the values of *Ubuntu* are concerned with the welfare of everyone in the community. This is contrary to individualists rather place great emphasis on the need to respect each individual's freedom of choice (Triandis & Suh 2002). In social settings where the individual choice paradigm is preeminent, the social and structural causes of non-participation of SWDs in social activities is downplayed and justified as a matter of individual choice. Failure to participate is thus constructed as a matter of personal preference, rather than an outcome of disabling institutional cultures, practices and attitudes.

> At the moment, I think a lot of that question is dependent on the student. If the students themselves are proactive, then they will do sport. It depends on the students themselves what they want. It is also important that they take control and they take charge of their own inclusion; that is not my Unit's responsibility (Debbie).

Ubuntu defines the individual in terms of several relationships with others (Louw 1998). Thus, friendship is central to a person's ability to realise their true self (Metz 2011b). SWDs who take part in team sport have more opportunities to form and sustain relationships with both SWDs and non-disabled students beyond the classroom setting. Katleko's soccer team initiative, explained by Joyce below, is one notable example of how such an enabling environment can be fostered and built.

> In terms of sport, there is this lovely initiative: "Katleko's soccer team". Many years ago, it was four/five years ago, the Disability Awareness Movements (DAM) wanted to set up a soccer team in order to raise awareness and also bring sort of integration with disabled students outside and non-disabled students. So they thought of soccer, as it is a big sport nationally. I think they are playing in first division or second division soccer at the university, and that's combined with students with disabilities and non-disabled students. So, that's something that has been running for quite a while. Well, it's not to win. They are doing very well, but initially they just thought of this, just to have a soccer team, because they did not have many disabled members to form a team, so they included others. That's again a nice example of mainstreaming, where disabled and non-disabled students actually took the lead in getting friends that are non-disabled to come and join them, and they are really enjoying it (Joyce).

House Committee and SRC members are often targeted for sensitisation workshops to educate them on the importance of always having SWDs in mind when planning social activities, in order to avoid the risk of potentially discriminating against SWDs through holding events in inaccessible venues.

> We do talk to all students at the beginning of the year, all first-year students coming in, to make awareness of the Disability Unit. And, at the same time, we also try and raise awareness discussing challenges that students could have, and that students should also take responsibility. For example, if they can organise a first-year party at their Residence, that they make sure that where they are having it, is it accessible, the venue, that kind of thing? (Roy).

> We work a lot with the residences and with the House Committee Members and the SRC. In the SRC, for instance, there's always a person who is also tasked in his portfolio with disability. So, we worked closely with them and we do training

> with them. [We emphasise to them that] that whenever there is a function or social event, they should always keep in mind that it should be accessible for all people, and not only in terms of venue accessibility for people using wheelchairs, but also in terms of how you advertise the event, for instance, because many times people will put up posters and then the blind students wouldn't be aware of it (Joyce).

Joyce's point echoes the findings of a South African study which found that, in many instances, visually impaired and blind students felt they were not sufficiently aware of campus social events, as information posted on notice boards is only accessible to sighted students (FOTIM 2011 see also Bukhala 2009). The UNCRPD notes that the provision of accessible information and communication is important in enabling PWDs to enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms fully (United Nations 2006). Thus, inclusive communication methods are central to the fostering of hospitable campus cultures.

> So, for me, one of the most important things is to disseminate the information. So, our role in that is to make the information accessible to the students. We can print something in Braille if it's needed, or we can provide a sign language interpreting services if it's needed also. So, disseminating information and disseminating accessible information, I think, is a big role that we play in creating opportunities. So, if you create the opportunities and you disseminate the information and you create the space where this can happen, the choice in the end all remains the student's. But we don't want students to say, 'Oh, but I didn't know.' So, we make sure that the information goes out; we make sure that there are enough opportunities and then it's up to them to participate (Debbie).

Enabling cultures and attitudinal shifts can only go so far, however, in creating hospitable campus environments. Where a place is physically built in such a way that it is inaccessible to a student with a disability, no amount of attitudinal change will make it possible for that person to enter into it. There is no point in saying a stranger is welcome in the chief's home if the door is barred. The built environments of campuses are central to whether or not they are experienced as hospitable or disabling.

Hospitable physical infrastructure

> We want them to be able to be independent, but also confident to ask for assistance when they need it. So, if we were going to put them in a residence all by themselves and we are going to make, you know, social events just for them, then we [are] sort of excluding them, or we [are] sort of isolating them from the rest of the university community, and I don't think that is really the way to go. I don't think that will have the right impact on our students, because, you know, in the end we want them to be part of the university community. We want them to contribute, you know, successfully (Deidre).

> Ok, so what we prefer to do in terms of so many of our students [is to have them] stay on campus, because it's safer for them, and it makes the campus more accessible. It's easier for them to get from point A to point B — they don't have to struggle with transport and stuff like that. So, as far as that goes we try to place them, we work closely with Housing Residence Affairs and we try and place them as widely as possible on campus, and not put them all in one residence. So, we have a blind student here, we have a deaf student there, we have maybe another blind student there, we have a wheelchair student here, we have some students with specific learning difficulties here, we have a student with cerebral palsy here and there. We really encourage them and encourage the residences themselves because a lot of your student activities on campus are residence focused (Fiona).

The opposite of hospitality is isolation — the segregation of a student with a disability from their peers (Tripp *et al*. 2007). Placement of SWDs in residences is the first step in ensuring that these students are not isolated from their non-disabled peers. Once placed in residence, the next step is integration into the full range of activities on offer. But this is only possible if the physical infrastructure of campuses is designed in such a way that it is not disabling. As Mugumbate & Nyoni (2013: 4) point out, "if a person with a wheelchair is unable to access a building because it has stairs then that person becomes disabled". South African campuses are fraught with disabling infrastructure. For instance, wheelchair users must negotiate campuses with broken lifts, or no lifts, which means that they are unable to consult lecturers whose offices are located on upper levels (Macupe 2017).

The goal of integration in residences is thwarted by the absence of reliable functioning lifts which means that students with physical disabilities are often confined to the ground floors or choose not to attend universities that would be disabling to them.

> For someone that is physically disabled, they wouldn't be able to climb stairs, so I would say maybe a lift. I don't know [of] other means of helping them go up. They should not be limited to the ground floor. It creates stigma. Facilities wise, they must try to make them accessible. People who apply here do their own research first, mostly those that are a bit disadvantaged or critically disabled, would rather go to more accommodating universities than come here (Nthabiseng).

> I don't know how to categorise her disability; she has her leg amputated and she is using, like, crutches. We had to put her [on] the ground floor, because of the stairs. There are stairs coming from the door […]to go up, hence we had to place her on the ground floor. She is not accommodated, I won't lie (Lebogang).

Hospitality for students with physical disabilities cannot be granted by the mere installation of lifts, but by ensuring the constant maintenance of these lifts, as social aspects of students' lives are compromised in the event of lifts breaking down as well.

> As for the first group [*referring to students with physical disabilities*], you have to look at the physical accessibility, because if, if your environment is not physically accessible for them, and then they can't go to meetings or to parties or therefore you have to look, especially in residence also. If a lift is not working, they can't go and you know, meet with friends upstairs in the rooms. Therefore, you have to look at the environment, the physical environment must be accessible, and therefore we are trying our best to do that (Claudine).

Residences that are not located within the proximity of central facilities often utilised by all students pose a challenge, particularly for students whose disability leads to reduced mobility.

> Like I said, the issue of old infrastructure is the one that makes it difficult to accommodate students with disabilities. The challenge now, it's for them to reach

> classes from the residences. We don't have the infrastructure. The infrastructure is not set up in such a way that they can use lifts or ramps or whatever. That is a challenge. Our whole residence is away from the library and lecture halls (Yolani).

A hospitable attitude requires of members of a community that those whose needs differ from the norm, or which are seen as "strange", are accommodated. SWDs often present institutions with a need which is, as Andries puts it, "something new", but to be a hospitable host means finding ways to provide for such needs.

> See, it's a new thing this year. [I] will also tell you we have a blind student which is the first time we had to deal with this situation. Now, the implications of that: she got a new guide dog which is trained especially for her. She wanted to come specifically to study here and she wanted to come with her guide dog. And we tried to get her into a residence that was on campus, but the guide dog must stay with her. Now, the residences on campus are double rooms, so it's a big room but it's for 2 students, but the guide dog must be with her all the time. It's a new guide dog. It's not a pet, it's a working dog. For her, this guide dog is a device, the guide dog must stay with her. […] So, then we had a struggle, and now, luckily, they ended up accommodating her. But it was quite an experience. I see her walking around with the guide dog. The guide came with the guide dog for a few days, taught the guide dog the route from the residence to where she has classes etc. So that's something new. We have never had that. So, when push comes to shove, I'm available to the campuses to help them talk and to negotiate and to do whatever (Andries).

The historical placement of PWDs in institutions such as segregated schools, institutionalised care settings and sheltered employment has been criticised for isolating PWDs from their family, friends and communities (Cheeseman 2015). This form of isolation is disempowering as it fosters "the assumption that a person is incapable or unworthy of participating in the community" (Cheeseman 2015: 41). This institutionalised form of segregation of PWDs is a violation of their rights as per the provisions of the UNCRPD which advocates the deinstitutionalisation of PWDs (United Nations 2006). When campus infrastructure does not provide physical access for PWDs, this amounts to a reintroduction, in effect, of institutional segregation. One arena in which physical segregation and exclusion has to be challenged is with regard to participation in sport. As described above, the

significance of participation in sport is non-trivial and exclusion is partly to do with attitudinal barriers and partly to do with infrastructural barriers.

South Africa is a signatory to the UNCRPD. During its Eleventh session, which took place from 31 March to 11 April 2014, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted General Comment No. 2 on Article 9 of the UNCRPD on Accessibility. One of the important points emphasised was that "States Parties have the duty to provide accessibility before receiving an individual request to enter or use a place or service" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014: 24). It follows that "failure to ensure accessibility is no longer just a shame to lament, but constitutes a violation of the core human rights principles of equality and non-discrimination" (United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2014: 1). Making educational and residential buildings accessible to ensure that there is appropriate physical access for all SWDs is an obligation that *White Paper 6* imposes upon all HEIs (DoE 1997).

Article 9 of the UNCRPD emphasises the principle of accessibility as a fundamental concept of achieving disability rights (Equal Access Monitor 2016: 1):

> To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment…and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

South Africa, however, seems to be lagging behind in this regard. Since democracy in 1994, the South African government has made minimal effort to provide accessible public sporting facilities to widen sport participation opportunities for PWDs (SASCOC 2012). Inadequate resources and lack of adaptable facilities amounts to social exclusion of PWDs (Levitas *et al*. 2007). This problem is felt acutely at smaller South African HBIs when compared to bigger HWIs which are better resourced and have better infrastructure in general.

> Unfortunately, […] I'm not in a position to talk about the sports part, because we don't do sport. Big universities have more infrastructure. It's easier for them to accommodate students with disabilities. For us it makes it more difficult. That's what they [*referring to SWDs*] want to do here, like play goal ball. But we don't have enough infrastructure, and there is not enough money for them, because we only get a small budget for the sports, and that money has to be divided for all necessary sports that is being offered, anything from dancing to choir and whatever (Richard).

> There are no recreational facilities on this campus. There is a bar, and that's about it. So, there isn't any other recreational facilities. We don't have that. We haven't got anywhere in terms of access to recreation (Debbie).

These findings on the lack of accessible sport facilities are congruent with those from previous South African studies (see, for instance, Wright 2007; FOTIM 2011; Collins 2019) and those of studies of SWDs in other African countries (see, for instance, Bukhala 2009; Wanderi *et al.* 2009; Dada & Ukpata 2017). A lack of accessible facilities is a major barrier to participation in sport for many SWDs, which isolates these students and reinforces assumptions about their physical incapacity.

> When you apply to these Departments for support and funding, they always tell you 'oh, sorry! We don't have any funds', or 'we didn't budget for it', or 'we can't', or 'next year', and next year it never happens. My budget in the university for sport [and] for athletes with disabilities is the smallest of all budgets for sport. From national government, the university receives up until today nothing to develop sport or high-performance athletes or mass participation (Elizabeth).

In stark contrast are those universities with accessible sports facilities and resources which see not just the participation of SWDs as the goal, but go beyond participation to providing opportunities to excel where appropriate.

> Remember, [this university] focuses on high performance and elite sport. Not all my athletes are elite athletes, but if you are a good student, I will provide any

> support structure for you to go and play sport. I have five basketball players, but only one in the national squad. The others are just playing it for fun, but they all use the same transport. So, as a student I will provide you that infrastructure. I have to, because you are a student at this university. You don't have to excel in sport, but if you do excel, we will obviously provide all the additional services, like physiotherapy, sports science backup, medical support, and that is part of your bursary structure. Students who just play for social activities don't get a sports bursary, but they are not pushed aside. They can still [participate]. We have two vehicles. Both are wheelchair accessible because we found that public transport does not work for them when they want to go to their various training facilities. If you are a wheelchair tennis player, and you want to get from one campus to another tennis court, we will transport you there. My responsibility is to bring in athletes. I provide them with all support structures I can for them to them to excel in their sport (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth makes the important point that the opportunity to excel needs to be recognised and catered for, but that, equally, the opportunity to participate even when one is not an elite athlete is just as important. A person with a disability should not have to excel at the highest level to qualify for access to recreation. Ryan captures the idea of hospitality as "making everything accessible for all people".

> From a recreational perspective, I'm just thinking of students who are staying in residence that are wheelchair users. We do have an accessible bus that they can also go to Rosebank, to the shops, and that's important. As far as recreation goes, we try and make everything accessible for all people, like the swimming pool in the Education campus has a lift to lower a wheelchair user into the water for swimming purposes (Ryan).

Some DUSMs are assuming responsibility for forging collaborative initiatives with other neighbouring universities that do have facilities for SWDs.

> For many years we have actually worked with [our neighbouring university]. [Our neighbouring university] is actually more advanced in terms of their sport offerings to students with disabilities, and there I fully support the idea of where you actually collaborate. So, with sport, I fully agree with that, because you do not have enough blind students at one institution to form a team, yet if you work with [your neighbouring university], the two together can make a strong team. So that's

> where regional collaboration is more important. So, we have already had quite a number of meetings with [our neighbouring university] already in connection with collaborating for sport, which we also see as part of sport inclusion. We have some collaborative efforts already. We have … students, Katleko and Sasande, that are really good in whatever sport they are doing, and then they will also work with [our neighbouring university]. So, our sport people will communicate with them and get to some kind of arrangement to form a team or something like that (Joyce).

A focus on collaboration and cooperation in order to achieve community goals is central to *Ubuntu* ethics. South African universities with more accessible sport facilities need to be encouraged to share their facilities with universities without such facilities.

Infrastructure and Safety

A hospitable community is a safe community. Globally, research has documented the importance of the safety of PWDs. For example, Robinson's (2016) study explored the support needs of children and young PWDs if they are to feel, and be, safe in institutional settings and recommended the need for young PWDs to learn fire safety in case they are left home alone. Given that students, including those with disabilities, spend large periods of time in residences, participants emphasised the need for the safety of these spaces to be assured in order to make them hospitable to students with diverse disabilities. South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act* provides that:

> Any building shall be so designed, constructed and equipped that in case of fire:
>
> The protection of occupants or users, including persons with disabilities, therein is ensured and that provision is made for the safe evacuation of such occupants or users;
>
> Adequate means of access, and equipment for detecting, fighting, controlling and extinguishing such fire, is provided.

Although most South African universities have attempted to comply with this *Act*'s provisions, the safety of students with hearing impairments is still put in jeopardy on campuses as most buildings

only have audible, and not visual, alarms, which would be needed to notify deaf people in the event of a fire breaking out. In light of this, in May 2017, University of Cape Town students reported their institution to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) for violating the rights of SWDs (Koyana 2017).

As Lilian pointed out, concern from the students at her university is far from theoretical. Institutions that do not take appropriate measures to alert deaf students in the event of a fire breaking out pose a real risk to these students.

> If you think of residences, for example, I think people forget that there are deaf students in the residence. And if there is a fire, like the North West story, I don't know if you heard the story — school where 23 Deaf kids were injured very seriously, and 3 died, because there is an alarm system that went off, but nothing to warn the deaf students in the residence. So, you know the adaptions that need to be made. We have to advise the management on that, and, I think, budgetary wise they have to plan for it (Lilian).

According to Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya (2015: 2), an accessible built environment gives SWDs a sense of belonging in the form of "welcom[ing] a diversity of learners and causing them to feel safe, capable and accepted, thus enhancing their overall learning experience". To be forced to enter or exit a building from the back is perhaps the opposite of experiencing hospitality.

> Inclusive education means that you reach all your students in your classroom. Outside the classroom, inclusive education is about creating a space where everybody feels welcome, so if you have the residence and you have the first floor accessible and there is not a lift to the second floor a student with a wheelchair won't be able to, will never be able to visit his friends on the second floor, so his friends must come and visit him in his room all the time. And what also happens is that you have the first floor, the step, and then have the dining hall. So, now when a student in a wheelchair wants to move to the dining hall, he has to go from the outside. So, do you feel welcome there? If you have to use the back door? So, to make them aware of removing that step to make the student move within a residence, to put in a lift or whatever, but it will cost money. And also, structural barriers that you have to remove and also attitudes (Fiona).

> Don't make their entrance or exit from the building far from others. They must always make sure that they feel special. The same entrance that others are using, just next to it. Make sure that there is inclusion. Don't put it there at the back or something. It's another element of discrimination according to me. It's like you are hiding them. Make them feel at home, and make sure that other students will also acknowledge them. That will give them dignity, some level of dignity, to say that 'I'm also a human being'. That's why, even here, we don't even think of them as differently abled (Thembani).

Social inclusion has to do with, for example, students with and without disabilities interacting with one another reciprocally (Sherill 2004). Physical barriers compromise the prospect of reciprocal friendships flourishing, confining, for instance, wheelchair users to specific areas and spheres of movement and interaction. With most South African HEIs tending to prioritise the accessibility of educational buildings, this has left some residences or floors of residences physically inaccessible to SWDs. South African HEIs often use the minority status of SWDs as a justification for not retrofitting campus buildings to make them more accessible.

> In other areas, it's difficult to really change whole buildings to accommodate SWDs, but where we can we do change the buildings to be disability friendly. The challenge that we have is that we don't even have more than five students with disabilities who are living in our residences system (Yolani).

In residences without lifts that do provide accommodation for SWDs, it is common practice that students with physical disabilities are allocated rooms on the ground floor for safety and convenience reasons.

> Some residences have adapted their facilities, such as bathrooms, showers toilets, and the entrances. I know that there are some rooms that are even using remote control door[s] to open so the students who can't open the door can just push the button on their wheelchair and the door opens. The rooms that we have for these guys are all on the ground level always. They have been accommodated specifically, and it works because if there is [a] fire, or anything dangerous like that, for evacuation the rooms can enable students to evacuate safely as well and without wasting lots of time (Francois).

Within universities, safety is not the only marker of a hospitable physical infrastructure. For instance, the unavailability of adapted kitchen facilities on the ground floor, where SWDs are located means, makes the routine activity of cooking a challenge.

> They don't cook in their rooms. They cook in the kitchen upstairs. So, she must travel all the way upstairs. She also cooks in the kitchen, but it's not user friendly for her. It's only user friendly to us [*referring to non-disabled people*] not to her. How will she carry pots while walking on crutches to the kitchen? It's not user friendly (Lebogang).

Universities may cite a lack of appropriate adapted infrastructure, and their inability to ensure the safety of SWDs, as a reason for failing to offer places in residence to SWDs. This denies both these students and their non-disabled peers opportunities to live and interact with one another, thus being exposed to a fuller conception of what it means to be human. It is however, undesirable as some universities have done, to make special rules for SWDs in inaccessible residences, such as allowing the use of electric kettles in their rooms. Measures like these accentuate differences and see the assimilation of SWDs into residences from a non-disabled standpoint.

> The challenge is that residence buildings do not accommodate students with disabilities. One of the rules in the residences is that you do not keep a kettle in your room. And that is a challenge for a person with one leg who must use crutches. Would it be suitable for them to go up and down to the kitchen? So, for her we allow her to keep her kettle in her room. How would she carry the kettle with boiling water from the dining hall or the kitchen and so forth. It can be a bit difficult (Lebogang).

Another way in which the built environment of campuses can be made more accessible to SWDs is by placing these students physically on campus in a way that is mindful of their needs. For example, by also ensuring that blind students are placed in residences closer to core educational buildings so that they do not have to be distracted by traffic congestion as they attempt to manoeuvre around campus.

> There are specific residences where students with certain disabilities are usually placed. Like, female students with visual impairments have their residences far away from any roads so they literally walk in a road across university campus, and they walk through the gate and they are inside the campus. You know so the placement of res and the type of disability is also considered (Francois).

Giffard-Lindsay (2007) has expressed concerns about how SWDs continue to be the last priority with respect to their institutions' social inclusion initiatives. This results in their invisibilisation or exclusion as "people who do not fit the required criteria [or norm]" (Giffard-Lindsay 2007 :6). An example of how reality is seen through an ableist lens is construction projects on campus which pose a significant safety hazard to blind students. If there were a clear and present threat to the safety of non-disabled students, there is no doubt that there would be extensive communication about the issue and measures taken to ameliorate it. This is not the case when it comes to safety hazards on campus from the perspective of PWDs.

> There is a lot of things that we are pushing for. Another thing that we feel quite strongly about is there is a lot of construction on campus — like a lot. And we just want someone from Facilities to communicate and let us know in the Disability Unit that there will be on-going construction on this part and that part of campus next week via SMS or calling us so that we know we must avoid that area. Now, all of a sudden, they put something on the pathway that we use every day, and it really does disorient us. If they warned us and told us to stay away from a certain area, at least we will know to find another way around that. I don't know why the management doesn't inform us about construction activities. We have brought this up many times. I don't think they hear us. I remember last year, on campus, there was a huge three metre hole that you could fall into, […] and there was nothing around the hole to warn us blind people that it was there, and that if you fall you could break your leg. It took, I promise you, the university three months to cover that hole — three months after we had complained and complained. When I was in first-year, I fell down a shaft here, [...] so I had to change my Sport degree programme to doing a Higher Certificate because of my leg. I was out for six months. I had a lot of injuries and stuff and they said it's going to set me back so many years if I continue doing sport (Thandolwethu).

Enhancing the mobility orientation skills of blind and visually impaired people is important in improving their safety, as a wrong decision can potentially put them in a dangerous situation (Bowman & Liu 2017). When moving about the environment, blind and visually impaired

people are more likely to face such problems, including determining their location in the environment, knowing which direction they are facing, the direction of their body movements, and a lack of information regarding significant objects in the environment, such as the distance between such objects and how near or far away they are (Sánchez *et al*. 2013). For this reason, blind people opt for safer and familiar routes with fewer obstacles, thus diminishing the risk of tripping or bumping into objects (Pressl & Wieser 2005). University planners and maintenance workers seldom take these kinds of considerations into account when making alterations to the built environment of campuses. Instead, measures taken focus the responsibility on the person with a disability to accommodate themselves in the environment.

> To address the needs of students with disabilities, we do mobility orientation. What we mean by mobility orientation is, for instance, students with visual impairments are unfamiliar with the surroundings of this campus environment. So, we partner with external stakeholders to familiarise them [*referring to students with visual impairments*] with [the] environment, for instance, routes to the libraries, lecture theatres, and so on (Thandokazi).

Parking

For PWDs to participate fully in mainstream society, it is important for disabled parking bays to be accessible, easy to use, and for there to be sufficient parking spaces within a well-designed environment (Center for Excellence in Universal Design 2017). Accessible car parking, as defined by the Irish Wheelchair Association (2009: 13), "involves the appropriate designation and location of both car and multi-purpose vehicle parking bays and the provision of set-down/pick-up bays". In addition, accessible disabled parking bays are those which are conveniently located in relation to buildings, so that those with limited mobility can "then walk or travel in a wheelchair to the main entrance" (Irish Wheelchair Association 2009: 13).

Designated disabled parking spaces are central to creating hospitable campuses. However, research indicates that, across the world, accessible parking is either unavailable or misused by non-disabled drivers (see, for example, Tinklin & Hall 1998). The lack of disabled parking bays

on most South African campuses contravenes the country's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act* which provides that:

> Where parking for more than 50 motor vehicles is provided in or in connection with any building having a means of access contemplated in sub-regulation (1), adequate parking space shall be provided for the parking of motor vehicles used by persons with disabilities and a suitable means of access shall be provided from the parking area, whether such parking area be inside or outside such building, to the ground storey of such building (Keuter 2008: 121).

My data indicates that there are some universities whose campus security personnel are not strictly monitoring and enforcing fines and legal penalties to non-disabled motorists who misuse limited disabled parking bays. The consequences of this weigh heavily on some DUSMs, who have to incur extra duties of having to constantly conscientise those who illegally park in disabled parking bays, and Elna is one of these DUSMs.

> On a daily basis, the parking outside that is marked for disabled people, we usually clearly go and ask them [*referring to non-disable people*] personally to remove their cars. I actually, at one stage, went and put the notice on the windscreen to tell him that he is not allowed to park there. Parking space is an obstacle, the barrier that we must deal with every day. People park there because they don't realise it's a disabled parking. There is not enough awareness. I mean, it's like the moment that you have experienced the thing [*being disabled*], you will understand better (Elna).

The concept of "marginalisation", according to Young (1990), is the inability or unwillingness of the system to incorporate marginalised groups into political, economic, and cultural life. The marginalisation of DUSMs by management often results in the construction of inaccessible buildings on campus.

> I can't say specifically it's something, but the idea would be that as you walk on campus, there shouldn't be anything that is not done to accommodate students with disabilities. But there are still quite a few things that needs to be changed, but from top management. For instance, the hotel that was built now. I don't know

> exactly if there is any university policy in place. There should have been a clause in that policy that would accommodate the fact that the building should have been built, from the first brick that was laid, accessible for students, for people with disabilities, but it hasn't. There are still areas that are not accessible, so there is still things that needs [*sic*] to be adapted from top management side. So that when we contract a guy to come and build a building, one of the things in the contract must already say you must get a consultant that will consult you that will give you advice on how to make this building an accessible space (Elna).

Research indicates that the provision of NSFAS bursaries has been celebrated for widening educational access opportunities to HEIs for South African SWDs (Chiwandire & Vincent 2016). In the context of her university, Elize finds this increase in enrolment rates of SWDs not worth celebration, as this has coincided with unbearable workloads for a staff member.

> I'm trying to do my best, but I can't do everything. That's where I decided that, you know, what I will work on [is] a needs basis. Current students and their needs, I have to cover them, and the prospective students – I proactively ask them what their needs are, and they come and visit me. Like, from now on, I am already expecting some of my students. They already applied for next year so that I can work on their needs. So, in January when they come, their needs are being met. Yeah, so, I prioritise in order to get some of these things done. So that's my main problem. Yeah, no assistance really. Management supports me, but they are not sending me someone to assist. And since it's under control, because I find a way of supporting students with disabilities, even if I have to do whatever. Management seems to think that things are working well. You understand what I'm saying. Sort of like everything is going well. I am complaining, but what I am complaining about is sorted in a way, so 'why is she complaining'. So, I started working my way around accessibility, but, I mean, if I didn't work my way around accessibility, we were not going to have students with disabilities on campus. But the more students I get, the more sleepless my nights are (Elize).

DUSMs' voluntary compliance to compensate for the failings of management, possibly because of their inferior position, shows how DUSMs suffer from managements' domination, a concept which Weber (1968: 212) defines "as the probability that certain specific commands (or all commands) will be obeyed by a given group of persons". Under domination such elements as "obedience" (Weber 1968) are included, which is evident by how these participants are passively obeying

commands and accepting responsibilities which should be dealt with by the management themselves through hiring more DUSMs or assistants to assist in Disability Units.

In comparison to DUSMs, university management personnel often have no or minimal expertise with regard to disability in HE. However, the power to influence important decisions regarding the needs of SWDs on South African campuses continues to lie with management — who render DUSMs largely powerless to intervene practically on behalf of SWDs as required by their professional obligations. The fact that this discrimination continues shows that management structures do not fully embrace *Ubuntu* ethics in their leadership practices.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that DUSMs are making concerted efforts in making residence life welcoming spaces in which SWDs can flourish. Hospitable residence cultures can only be achieved if institutions' non-disabled communities hold positive attitudes towards SWDs (Education Review Office 2015). Some HEIs' residences programmes are designed to foster inclusive cultures though encouraging students to have an intimate connection amongst themselves, regardless of their disability. This means making SWDs "feel personally significant—i.e., feel welcomed, recognised as individuals, and that they matter to the institution" (Cuseo 2007: 3).

Accessibility refers to "the degree to which an environment, service, or product allows access by as many people as possible, in particular people with disabilities" (WHO & the World Bank 2011: 303). "Accessibility", as defined by the UNCRPD, entails making it possible for "persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life" (United Nations 2006: 2). Signatories to the Convention are thus obliged to:

> take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to

> information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open to or provided to the public (United Nations 2006: 2).

The UNCRPD further notes that obstacles and barriers to accessibility — for example, in relation to buildings, roads, transportation, housing and outdoor facilities — must be identified and eliminated (United Nations 2006). Proponents of inclusive education have highlighted the importance of prioritising the accessibility of facilities, such as lecture theatres, libraries, toilets and modes of transport (Thomas 2012). If sports participation is seen as a right, infrastructure resources will also be used toward increasing participation opportunities. Here though, I argue for the notion of accessibility to be amended to one of hospitality, which suggests not just the removal of barriers to the individual choice to participate but the active creation of an environment that is welcoming, caring and mutually supportive of the involvement of all.

The UNCRPD calls upon States Parties to honour their obligations with respect to making social spaces such as cafeterias and restaurants physically accessible to PWDs (United Nations 2006). In countries like Canada, relevant authorities see to it that owners of cafeterias and restaurants strictly comply with this obligation by making these facilities more accessible to everyone, including PWDs (Canadian Human Rights Commission 2006). In addition to the provision of services like these, which have the potential to significantly assist SWDs, universities need to work to raise awareness, conscientise and sensitise the non-disabled campus community to questions of diversity and inclusion.

Madriaga (2007) associates disability discrimination with HEIs' failure to recognise and value the differences of PWDs which has resulted in these institutions not making efforts to increase the enrolments of SWDs.

> I would say, again, that we need to catch up with other universities. This thing of saying that it's expensive and what not, everything that is worth doing requires investment, monetary and otherwise. What you are doing you have to invest, but, at the end of the day, it's going to be an investment that you are going to be proud

> of in future. They need to do something about this. Honestly speaking, even if you check the statistic now, the number of disabled people who are attending [this university] is so low. So much more can be done. We need to catch up. We need to come up so that disabled students can come and study here to further their studies. They are sitting at home thinking 'I can't afford to go to this place where I know they can cater for my needs', whereas we are here. We say we are an institution of higher learning. We can do something so that disabled students in our immediate communities can be encouraged to come and study here. So that's the main thing. I feel anything that is worth doing: just invest money and look at the bigger picture. You need to start doing it, not for the sake of compliance, but for the sake of really empowering society. Not just empowerment for specific people, but for everybody (Nthabiseng).

It could be argued that obtaining full equality of opportunity is difficult to achieve for SWDs pursuing HE as they "have to contend with issues that non-disabled students may not experience", for instance, inadequate or inaccessible facilities (Madriaga 2007: 400-401). Although some DUSMs really want to make their universities as welcoming as possible to SWDs, to the extent of making them feel at home, managements' failure to make the built environment more accessible to SWDs remains a challenging barrier, making it impossible for universities to be spaces which can be equated to what Olwethu refers to as "home away from home" — and what I have termed here "a hospitable campus environment".

> Well, in the disability space, one of the critical challenges will be your facilities. This university was actually built 49 years ago. So, at that stage, in terms of Building Regulations, there was never actually any urgency to make our facilities to be accessible. As a result, you need a huge injection of resources so that you make your facilities […] accommodating to disabled people, like your lifts, your access to offices, ablution facilities, your steps, your ramps, your parking bays, you know, the stairs. So, there needs to be a huge amount of resourcing that needs to go into these. So, there is also those kinds of challenges. But also, I think, to me, the commitment becomes critical. You need leadership on this one, because without leadership it becomes a challenge, but also you will also need what I call a 'home away from home' for students and staff with disabilities. To ensure that this really is a space where they not only feel they belong, but also feel like they can trust and feel the agency to facilitate their inclusion and a sense of belonging, but also to be a space where we are able to raise awareness. To inform decision making on the university in such a way that we begin to take the issues of disability as very critical and very essential to the management of this university in our actual environment (Olwethu).

On an institutional level, some of my participants have called on the need for management structures to have the political will and commitment to equally financially invest in making the built environment of campuses more accessible, instead of using the absence of funding and the preservation of heritage to legitimise the continued physical inaccessibility of campuses.

> If you take something like Oxford University or Cambridge University, [they] are a thousand years old, and they've managed to make most of their buildings accessible. So, it can be done, but there has got to be the political will, and there has got to be the will to spend money. Because at university there is always competing claims. There is never enough money to do anything. Everybody always thinks that they deserve that money, for whether it's the nuclear programme, or transplant programme, their African languages programme. So, disability access always ends up having to fight with all those other competing claims [for] the university's resources (Mitchell).

The concept of equity has recently dominated debates about the provision of education to historically disadvantaged groups (Taole 2016; Waitoller & Artiles 2013). In contrast, proponents of *Ubuntu* frame the concept of equity more broadly, as grounded in the sharing of resources. The most important starting point is that for *Ubuntu,* fairness has to do with doing what is right and moral, which is to strive for fairness through sharing resources in order for all community members to develop their full potential (Letseka 2014). Although it is documented that South African HEIs' are currently struggling financially due to government funding cuts (Ndlovu & Walton 2016; Chiwandire & Vincent 2019), this does not justify unfair treatment of SWDs. *Ubuntu* is best realised by "deeds of sharing and sacrifice" (Munyaka & Mothlabi 2009: 74).

The emphasis here on the need to sensitise management highlights a radical shift from previous South African studies (Hlalele & Alexander 2012; FOTIM 2011; Mutanga & Walker 2017; Chiwandire 2019) and those elsewhere (O'Connor *et al*. 1998; Opini 2012) which only emphasise the need to sensitise lecturers as a way of encouraging personnel to design and deliver a curriculum which is accessible to all students with diverse disabilities.

The findings indicate that through the constant intervention of DUSMs, most residences are able to create an enabling environment which could be said to be hospitable to SWDs. Among other things, this is evidenced by the participation of SWDs in residence's mainstreamed social activities, in House Committees and the SRC - an inclusive culture which fosters universal brotherhood and sisterhood, social and academic programmes which help SWDs to achieve a balanced lifestyle and DUSMs' watchdog role in promoting and protecting the rights of SWDs in residences. On the contrary, other participants spoke negatively about small universities, especially HBIs, as not being able to provide a conducive environment that does not hinder them from flourishing and reaching their full potential. Most residences in HBIs have been identified by participants as unhospitable, because they have physically inaccessible facilities and they pose a safety hazard, particularly to blind and deaf students. In addition, this chapter has discussed the role of transport, participation in SARAs, and the role these play in achieving the social inclusion of SWDs.

SWDs continue to encounter HEIs as permeated by disablist attitudes (Madriaga 2007). Such attitudes often perpetuated by lecturers (Lyner-Cleophas 2016). The failure of management to embrace *Ubuntu* has negatively resulted in this cadre failing to create hospitable campus environments for SWDs to flourish. SWDs are discriminated against on the grounds of their disability and minority status, and DUSMs are rendered powerless to promote and protect the rights of SWDs. To avoid so much power being centred in management structures, there is a need for an open dialogue between the management and DUSMs in addressing the needs of SWDs, if the management are to address systematic unfairness and become truly *Ubuntu* advocates.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

As Krippendorff (2004) observes, one of the best ways for judging the quality of a qualitative study's findings is whether it has generated new insights into the studied phenomenon. If so, the study should have increased the understanding of particular phenomena or informed practical actions (Krippendorff 2004). The findings of the present study have added new knowledge about disability and inclusion in HE not only in the context of South Africa but in ways that are of more general significance.

The study critiques the existing dominant frameworks of understanding within which disability inclusion has been theorised and which have led to particular policy outcomes and practices. In *Ubuntu*-oriented traditional societies, it was through young people's interaction with older people who had an orientation toward various aspects of community laws, values, and mores that the former would learn about all these aspects (Shiundu & Omulando 1992). A similar reasoning should also apply to non-disabled people, that is to say, they need to interact with PWDs, if the former are to have an informed understanding about the true lived experiences of the latter. To shed light on this, Young (1997: 42) argued that: "[…] with careful listening non-disabled people can learn to understand important aspects of the lives and perspective of people with disabilities".

The findings of the present study suggest that some SWDs have been denied a voice on how they would like the non-disabled university community to relate to them socially. Erroneous assumptions are made by non-disabled people, because they do not engage directly with SWDs to discuss these matters. Thus, even those, like DUSMs, who are charged with the duty of care towards SWDs, are heard constructing SWDs as dependent, incapable, and unfriendly. SWDs are vulnerable to what Fraser (2000) refers to as misrecognition. Here being misrecognised does not only mean "to be thought ill of, looked down upon or devalued in others' attitudes, beliefs or representations. Moreover, it means to be denied the status of a full partner in social interaction" worthy of mutual respect (Fraser 2000: 113-114). This shows how some South African universities are not promoting

Ubuntu's value of communalism which promotes the cultivation of reciprocal relationships or friendships regardless of one's social status.

In order to move from misrecognition to the recognition of SWDs, *Ubuntu* ethics encourage university community members to cultivate the "willingness to learn from others [particularly SWDs] as a way of building our own knowledge base and wisdom" (Nafukho 2006: 410). This could be one of the ways of operationalising *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism which emphasises relations of interdependence within educational settings. Some studies have shown that this is possible and that it also has beneficial outcomes for non-disabled learners. In their study, Shokoohi-Yekta & Hendrickson (2010), for instance, administered the Student Friendship Perception Survey (SFPS) to 656 American and 289 Iranian high school non-disabled students in order to examine their opinions regarding friendships with peers with severe disabilities. The study found that participants in both countries agreed that it is possible to have beneficial reciprocal friendships with students with severe disabilities and the former felt responsible for initiating friendship acts (Shokoohi-Yekta & Hendrickson 2010). Likewise, in the present study, some participants who are friends with PWDs acknowledge how such friendships have been enriching in terms of learning how to best relate to the latter, among other things.

> Accessibility measures stand to benefit many more people than just those seen as disabled — elderly people, people with temporary injuries, illness and fatigue, small children and their caregivers are only some of the other groups of people whose movement and use of facilities can be facilitated through ensuring that infrastructure is planned with accessibility in mind (Equal Access Monitor 2016: 5).

In contrast to these findings, many South African HEIs' authorities see making the built environment more accessible as a costly and unworthwhile exercise. This view is disabling in the sense that it fails to take into account the fact that most universities were "built to exclude rather than include students with disabilities" (Wolanin & Steele 2004: 53 see also DeJong & Lifchez 1983). In the South African context, we have seen that when universities do attempt to make their campuses more accessible, the focus is on ensuring the accessibility of *academic* buildings,

like lecture theatres and libraries, for SWDs, so that their academic access is not compromised. However, this means that while progress has been made to ensure the physical accessibility of selected buildings, "residential areas are often not designed in ways which are accessible for people with disabilities" (DHET 2018: 47). The focus on academic inclusion fails to seriously consider the idea that a person with a disability is a "whole person", not reducible to their disability and having the full spectrum of needs and interests pertaining to campus life.

The issues of job burnout and lack of human resources in Disability Units have been raised as a matter of concern by DUSMs who reported challenges with coping to address the social inclusion needs of SWDs in the wake of the increasing enrolment of this group on South African campuses. In light of this, there needs to be the operationalisation of the *Ubuntu* value of human dignity as this would see campuses responding to the needs of SWDs by seeing the "whole person" and responding to the social needs of SWDs rather than only to their academic needs.

As the findings of this study have shown, restricting built environment accessibility initiatives only to academic buildings is an inefficient method of addressing the needs of SWDs holistically, as this still leaves their social inclusion needs ignored. Commenting on this, Loja *et al.* (2013) argue that architectural barriers in public social spaces curtail the possibility of SWDs forming social relationships with their non-disabled counterparts. This is particularly true of old South African campus residences which still do not have lifts resulting in all students with physical disabilities being allocated rooms on the ground floor. This automatically compartmentalises these students and deny them opportunities, for instance, to socialise with students on the other floors of their residences — opportunities that would be taken for granted by those who are not disabled.

In light of the above, I have argued that such campuses with inaccessible residences fail to promote the *Ubuntu* value of hospitality and this is a disabling barrier to the social inclusion of SWDs, particularly when taking into consideration that campus residences ought to create

comfortable spaces for all students. Spaces that Clemons *et al*. (2004) refer to as new temporary homes. Given the fact that all students, including those with disabilities, spend considerably more time in residences than in lecture theatres, it is important for universities to take the operationalisation of *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality seriously. In addition, I have also argued that accessible residences are very important for the formation of friendships, especially between wheelchair users and their non-disabled peers, as the former will be able to navigate freely within their own or neighbouring residences without having to worry about the physical built environment. The World Health Organization (2011: 4) also emphasises the importance of accessible residences: "a person's environment has a huge impact on the experience and extent of disability. Inaccessible environments create disability by creating barriers to participation and inclusion". Hence, I recommend the need for universities with inaccessible campus residences to allocate budgets to make their residences more accessible, if these institutions are to effectively operationalise the *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality.

Ubuntu ethics prescribe that each community member's human dignity ought to be honoured in order to foster "the development and maintenance of mutually affirming and enhancing relationships" (Nussbaum 2003a: 1-2). As the findings of this study have shown, honouring the human dignity of SWDs means affording access to basic facilities such as more accessible toilets on campuses. Other elementary requirements, like the building of ramps at proper gradients and the provision of lifts to make it possible for SWDs to access kitchen facilities on top floors in old residences, are fundamental starting points for treating members of university communities with equal dignity. It could be argued most South African universities lacking these facilities are failing to promote *Ubuntu*'s value of human dignity and this has negatively impacted on SWDs' ability, especially wheelchair user students, to live dignified lives on campuses.

The social exclusion of SWDs on some campuses has also been exacerbated by the lack of accessible sport facilities and infrastructure, thus resulting in SWDs being denied equal sport participation opportunities. Sports-oriented SWDs whose campuses do not have accessible sport infrastructure have either been left with no sport participation opportunities or must endure the time-consuming process of having to travel to other neighbouring campuses with accessible sport

infrastructure. In light of this, the most recent South African disability policies such as the *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* have called for HEIs to also focus attention on making their cultural, social and sport facilities more accessible to PWDs as these spaces are currently not accessible to this group (DHET 2018). Many of the sampled universities in the present study still do not have accessible sporting facilities for SWDs. SWDs passionate about sport either have to give up on sport or travel to neighbouring universities with accessible sporting facilities to play sport. The participation in sport for SWDs is an important facilitator of social inclusion. Sport also provides SWDs with entertainment, thus making HEIs hospitable spaces for SWDs to flourish both academically and socially. It is recognised as an important right for this group both in the UNCRPD as well as in South African national and HE disability policies.

There is a growing body of literature which proves the social and health benefits of sports participation among SWDs in HE and most of this literature reiterates the view that SWDs enjoy sports for the same reasons as their non-disabled peers. The benefits of SWDs participating in sports were noted in Blinde & Taub's (1999) study of 28 male university students with physical and sensory disabilities at Midwestern University in the US. These students noted that sport participation increased their social integration into university life (Blinde & Taub 1999), amongst other benefits. Other authors have noted that sport participation helps maintain self-discipline (Bailey *et al*. 2009). Such self-discipline can positively impact on the academic of SWDs achievement (ICSSPE 2001). This has been confirmed in one study that showed that learners with disabilities who participate in sports activities perform better academically (Wanderi *et al.* 2009). Likewise, a high percentage (92%) of SWDs at Kenyatta University who were sampled in Bukhala's (2009) study also confirmed that participation in sport was a very important component in helping them cope with their full and often stressful academic lives. Likewise, in the South African context, Israel's (2017) study of SWDs at Rhodes University also found that participating in sport is important in enabling them to also perform better academically.

Apart from participation in sports and exercise as an important right, proponents have also noted that participation in sport for PWDs has numerous benefits such as improved health and mental well-being (Bohnert 2016; Fox 1992; Jones 1995). Participation in sport also leads to a reduction in the risk for chronic illnesses for PWDs (Durstine *et al*. 2000; Heath & Fentem 1997). Other scholars argue that sport participation for PWDs contributes to lowering levels of anxiety and decreased stress (Martin 2006; Kristen *et al*. 2003; CDC 1997). Some researchers commend sport participation for PWDs for lowering the prevalence of obesity (Bukhala 2009; Rimmer & Rowland 2007). For other academics, participation in sport for PWDs helps reduce dependency on pain and depression medication (Dada & Ukpata 2017). Rohwer (2013) argues that participation in sport for PWDs helps improve blood circulation, strengthening muscles, better balance and co-ordination.

At an individual level, PWDs who engage in sports and other social activities have improved peer relations and increased social interactions in comparison to those who do not engage in these activities (Blinde & McClung 1999; Shapiro & Martin 2010; DePauw 1992). For all these reasons and many others, the circle of inclusion for SWDs should never be restricted to a narrow academic interpretation but needs, critically, to be widened to incorporate social inclusion into diverse opportunities for full and equal participation in university life. When SWDs are more fully a part of social and recreational activities on campus, the often narrow understanding that non-disabled people have of PWDs is also challenged: "sport changes community perceptions of persons with disabilities by focusing attention on their abilities and moving their disability into the background" (Dada & Ukpata 2017: 138-139 see also Losch 2015; Sherrill 2004).

In this way narrow perceptions focusing on the disability can be widened so that the person can be seen and recognised (Dada & Ukpata 2017), challenging prejudice and stigmatisation. It has also been suggested that inclusion in a wider ambit of social activities has the potential to change what PWDs think and feel about themselves in ways that are potentially empowering and help individuals to recognise their own potential (Dada & Ukpata 2017). Investing in sport for SWDs plays an important role in facilitating the social inclusion of this group. This was confirmed by Dada & Ukpata's (2017) survey of 60 purposively selected SWDs from three Nigerian

universities which found that sports participation aided in integrating these students more fully into the university through reducing their social isolation.

Within the dominant human rights approach, making inclusive education a reality for SWDs has always been framed as something that is not easily achievable. Even prominent proponents of inclusive education like Booth & Ainscow (2002: 11) subscribe to this view when they argue that the process of achieving inclusive education "will require the involvement of many people in a more painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes". This standpoint — that disability inclusion is difficult and uncomfortable – is confirmed in the South African literature (Khumalo cited in Van Der Merwe 2017; Mutanga *et al*. 2018). This framing of disability was also reproduced by many of the DUSMs interviewed for the present study. Efforts at inclusion, rather than being seen as a taken-for-granted requirement of including diverse humans in the full range of campus experiences, were represented in their narratives as going "an extra mile".

Rather than a slow but steady progression in terms of inclusion initiatives, in some instances there have been reversals of gains made. For example, some Disability Units have discontinued awareness raising activities on the grounds of low attendance rates on the part of non-disabled students. In the context of the inclusion of PWDs in mainstream societies Article 3 of the UNCRPD provides that educational institutions have an obligation to promote "the principle of respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity" (United Nations 2006: 5). For this reason, most South African national and individual universities' disability policies do discuss this principle of respect for diversity and how institutions should take this seriously if they are to holistically include SWDs in these spaces. Likewise, proponents of inclusive education also argue that accepting and celebrating diversity is important in creating a positive school culture (Mitchell 2007). In the context of the South African HE in particular, the *White Paper 3* obliges HEIs to transform their "institutional cultures to support diversity" (DoE 1997: 34).

Discontinuing face-to-face awareness raising initiatives is in itself a violation of Article 8 of the UNCRPD as well as numerous South African disability policies which oblige educational institutions to constantly raise awareness as a way of tackling attitudinal barriers faced by SWDs on campuses. Awareness raising campaigns are important in enabling non-disabled people to erase their mistaken attitudes and be able to accept difference as an important contribution to diversity which will result in SWDs flourishing on campuses (Russell & Malhotra 2002). Rather than discontinuing awareness raising, these measures need to be seen as fundamental to achieving equal respect and rectifying injustices within educational institutions (McBride 2009).

SWDs sampled in the present study recommended the need for continuation of awareness raising activities as a way of achieving this group's struggles for equal respect and justice. *Ubuntu* ethics require of community members that they should embrace and acknowledge differences and diversity of people within their communities (see, for instance, Bangura 2005; Nafukho 2006; Van der Merwe 1996; Eze 2008). Thus Disability Units need to work in collaboration with SWDs to come up with different kinds of creative awareness raising activities which can potentially attract more non-disabled university community members to attend these activities rather than simply accepting the status quo in which non-disabled people are "not interested" in disability issues.

Respecting and accepting diversity still have a long way to go to be achieved on South African campuses. Inclusive education advocates respecting *all* SWDs regardless of their disability. However, it is clear that even DUSMs who are meant to be advocates for SWDs believe that SWDs (particularly those with invisible disabilities) are sometimes unfairly advantaged by their disabilities. DUSMs on occasion are responsible for justifying their institutions' reluctance to enrol or fully support their enrolled SWDs, arguing that to facilitate the inclusion of these students is costly (Chiwandire & Vincent 2019). The justification of discrimination is an indication of failure on the part of DUSMs to embrace diversity as they are qualifying the right to inclusive education based on which student is cheaper to support, taking the form of an "impairment-based approach" (Naaz 2012: 27). The argument of the thesis has been that the normalisation of these kinds of justifications for exclusion arises from some of the Western

individualist paradigm that is the taken-for-granted starting point or framework which continues to inform thinking about disability inclusion.

The thesis advocates an alternative framework. *Ubuntu* views every individual as important to society. What has been termed the "needs-based approach" (Poni 2013) to disability could be said to have much in common with the values of *Ubuntu*. As Poni (2013: 534) elaborates, the "needs-based approach" advocates for specific support and responsiveness to the holistic needs of every person based on their particular impairment. HEIs ought to enlarge their ability to deliver appropriate services and support to all students regardless of disability type and to cope with diversity within the community (Naaz 2012) instead of taking the non-disabled as the unstated norm and crafting campus environments to cater for that norm. Hence, a radical move away from an "impairment-based approach" to what Poni (2013) refers to as a "needs-based approach" could potentially help South African universities to take diversity seriously through promoting *Ubuntu*'s values of hospitality, human dignity and communalism. This could be achieved by these institutions if they made concerted efforts to enrol and support the social needs of all students with diverse disabilities.

Participants sometimes endorsed their institutions' reluctance to comply with international and national minimum accessibility standards despite this discriminating against students on the grounds of physical disability. SWDs are expected to fit into their campuses' oppressive inaccessible built environments and not question the design of buildings, sports and recreation facilities and basic amenities. Some participants seemed resigned to the idea that their campuses will never be one hundred percent accessible — and expected SWDs to be similarly accepting. Not only does this show how these participants are not empathetic to the needs of SWDs by expecting them to navigate an inaccessible built environment, but it also raises questions as to whose needs are these DUSMs protecting or serving – those of SWDs or those of management who emphasise the need for belt-tightening when accessibility of the built environment initiatives are raised. Asking this question is important to *Ubuntu* given that traditional leaders had an obligation to fully represent the needs of their subjects. The management personnel's invocation of costs as a justification for their reluctance to making the built environment more

accessible has been disputed by research (Policy Paper 2011). In fact, research has found that "accessible design is inexpensive, with one study stating that making buildings accessible represents less than 1% of total construction costs" (Policy Paper 2011: 10). This reluctance and the use of cost as a justification then needs an alternative explanation — in the view of this study that explanation lies in the framework of understanding that is being employed. When *Ubuntu* ethics rather than individualism, competitiveness and bottom lines, are the starting point for understanding, an entirely different perspective on belonging, difference and inclusion is made possible.

Non-disabled people have failed to respect and accept diversity throughout history and have treated disability as a "source of fear and ridicule […]" (Thomas 1982: 22 see also Barnes 1997). As shown in literature, within South African society, popular misconceptions held by non-disabled people towards PWDs act as a barrier for the former to make friendships or relate to the latter (Combrinck & Meer 2013). Similar challenges are also faced on South African campuses as SWDs often feel disrespected by non-disabled peers, lecturers and even residence wardens. As one participant noted, non-disabled people often respond to PWDs with fear and also panic because they seem to believe that disability is contagious. Such prejudiced reactions are a barrier to social inclusion and also indicates that *Ubuntu*'s value of human dignity is not being promoted in such institutions. This prejudice results in non-disabled students not wanting to make friends with SWDs, lecturers not wanting to put effort into teaching SWDs and residence wardens treating SWDs differently and unfairly. Prejudice and misconceptions arise when the non-disabled do not have reason to interact directly with PWDs. In contrast, those who are friends with PWDs emphasise the beneficial outcomes of these friendships in their *own* lives. This is one of the central lessons of the philosophy of *Ubuntu* — the idea that we become more fully humanised through our relationships with others.

Chataika & McKenzie (2013) have argued that individualism is not a value that has much resonance in African communities which embrace *Ubuntu*. When individualism and autonomy are upheld as social values for which to strive, people are prevented from recognising their interdependence on one another. *Ubuntu* ethics suggest that "an individual realises her true self

by respecting the value of friendship" (Metz 2011b: 540). When university students are informed by a framework of individual achievement and success SWDs are mistrusted, for instance, when it comes to groupwork. The fear is that the impairment of another might lower the quality of work produced or affect the chances of achieving good grades. A paradigm shift towards embracing the idea that the goal is not individual achievement, but respect for the worth of every person's contribution, the deepening of reciprocal ties, and learning from diversity. This *Ubuntu* centred approach would make it possible for students to relate to one another's differences in another way. In addition, embracing *Ubuntu* communalist values would mean SWDs and their non-disabled peers forming and sustaining healthy reciprocal relationships.

Taking individualism as a starting point leads to constructing SWDs as "special admits who don't deserve to be here [that is HEIs]" (McCune 2001: 7) in contrast to the recognition fostered in societies embracing *Ubuntu* ethics, that belonging does not have to be earned by achievement. Instead, members of a community recognise one another's belonging and interconnectedness as a given. Inclusive classroom settings can be a site for facilitating friendship formation and sustenance between SWDs and their non-disabled peers (Shokoohi-Yekta & Hendrickson 2010). However, societies populated by competitive, atomised, autonomy prizing individuals are not positively inclined towards inclusive education teaching strategies such as co-operative learning and tend towards practices that socially isolate those, such as SWDs, who are perceived as "weaker" or different from the norm.

Through the important role of DUSMs and residence wardens, campus residence life at some South African universities are being made more hospitable for SWDs, thus promoting the value *Ubuntu*'s hospitality. The efforts made by some of these DUSMs and residence wardens show that enabling environments can be created in which SWDs and non-disabled students form and sustain friendships which last beyond university. This is achieved, for example, by making participation in diverse academic and social activities possible for SWDs which in turn helps these students to live well-rounded, well-balanced lifestyles during their time on campus. However, as the study findings show, such initiatives are not the norm. Inclusion of SWDs who

live off-campus is a particular challenge with these students having even more limited social inclusion opportunities in comparison to their peers who live on campus.

Ubuntu in educational institutions, as South Africa's Department of Education has argued, "requires you to respect others if you are to respect yourself" (DoE 2001: 16). The unchallenged discriminatory attitudes of the non-disabled cannot be allowed to be a barrier to inclusive education. Entering university is entering a community that requires of all its members that they "equally respect the rights of other students regardless of sexual orientation, sex, gender, disability etc." (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills 2014: 9), but simply asserting individual rights is not enough. What is required, it is argued here, is for South African universities to embrace the value of mutual respect.

Some DUSMs seem to have a general expectation that SWDs should take responsibility for their own social inclusion rather than expect assistance. This is another way in which a culture infused with the value of individualism harms those who differ from its expectations regarding who is considered the "normal" or "ideal" student. DUSMs seldom mention measures that need to be taken by non-disabled students to form friendships with SWDs. Instead, the onus is on the student with a disability to "fit in", which in itself suggests the dominance of ableist norms and expectations. SWDs sampled in this study did report making efforts to reach out to their non-disabled peers but felt excluded and discriminated against by the latter. This finding is echoed in other studies. For example, in their study Siperstein *et al*. (1997) found that non-disabled students do not want to socialise and engage in extra-curricular activities with learners with disabilities after school. This is not surprising given a culture in which reciprocity and mutual obligation are not highly prized.

The unwillingness of the non-disabled community to engage with those who are different to themselves is often met with a fatalistic shrug of the shoulders. This attitude is rooted in individualistic assumptions which take the idea for granted that friendship formation is purely a matter of individual choice. In contrast, initiatives such as Katleko's soccer team reported in the

present study show that relationships can be fostered and built rather than being expected to emerge organically. The point about *Ubuntu* ethics is that within this paradigm leaders in a community are expected to take responsibility for making sure that such opportunities arise and are participated in by members of the community. One positive avenue for change thus lies in SWDs putting themselves forward for SRC and residence House Committee leadership positions. However, as the thesis shows, merely changing the personnel of such bodies without changing the underlying ethos and values informing them will not necessarily have the desired outcome. SWDs continue to be constructed as lacking social skills4 in university environments which are disabling. *Ubuntu* ethics provide a framework for critiquing the assumptions that inform such cultures.

Heylighen *et al*. (2016) have noted that even in countries with well-established accessibility laws numerous buildings are still poorly accessible. South African campuses are no exception (Howell & Lazarus 2003; Chiwandire & Vincent 2017). In common with previous findings, the present study found that some campus residences and other buildings are still not being built in compliance with the country's accessibility legislation. In the South African context, SWDs' right to accessible campuses, as per the provisions of South Africa's *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act*s, are sometimes described as clashing with the need to preserve the historical heritage of campus buildings as provided for by *the National Heritage Council of South Africa*. Many campuses' historical buildings have to this day still not been retrofitted to make them more accessible to PWDs. SWDs, particularly those with physical disabilities, are the most disproportionately affected by this as they find it impossible to flourish and reach their full potential when they are being forced to "fit into" oppressive ableist environments — both physical and attitudinal.

Addressing accessibility barriers to the built environment would require university management to work in collaboration with DUSMs — an approach affirmed by the consultative ethos that *Ubuntu* ethics prescribe. Heylighen *et al*. (2016: 4) have defined the concept of "Rent-a-Spatialist" as an initiative that advocates architectural design practice which "is informed by mobilising disabled peoples' embodied experience as a consultancy service. Rent-a-Spatialist

thus acknowledges that those affected by building accessibility bring valuable skills to the table and rewards them accordingly". Research in HE has shown that listening to the experiences of SWDs has the advantage of letting these individuals express their lived experiences of being a student in these institutions (Jayram & Scullion 2000) and come up with solutions on how to best address the day-to-day challenges they face. If informed by *Ubuntu*-style holistic consultations, which greatly value the views of SWDs on South African campuses, universities would be more likely to modify their built environments in ways which consider the needs of a continuum of disabilities (Asch 2001). Hence, it is through conducting these holistic consultations that such campuses could then be said to have operationalised or promoted *Ubuntu*'s value of human dignity.

Traditional African leaders who humbled themselves before their subjects to listen to their views did so because they believed that holistic consultation played an important role in arriving at fair conclusions which addressed the common good (Ndlovu 2007). South African disability policies which affirm such an approach have criticised decision-making processes which deny PWDs opportunities to have their voices heard as negating members of this group's human dignity as full persons (Department of Social Development 2016). Holistic consultation moreover means consultation not only with students with physical disabilities, but also other types of disabilities in order to create campus environments that are accessible not only to people with "locomotor limitations, but also for those with cognitive, sensory (vision or hearing impaired) and temporary ailments (reduced mobility) as well" (Agarwal 2012: 56).

Within inclusive education debates, transformation has often been understood from an academic inclusion standpoint with educational institutions being called upon to transform their cultures, primarily to increase access, participation, and academic achievement of SWDs (Artiles *et al*. 2006) — an approach which is also endorsed by South African HEIs from both a policy and practice standpoint. Matshedisho (2007: 697) has criticised South Africa's path towards equal access to HE for SWDs "as based on misconceptions, without an explicit strategy for transformation". HE transformation initiatives have largely failed in their efforts to promote a sense of belonging and comfort for SWDs (Munyuki 2015).

Research within the HE environment has to date focused on academic motivation, success, and persistence (Freeman *et al*. 2007; Hausmann *et al*. 2007; Hoffman *et al*. 2003). In contrast, the findings of the present study have shown that it is not only matters of academic inclusion which achieve a sense of belonging for SWDs, but also creating hospitable campus environments where SWDs can take part in various social activities. This is foundational to the formation and sustenance of reciprocal friendships. Instead of the ad hoc responses to individual cases and the gulf between policies and practices that characterises the sector at present, systemic transformation is required which takes the holistic needs of SWDs seriously (Ntombela & Soobrayen 2013).

South African disability policies, such as the 2015 *Guidelines for the creation of equitable opportunities for people with disabilities in South African Higher Education* (Howell 2015), as well as recent studies (Chiwandire & Vincent 2017), have recommended the need for HEIs to take the principle of universal design seriously if they are to make their built environments more accessible. However, these calls have not been backed with practical solutions for achieving this goal. In the present study a paradigm shift is advocated, with one of its outcomes the imperative of holistic consultations as a way of respecting the human dignity of those being consulted. *Ubuntu* ethics prescribe that: "a good chief listens to the group and finds the point of consensus. He (most are men) would play a low-key role, listen to all viewpoints, facilitate debate and, in the end, summarise and make a decision which is just, preserves dignity and reflects the consensus of the group" (Samkange & Samkange 1980: 214). Through their "open door policy" approach many DUSMs are supporters of holistic consultation strategies. However, what is less clear is whether or not this consultative attitude on their part can be utilised effectively to address the concerns expressed by SWDs. Recall that *Ubuntu* requires the *chief* — rather than less powerful subordinates — to consult and have an attitude of listening, even to the least significant voices.

To date, there is a dearth of South African literature which recommends the need to involve university management in issues of disability inclusion of SWDs in HE. The only available studies have focused exclusively on the importance of the involvement of management in academic inclusion matters (Matshedisho 2007; Howell 2005; Lyner-Cleophas 2016; Ramaahlo *et al*. 2018; Chiwandire 2019). As Mutanga's (2015: 231) doctoral dissertation that investigated the experiences of students with diverse disabilities at two South African universities recommended, institutions need to provide "a holistic approach involving all stakeholders within the university (all staff, all students, university administration, external players)" if these institutions are to provide social support for SWDs. It is advisable that rather than DUSMs being solely responsible for the consultations, it may be imperative for them to take a step further to conscientise the management of their institutions to also embrace the culture of *Ubuntu* holistic consultations given that the latter exert so much influence in making important decisions in their universities. Thus, it could be argued that doing so could positively result in more South African universities operationalising or holistically promoting *Ubuntu*'s value of human dignity.

In contrast, the position at present is one in which the university management is heavily involved in making decisions on issues affecting the daily experiences of SWDs without consulting with the latter or with DUSMs. Following Ndlovu's (2007) view, a leader who has *Ubuntu* must be selfless in the sense that they consult widely and listen to their subjects' views. Such a leader should not lead but rather allow the people to lead themselves and should not impose their will on the people as this will be incompatible with *Ubuntu* values (Ndlovu 2007). As Van der Merwe (1996: 1) recommends, "people must keep dialogue alive irrespective of differences". Campuses which consciously foster *Ubuntu* values in their members will see leaders who are always open to dialogue with community members regardless of their status. By building institutional cultures founded on the values of *Ubuntu,* one of the outcomes will be a greater degree of consultation and management that are fair in their decisions, for example, when it comes to allocating funds for ensuring the successful social inclusion of SWDs in HE. Therefore, this is one of the ways in which South African universities can positively promote *Ubuntu*'s value of human dignity.

According to Chachine (2008), *Ubuntu* emphasises social interdependence amongst community members because in traditional societies every person — young or adult — was regarded as important in contributing to the community web. Nafukho (2006) argues that *Ubuntu*-oriented African traditions encouraged continued reciprocal learning. For instance, while children learned from adults how to live, behave, and function in society notable is that adults also "learned from children and fellow adults, girls learned from women, and boys learned from men about life and developed work skills" (Nafukho 2006: 412). In addition to that "the elders, especially the grandparents, parents, uncles, and aunts, played a major role of passing on to younger adults and children essential knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values" (Nafukho 2006: 412). It is further argued that the interaction with older people who had an orientation toward various aspects of community laws, values, and mores provided the youth with a great opportunity to also learn about all these important things (Shiundu & Omulando 1992).

In emphasising interdependence and group solidarity, it is evident that *Ubuntu* implies an interactive ethic in which one's humanity is shaped by his or her interaction with others as co-dependent beings (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2010; Cornell & van Marle 2005). As proponents of inclusive education have argued, this form of interdependence is beneficial for students as "it builds a caring community where everyone's experiences and abilities are valued" (Tafirei *et al*. 2013: 243). In order to achieve this, disability needs to be mainstreamed in the form of having every university community member, particularly those in leadership positions, actively contributing towards making the university a welcoming environment. As previous studies (see, for instance, Van Jaarsveldt & Ndeya-Ndereya 2015; Howell 2005) have argued, lecturers need to contribute to mainstreaming disability initiatives rather than always referring SWDs to Disability Units. Here I recommend that DUSMs pay more attention to getting management personnel on board to contribute to mainstreaming disability as they influence important decision-making processes, including those affecting SWDs. Thus, having the management personnel actively involved in disability mainstreaming initiatives has the potential of widening opportunities for SWDs to have their social inclusion needs addressed on South African campuses making this one of the effective ways of promoting *Ubuntu*'s values of hospitality, human dignity and communalism.

Commenting on how PWDs are being treated as second class citizens in mainstream society Meikle (2016) argues that:

> Disabled people face a myriad of challenges, but a key one is the ability to safely get around. We have heard from disabled people, specifically wheelchair users and blind people, about taxi drivers refusing to pick them up or being overcharged for their journey.

As noted in the South African policy framework, "public and campus transport should be accessible to students with disabilities. The DHET and the Department of Transport should ensure proper effective and accessible transport provision for students with disabilities" (Government Gazette 2016: 44). Under South Africa's NSFAS bursary for SWDs, the government or individual institutions have an obligation to provide adapted transport to SWDs, particularly wheelchair users, although this is seen as mainly for academic purposes, which is to travel from home to campus or from one campus to another (Ndlovu & Walton 2016). In the present study, I argue that the availability of adapted transport should not be seen as a necessity only for academic purposes. It is one of the important core facilitators of *social* inclusion of SWDs, as such universities need to take this seriously if they are to promote *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality. In this regard, bigger HWIs which offer transport or shuttle services to SWDs provide these students with travelling opportunities to shopping malls amongst other places — thus treating the person as a "whole person" not reduced to their disability but rather as someone with a full range of human interests and desires. In this way, these universities promote *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality. In contrast, SWDs whose universities do not provide such transport could be regarded as not promoting *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality and this imposes a barrier to social inclusion for SWDs. This is because the lack of appropriate transport has left SWDs, particularly wheelchair users and blind students, socially isolated on campuses located geographically far away from the central business district and other basic services, such as shops and entertainment, with their only option having to pay hefty fares out of pocket to use conventional un-adapted public taxis, if they want to commute to access such facilities.

Apart from transport challenges, the use of disabled parking bays by the non-disabled university community has also been raised as a matter of concern by some DUSMs in the present study. In the South African context, the *National Building Regulations and Building and Building Standards Act* obliges HEIs to provide disabled parking for PWDs, particularly wheelchair users, in conveniently located areas. In the present study, the social inclusion barriers to SWDs, predominantly wheelchair users with cars, have been attributed to the non-disabled university community members who illegally park in disabled parking. While awareness-raising and punitive measures, such as imposing fines on those who use PWDs designated parking bays, are important, we need to ascertain the reason for this behaviour. In the present study, the argument is that a culture of individualism and an ethos of competitive selfishness lead to a "me first" approach that underlies a person's decision to take a parking bay that is specifically designated for someone who needs it more. On campuses where non-disabled people violate SWDs' rights to disability parking, *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality is also undermined and to rectify this university security staff members need to impose fines on non-disabled people who illegally use parking bay reserved for PWDs.

In order to achieve *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality, leaders of traditional societies had an obligation to promote fair practices, especially when addressing the daily needs of the minority disadvantaged members of the society. In contrast, the efforts of DUSMs to do more to achieve fairness for SWDs are being compromised by their "status subordination" in which university management uses its dominant status to either not provide funding to facilitate disability inclusion or taking a foot-dragging approach to doing so efficiently. In the absence of a paradigm shift, as the present study shows, even DUSMs can be seen supporting and justifying unjust management decisions that discriminate against and neglect the needs of SWDs. This has taken the form of DUSMs policing the lives of SWDs and disciplining those whose actions do not seem to conform to conventional ableist university norms. These actions by DUSMs could be regarded as impediments to the promotion of *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism.

In some cases, DUSMs try to discourage SWDs from socialising amongst themselves, especially in the Disability Units, because they assume that this will prevent them from learning good social

skills — presumably due to the flawed logic that such skills can only be acquired from socialising with non-disabled people. Ironically, one does not see non-disabled people discouraged from socialising with other non-disabled people or being accused of not developing social skills when they do. Apart from that, making friends amongst themselves does not necessarily mean that SWDs will not also befriend non-disabled students as the latter are the majority in HEIs and elsewhere. Mbigi & Maree (1995: 7) define "*Ubuntu* as the sense of solidarity or brotherhood which arises among people within marginalised or disadvantaged groups". There are many benefits to be gained from PWDs collaborating and working together to challenge injustices and oppression. As some DUSMs pointed out, Disability Units can become places where SWDs bring non-disabled friends — to do groupwork, for example, thus making these spaces facilitators of social inclusion through the promotion of *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism. Here SWDs can meet non-disabled people in an environment where they are, for once, not the minority and which, for once, caters specifically to their needs.

Van Rooyen *et al*. (2004: 14) have argued that to achieve recognition for SWDs in South African educational institutions requires "a commitment to avoid practising the power of surveillance, control and discipline upon others". Non-disabled people's negative stereotypes and stigmatised perceptions of disability perpetuate the image of this group as dependent (Amin 2013). Seen in this light, DUSMs who frame SWDs as dependent perpetuate the disempowerment of SWDs while at the same time purporting to want to "fix" SWDs, so that they can become as independent as their non-disabled peers who are assumed to be naturally independent. DUSMs in the present study could often be heard expressing the hope that SWDs become independent as this would prepare them for their transition into the labour market. In order to become desirable future employees, SWDs are encouraged to focus on academic success rather than extracurricular activities, such as sport, as it is assumed that it would be difficult for them to balance both and still achieve good academic results. Thus the focus is on ensuring that PWDs "fit into" the (unchanged; ableist) labour market rather than the focus being on challenging environments which make it impossible for PWDs to lead full, balanced, socially rich lives that non-disabled people appear to take for granted as part of being human. It is the environment

which is disabling to the social inclusion of SWDs as it does not promote *Ubuntu*'s value of hospitality.

One of the exclusionary practices reinforced by DUSMs is their negative attitude towards special schools because of the presumed failures of these schools when it comes to equipping SWDs with good social skills necessary to cope upon transitioning into HEIs. Yet scholars have proposed that special schools have an important role to play. In some instances, a person with a severe disability can best be educated in these settings rather than in mainstream institutions (Hehir 2002). Also, agreeing with this view are parents particularly those who "have anxieties about the quality of mainstream schools, they are more likely to push for segregated solutions for their children with disabilities" (WHO & the World Bank 2011: 215). In addition, special schools are seen as a valuable resource, because unlike mainstream settings they offer specialised support for learners with disabilities on an individual basis (Allan & Brown 2001; Lindsay 2007; O'Keefe 2004; Qu 2015). Against this background, rather than worrying about the need for the abolishment of special schools, DUSMs need to use their influence to address imminent day-to-day social inclusion needs of SWDs to create a welcoming campus environment which promotes *Ubuntu* values of communalism, human dignity and hospitality for these students, regardless of their prior primary or secondary educational background. This includes playing a watchdog role against any form of discrimination against this group, providing food parcels to needy SWDs, as well as sexual and reproductive services that are catered specifically to their needs, rather than assuming that all students fit a generic "norm".

Jansen (2017) pointed to HE funding as one of the areas which need immediate attention given the dramatic decline in government subsidies to HEIs. This has resulted in most South African campuses' Disability Units being forced to operate under budgetary and other resource constraints (Howell 2005; Chiwandire & Vincent 2016; DHET 2013). This has in turn meant that HEIs tend towards implementing inclusion narrowly in a way which perpetuates the exclusion and marginalisation of SWDs (Chiwandire & Vincent 2019).

In light of this, South Africa's DHET funding formula has been criticised on a national level for failing to address inequities. Funding of HBIs must be prioritised given the legacies of apartheid's racist policies (DHET 2012). As far as the issue of funding and the inclusion of SWDs is concerned, given the continued neglect of poorer less resourced and rural South African HEIs, Mutanga *et al.* (2018) have called for the national government to come up with innovative funding mechanisms which source the bulk of funds for these institutions.

However, funding is not a legitimate reason for excluding SWDs. Instead, as Lyner-Cleophas (2016: 51) suggests, institutions need to utilise "creative ways of seeking funding such as seeking funds outside the university through non-governmental agencies or from the private sector". However, initiatives to prioritise disability funding continue to be curtailed by universities' management personnel (most of whom are non-disabled). The ethos at universities is informed by a framework that appears to cater for the majority, rather than embracing *Ubuntu*'s value of sharing, the prioritisation of disability funding is seen as a waste of resources given the minority position of these students on campuses, thus making it impossible for these campuses to promote *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism.

In this, management personnel embrace neoliberal concepts of maximisation of profits as they see investing in research initiatives as more likely to benefit the greater university student population (who are predominantly non-disabled). This has been confirmed by proponents of social justice who have raised concerns about how the application of economic-driven managerial principles in HE has unjustly excluded SWDs (Brabazon 2015). As Mutanga (2015: 119 see also Shrivastava & Shrivastava 2014; Chiwandire & Vincent 2019) has argued, placing economic rationalism ahead of creating caring and nurturing reciprocal social relations result in social justice considerations becoming low priority.

When management does commit to investing funds in, for example, retrofitting the built environment, releasing such funds does not happen immediately, but only after many years which means that there is little genuine empathy for the accessibility challenges faced by SWDs.

In order to genuinely embrace *Ubuntu,* leaders should not adopt a lifestyle that is different from their subjects instead they should live among their subjects and most importantly share what they own with disadvantaged members of the community (Ndlovu 2007). Thus, *Ubuntu* values seek to inculcate in community members principles of fairness, sharing, and empathy for one another. If these values were embraced, they would change the way the university management personnel respond to the needs of SWDs with far reaching implications.

Ongoing research identifies lack of funding as one of the biggest challenges facing South African Disability Units (FOTIM 2011). This was confirmed by participants in the present study. However, even given budgetary constraints, there are those DUSMs who are taking the initiative to ensure that the academic and social inclusion of SWDs is not compromised. Informed by *Ubuntu* values, universities can work with their communities to achieve inclusive education for learners with disabilities "even within conditions of availability of minimal material resources" (Walton 2011: 243). Walton (2011: 243) has commented that *Ubuntu* says, "'I am because we are, or I am fully human in relationship with others', and emphasises cooperation and the sharing of resources". Thus, the emphasis is not on what we lack but on what we have available to share with one another in order to be fully human.

Research in South Africa has indicated how most institutions' senior management do not provide sufficient support to DUSMs in their initiatives to promote disability inclusion, thus leaving the Disability Units to independently cope with many challenges in addressing disability inclusion on campuses (Howell 2015; Ramaahlo *et al*. 2018). While the present study's findings confirm the continuity of this trend, DUSMs' initiatives in dealing with these challenges are worth discussing here as they indicate how the human rights approach to disability inclusion can simply be ignored by these participants without them facing any consequences. Drawing on Young (2014), Lloyd (2000: 138) has associated powerlessness or a lack of authority as a form of oppression. DUSMs sampled in this study could be said to be oppressed by senior management because rather than the former standing against injustices perpetuated by the management, who are reluctant to provide disability funding, we have seen these DUSMs being co-opted to further the interests of the senior management despite this further marginalising SWDs. This is mainly

due to institutional relations of domination and power biased towards senior management. My reference to the marginalisation of SWDs refers to how these power structures have negatively resulted in DUSMs relegating the needs of their SWDs, for instance, by encouraging them to self-advocate for their rights even if the university environment is disabling. In addition to that this marginalisation has also manifested in complaints by some DUSMs about burnout and the lack of human resources to address the social inclusion needs of SWDs. I consider these complaints mere excuses because they did not seem to complain about assuming their management's extra duties to facilitate issues of disability inclusion. Therefore, all of these reasons are an indication of how these universities are failing to implement *Ubuntu*'s value of communalism.

Previous South African studies have portrayed the role of DUSMs in a positive light (Matshedisho 2010; FOTIM 2011). Here I argue that DUSMs are both enablers and disablers of the social inclusion of SWDs as they make important decisions regarding both the social and academic inclusion of SWDs. DUSMs are employed to serve the needs of SWDs, but there are occasions on which some DUSMs instead serve the interests of management and endorse decisions which further marginalise SWDs. It has been argued here that this results from assumptions that are made from within an individualist ableist paradigm. If DUSMs take a stand against any form of injustice perpetuated by management personnel, residences wardens, lecturers and non-disabled students, it will help to create an enabling HE environment where no SWDs will be prevented by their disabilities from flourishing. Nonetheless to play this role, it has been argued here, will require a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of the underlying values that inform the way in which members of our institutions relate to one another and a determination of our presumed goals — for example, autonomy versus connectedness, individual success versus friendship and mutual obligation; and sharing versus acquisition of resources.

The conclusions reached in the present study stem from the fact that in critically analysing the data I was interested "not just to study and understand society, but rather to critique and change society" (Patton 2008: 586). Thus, the findings of the present study could possibly help to change society in various significant ways, and this has been attributed to the utilisation of

Ubuntu as theoretical lens. This is because central to *Ubuntu,* from an African moral perspective, is that "it is not enough to be a human being […] [rather one also] ought to be a good person" (Molefe 2016: 104). Most proponents of *Ubuntu* propose that pursuing right action (Metz 2007b; Wiredu 1996) is one of the characteristics which indicates that one is a good person. Those failing to measure up to this expectation were ostracised in *Ubuntu*-driven societies. This is evidenced by Makuvaza (1996b: 76) when he argues that "those who fail to attain *hunhu*/*Ubuntu* are looked upon as children even in their adulthood". This shows that although the concept of *Ubuntu* has often been viewed in a positive light it does not exist in a vacuum, and as such, some positive action ought to be taken in order to bring its positive outcomes to fruition. A similar argument has been put forward by the proponents of the human rights approach who have called for relevant stakeholders in various social institutions to take action if they are to address the gap between policy and practice which often disproportionately affect PWDs in such spaces. This is evidenced by Skarstad (2018: 25) when he calls for the need for rigorous revision of established understandings of the human rights approach "so that they fully include all persons with disabilities".

In addition to the above, the present thesis' findings could provide useful insights into policy, practice, and implications for future research. In order to create a welcoming environment for SWDs, South African HEIs need to take some of the recommendations proposed by the 2018 *Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System* into serious consideration. This policy document recommends that South African HEIs *should* actually be the ones to proactively adjust to the needs of students with a "wide range of individual differences and needs" rather than SWDs adjusting to the needs of these institutions, if they are to effectively achieve disability mainstreaming (DHET 2018: 21). Given that the findings of the present thesis shows that most SWDs are often seen as the ones adjusting to the needs of their HEIs which are failing to promote *Ubuntu*'s values of communalism, hospitality and human dignity, I recommend a paradigm shift for these institutions to embrace *Ubuntu* values. One way in which DUSMs in these institutions could achieve this shift is to ensure that their awareness raising initiatives (that target the non-disabled university community) are informed by *Ubuntu* values as these promote inclusivity regardless of one's social status,

disability or ability. It is hoped that doing so will result in SWDs enjoying their rights to social inclusion on South African campuses in a meaningful way.

Also, in order for SWDs to enjoy their rights to social inclusion practical measures ought to be implemented by those in universities' influential positions, especially the university management. This could be accomplished, for example, through this cadre's provision of funding to support various initiatives which will positively result in SWDs enjoying these rights rather than just expecting that social inclusion will happen organically for SWDs upon their transition to varsity. Hence, I recommend the need for future studies to also sample the management from various South African universities on measures they are taking to include issues relating to the social inclusion of SWDs in their universities' transformation agenda, especially from a budgetary allocations' perspective. This is because most of the barriers hindering the full social inclusion of SWDs emanate from the fact that initiatives which could foster the social inclusion of this group are not being funded.

The present study has shown that the ongoing discrimination against SWDs on South African campuses stems not so much from the fact their HEIs have not fully embraced or recognised the rights of this group (Amin 2013), but from precisely an individualised rights-based approach to disability inclusion. Instead, the study suggests the need for a paradigm shift away from Western individualism and towards the inculcation and embracing of *Ubuntu* values such as communalism, hospitality and human dignity.

Ubuntu emphasises the responsibility of community members to care for strangers and treat them with equal respect. Applying similar reasoning to the context of South African campuses, SWDs have historically been regarded as strangers in these spaces. However, a university community informed by the values of *Ubuntu* does not regard the stranger with fear or loathing. Such a community seeks to promote understanding, to embrace and protect the stranger, and treat the stranger as part of an "extended family". In the words of the Shona dictum, *munhu wese ihama yako* (everyone is your relative) (Chataika & McKenzie 2013: 158).

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Appendix A: Invitation to participate in a study email sent to Heads of Disability Units

Invitation to participate in research on disability & Higher Education

Dear *******

Good day, I hope this email finds you well. My name is Desire Chiwandire and I am a registered PhD student with the Department of Political & International Studies at Rhodes University. My PhD thesis seeks to investigate the ways in which different South African universities accommodate students with disabilities from the perspective of inclusive education and I am working with Prof. Louise Vincent as my supervisor.

Unlike previous research which focused mainly on experiences of students with disabilities, my current research's participants focus is very broad as I am required to conduct interviews with South African universities' staff who are involved with disability-related issues particularly Disability Unit staff Library staff or any other key informants. Therefore, I am writing to kindly invite you to participate in my research. I got your email address from the University of ***** on the Disability Unit section.

As the ***** for all campuses I would deeply appreciate getting a chance to meet you at the earliest possible time and talk to you so that you can offer your insight on how the University of ***** accommodates students with disabilities from both an academic and social aspects of inclusion point of view. If you have further questions regarding my research project, please feel free to contact me at any time via my e-mail or the cell phone stated below. Thank you for your help in advance.

Kind Regards,

Desire Chiwandire

Appendix B: Consent form for participants

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

Department of Political and International Studies

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

PHD Research on the Social Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in South African Higher Education

You have been invited to participate in a research study conducted by Desire Chiwandire g09c5390@campus.ru.ac.za a registered PhD Candidate with the Department of Political and International Relations at Rhodes University. The purpose of the study is to investigate South African Disability Unit staff members' opinions on measures taken by their Institutions of Higher Education to accommodate students with disabilities from a social inclusion point of view. In keeping with the ethical procedures, please read the information below, and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

- This interview is voluntary. You have the right not to answer any question and you are also free to withdraw from the study at any stage if you so desire.
- Upon transcribing your voice record, for purposes of analysing data, I assure you that I will delete all self-identifying information that you would have provided as well as your email address.
- You will not receive monetary compensation for this interview.

I assure you of confidentiality the transcribed version of this interview will be stored in a secure work space for 6 months. The printed interviews will then be destroyed. Please note that by signing this consent form you consent to the following:

- That you understand the procedures described above.
- All questions have been clarified, you have responded to your satisfaction.
- You have agreed to participate in this study and you have been given a copy of this form.
- You have given permission for this interview to be printed and then used in my thesis research project.
- You have given permission for the following information to be included in publications resulting from this study, for instance, your direct quotes from this interview.

Please contact Desire Chiwandire on (+27 **********) with any questions or concerns or my supervisor: Prof Louise Vincent, louise.dorothy.vincent@ru.ac.za (+27 **********).

Signature: ……..… Date: ……

Full Name: …… Gender: …….. Age: …..…… years

Race: ……... Language: ……

Academic qualification/s: ……...

Name of the university: ……

Position in the Disability Unit: ……Years

Appendix C: Interview schedule for PhD research study

1. Can you please tell me a bit about yourself, and your position at this university?
2. How many students with disabilities are registered with your university, and what disabilities do they have?
3. What measures are you taking as a Disability Unit to ensure that all these students' social needs are equally addressed in their daily lives on campus?
4. What is your understanding or interpretation of the concept of inclusive education in the context of the inclusion of students with disabilities?
5. How does your understanding of inclusive education translate to the policies implemented by your university to accommodate students with disabilities?
6. What would you say distinguishes your Disability Unit's approach from other South African universities' Disability Units with regards to the inclusion of students with disabilities from a social inclusion point of view?
7. How involved is South Africa's DHET in supporting your Disability Unit to include students with disabilities meaningfully in their daily campus lives?
8. What measures do your Disability Unit take in raising awareness and conscientising or sensitising the whole non-disabled university community on disability?
9. As regards the Calendar of Events for Disability, what international, national and university disability events does your university celebrate, and if any of these are celebrated, elaborate how do you celebrate these events?
10. What challenges is your Disability Unit or university facing in ensuring the social inclusion of students with disabilities, and, what measures are you taking to address these challenges, if any?
11. Do you collaborate with other universities, either on a provincial or national level, in dealing with social issues of students with disabilities?