

Students' Understanding of Non-racialism and Citizenship Framings as Imperative for a Higher Education Transformative Agenda Based on Inclusivity and Social Justice: The Case of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Thabang Queench*, Sonwabo Stuurman and Allan Zinn

*Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy,
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa
E-mail: Thabang.Queench@nmmu.ac.za

KEYWORDS Democratic Practice. Emancipatory. Identity. Recognition. Solidarity

ABSTRACT The aim of the paper is to illustrate within the context of South Africa how Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) students' popular understandings of the ideals and praxis of non-racialism and citizenship framings can provide valuable insight for an emancipatory and transformative university agenda based on social justice and inclusivity. Using a 'stop-and-ask' survey instrument, the researchers conducted a systematised enquiry among 327 NMMU students. Results based on a thematic data analysis showed that most students' intuitive understandings of non-racialism hinge on the use of racial categories. For most students, non-racialism implies no discrimination and racism, harmony between races, or constitutional equality. There were positive as well as negative responses, with most students feeling that a lot can be done to improve race relations. The students' suggestions centred mainly around an emphasis on educational activities and campaigns based on the values of diversity and unity.

INTRODUCTION

"The reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself, from the normative perspective of one's partners in interaction, as their social addressee".
(Honneth 1995: 92)

The main contention of this paper is that social justice, inclusivity, and democratic practice in higher education (HE) can be heightened through engaging students in the problematisation of their understandings of phenomena of enquiry within social reality, so as to inform institutional planning and practice. The aim of the paper is to foreground Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) student experiences and student voices in analyses of the institutional cultural climate within the context of social justice, inclusivity and democratic practice

in HE. The exploration of students' understandings of non-racialism and citizenship is an approach that is informed by the assumption that understanding *what we are working against* is a prerequisite for understanding *what we are working toward*. In this paper the researchers acknowledge the centrality of non-racialism in South Africa's Constitution (1996), as reflected by the multiplicity of promulgation in government documents such as the 'Founding Provisions' of South Africa's Constitution (Act 108 of 1996: 3), however, the researchers want to argue strongly for a conceptualisation and re-examination of non-racialism from a social justice perspective. Social scientists argue that there is no epistemological evidence for the existence of 'race', and that 'race' is a social construct, to this end, the researchers' proposition is that 'race' as a category is not required for the constitution of the human subject. The fact that South African citizens are still engaged in a discourse about 'race' as though 'race' were real, visible and tangible, points to the conclusion that in as much as South Africans have transcended the pseudo-genetic notion of 'race', they are not a post-racial society *per se* (Mare 2001; Duncan 2003; Dixon et al. 2008).

Within South Africa, the changing context(s) of citizenship, agency and democracy are im-

Address for correspondence:

Thabang Queench,
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University,
PO Box 77000,
Port Elizabeth, 6031, South Africa
Telephone: 041 504 3115
E-mail: Thabang.Queench@nmmu.ac.za

bued with shifting ideological concerns and socio-economic imperatives, and as such, discourses of inclusion and equality are contingent upon changing democratic values and identities. Despite recent pronouncement and declarations by the ruling party and government of South Africa for a non-racial, non-sexist society based on democratic values, there has been a lack of profound pragmatic and programmatic action aimed at achieving such a society. Part of the task of higher education is to respond to the challenges with which South African society is confronted, and one of the principal challenges is how non-racialism as an ethical imperative can be foregrounded in higher education as an integral part of the transformation agenda. One of the goals of transformative education must be to work against inequality and inhumanity, linked to the system of domination, and to foreground social justice. In an age in which diversity and multiculturalism are increasingly prominent features of higher education and society, researchers and practitioners are relentlessly exploring numerous ways to meet the educational needs of diverse populations (for example, Ladson-Billings 1994, 1995; Banks and Banks 1995; Delpit 1995; Sleeter 1996; Gay 2000; Nieto 2000; Kumashiro 2002, 2004; Banks 2004). With this understanding of encapsulating inclusivity and meeting the educational needs of diverse populations, this paper will later turn to Axel Honneth's theoretical framework in an attempt to present and discuss his theory of recognition as a specific constellation in the analysis of social justice and inclusivity and as an imperative for a more nuanced understanding of citizenship within the context of higher education.

Definitions

Social Justice: The literature reveals many definitions of social justice that focus on means (processes) to ends (results). Folger and Cropanzano (1998) identify three types of justice, which they label interactional, procedural and distributive. About the concept of justice, they (1998: xv) note the following:

Justice is about how rewards and punishments are distributed by and within social collectives, and it is also about how people govern relations with one another. It is about who gets what and whether the participants in (and observers of) these transactions believe them

to be righteous of other kinds of human interactions—those that seem to lie beyond material transaction and distribution. Once we understand what justice is, we can easily comprehend why it is so central to human affairs: People care deeply about how they are treated by others.

Inclusivity: According to Maxam and Henderson (2013: 7), “inclusivity is a concept that connotes active involvement of the largest number of people both in the creation and sharing of wealth and prosperity to the greatest equitable benefit of all”. Understood in this way within the context of HE, inclusivity requires recognizing the right of every individual (without exception) to be included and adapting the environment and teaching approaches in order to ensure the valued participation of all.

Further, the Centre for Inclusivity based in University of Stellenbosch, South Africa (at the time of writing) defines inclusivity as referring to “an institutional appreciation of the perspectives, experiences and contributions of students, staff and the various communities the university serves and the way in which these diverse perspectives shapes an institutional culture” (Centre for Inclusivity 2014: 3).

NMMU and the Context of Higher Education in South Africa

A schematic historiographical analysis of NMMU is necessary to provide a particular context for a deeper understanding of the historical institutional cultural climate that for decades characterised the pre-merger apartheid institutions. Institutional histories, foundational beliefs, theories, methods and forms of practice provide a philosophical orientation that underpins any education system. The year 1994 signalled the formal end of an apartheid era in many sectors of South Africa, including higher education. Prior to 1994, education in this country was structured along the apartheid logic of “divide and rule”, which ensured that development was racially stratified and structured along lines of racial inequalities. As the result of a country-wide merger process, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University located in Port Elizabeth was established on 1 January 2005: a merger between two vastly different institutions, the former Port Elizabeth Technikon (PET) and the former University of Port Elizabeth (UPE), with

the incorporation of the Vista Port Elizabeth Campus into UPE in 2004. The period from 2001 – 2004 witnessed the inception of an important document, the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE), that was to guide the higher education transformation agenda. One of the fundamental objectives of the Ministry of Education (2001) as enunciated in the NPHE; “to meet the demands of social justice by addressing the social and structural inequalities inherited from apartheid” (Ministry of Education 2001: 3). There are various ways in which the idea of developing critical citizens has been promulgated in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) by the government, for example, the *National Plan for Higher Education White Paper* (Department of Education 1997b), and the *Education White Paper 3: A Framework for Transformation of Higher Education* (Department of Education 1997a). In this new epochal shift, higher education is called upon to help construct the conditions for a new sort of global and inclusive citizenship, one that is imbued with a collective consciousness of a new nation that embraces the democratic values of human rights, social justice and inclusivity.

The NMMU, within the context of broader societal challenges and the demand for higher education transformation, adopted a set of values to steer its post-1994 direction.¹ As a critical priority, informed by NMMU’s Vision 2020, the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University has focused on creating an inclusive, vibrant and affirming *institutional culture*. This aims to transform NMMU through providing an affirming environment for all its employees and students as guided by its mission, vision and set of values, as well as how it relates to communities outside of the university. Since 1994, the image of a South African society based on the principles of non-racialism, non-sexism and a respect for human rights became a commonplace marker for the country’s vision of a democratic South Africa. Further, several studies and research reports (see Borhat et al. 2002; Cornelissen and Horstmeier 2002) point to the persistence of a divided society buttressed by deep and massive socio-economic inequalities. Other studies (Sennett and Foster 1996; Wale and Foster 2007; Steyn and Foster 2008) suggest that identity in South Africa is constructed along ethnic, cultural and racial fault lines that shape our experiences of social reality.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, Axel Honneth’s work, especially his thinking on relations of power, recognition and respect, is of particular relevance and can be examined in the context of its application in higher education. Moreover, the significance to this study of Honneth’s theorizing can further be accentuated by its relevance to the concepts of social justice and equality at three different levels of political action: 1) the refusal of peculiar (oppressive) social situations, 2) a fight against the social groups interested in the permanence of these social situations, and 3) the aim of a more egalitarian society. Honneth (1990) argues that human integrity is dependent on the experience of mutual recognition.

The fundamental foundation of an individual’s moral consciousness and that of society in general require an intersubjective recognition of identities, potentialities and achievements. The conditions for the struggle for recognition may be activated through experiences of disrespect and the need for self-realization. Honneth (1995: 92) postulates that;

It is by the way of the morally motivated struggles of social groups - their collective attempt to establish, institutionally and culturally, expanded forms of recognition - that the normatively directional change of societies proceeds.

For the purposes of this study, and also in trying to decipher the meanings of the emergent students’ understanding and experiences within the university context, the ideas of Axel Honneth (1996) could be very informative as a source of reference when applied as theoretical tool to elucidate how students’ understanding and experiences could be linked to the ‘struggle for recognition’. The authors view institutions and social context as a project and a product of interaction. It is in the process of interaction that values, convictions and individual dispositions are displayed. As John Heritage (1998: 163) maintains,

The assumption is that it is fundamentally through interaction that context is built, invoked and managed and that it is through interaction that institutional imperatives originating from outside the interactions are evidenced and are made real and enforceable for the participants.

George Herbert Mead (1934) defines an institution as beliefs and practices in which each

participant incorporates not only their own attitude and role, but also the beliefs and roles of other participants. Deranty and Renault (2007) distinguish between three kinds of institutional effects on behaviour. Firstly, an institution means a way of coordinating behaviour by the means of rules. Secondly, an institution can involve a mobilisation of individual subjectivity, in order to coordinate individual actions not only by rules, but also by 'interpellation' (Althusser 1976: 79-138). Thirdly, institutions are also the places of the socialization and constitution of identities. Following the tradition of Hegel, George Herbert Mead, and many feminists (see Hutchings and Pulkkinen 2010) and Honneth (1996) highlight the significance of social relationships to the constitution, development and maintenance of a person's identity. Central to Honneth's argument is the significance of intersubjective relationships of recognition in the problematisation of social relations as a significant unit of analysis inclusive of non- and mis-recognition as fundamental sources of conflict. One of his main philosophical assumptions is that the constitution of human dignity can only be approximated by determining the nature of human interaction at a microsociological level and thus is contingent on the experience of intersubjective recognition (Honneth 1990). Honneth's theoretical framework is essentially embedded in the interpretation of social struggles and emanates from the intricate relationship between social patterns of recognition and provides preconditions for self-realisation. On the basis of the nexus between social patterns of recognition and individual prerequisites for self-realisation - and with constant reference to empirical findings of the social sciences - Honneth develops both a framework for interpreting social struggles and a normative account of the claims being raised in these struggles.

METHODOLOGY

Design and Data Collection

The research methodology adopted in the study is the phenomenological interpretivist paradigm. The overarching assumption guiding the approach to the data gathering process for this study is that the researcher should raise the participants to the status of equals, and examine the research problem from

their perspectives (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Creswell 1998; Guba and Lincoln 1998; Mahloma-holo 2010; Machin and Mayr 2012).

The data collection method for the study was a 'stop-and-ask' survey with a semi-structured questionnaire. The data collectors consisted of research assistants at the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD), who are students at NMMU. The procedure began with the reading of the survey instructions to the respondents. Respondents were verbally informed that they could skip any questions that they did not wish to answer and that they were at liberty to withdraw at any stage of the survey. Respondents were also informed before completing the questionnaire that by answering the questions, s/he consented to participate in the study. All participants agreed to participate and, as such, consent was obtained. In order to protect the respondents' anonymity and identity, they were not required to give their names. They were guaranteed anonymity, that they could withdraw at any stage and that they would have access to all research material throughout and after the process. Further, ethical clearance for this research was obtained from the university's research ethics committee for human studies.

Selection Method and Participants

The selection strategy used during this study was a non-probability convenience selection. It is therefore important to note that while trends can be observed from the data and the students' responses, and a level of understanding of students' framings of non-racialism and citizenship can develop, based on data collected among 327 NMMU students, a full generalisation of the results to the population of students at NMMU is not possible.

FINDINGS

Dynamics of recognition and disrespect featured prominently in this study. Emanating from this study repeatedly emerged the suggestion that institutional cultural climates have a complex and significant relationship with the question of social recognition in terms that are, in many ways, identical to the earlier explicated model by Honneth. Intersubjective recognition emerged as a key theme in the data, and has been central in students' accounts and experiences of campus life. The respondents were

clearly not seeking status or prestige alone but rather recognition, which touches on both one's 'private' sense of self and one's 'public' self.

This section will make a case that, generally, in South Africa there is a massive problem in so far as many, firstly, do not acknowledge the extent of our racial problem. Secondly, those who do acknowledge this are unaware of the nature and the challenge of our racial problem within our personal lives and interpersonal relationships with fellow South Africans. During this study, most students defined non-racialism in terms of positive 'race' relations. Keeping this understanding of non-racialism in mind, an interesting observation from the findings is that a large percentage of students do not regard South Africa as a non-racial society. Conversely, a significant number (58% when combined) of students regard 'race' relations at NMMU as either "very good" or "not bad and improving"; with a lesser number regarding 'race' relations at NMMU as "bad" or "poor".

Is South Africa a Non-racial Society?

In explaining their responses to whether they thought South Africa a non-racial society or not, most students referred to either the ongoing legacy of apartheid within South African society, or actual experiences of discrimination or racism (in terms of ideas or events), as the reason they responded the way they did. In answer to questions related to the efforts aimed at improvement of 'race' relations at NMMU, some students felt that improvement in 'race' relations is possible, and that activities towards building non-racialism are necessary.

Lastly, a significant number (85%) of responses centred on how the legacy of apartheid created distance and anger amongst different 'races', and contributed to the centrality of 'race' in South African society, including experiences of discrimination and racism. Other responses were either negative, namely, having been exposed to racist ideas, comments, or continued socio-economic imbalances; or positive, namely, having experienced a sense of the equality outlined in the Constitution, or the fact that different 'races' now socialise and live together. For example, Amanda (aged 20, female, 3rd year Education student) noted, "I have seen racial incidents occur in front of my eyes. People still face discrimination based on race. I feel that racism will always

be in society, the only thing that really changes is how people react to it". Further, Andiswa (aged 22, female, 3rd year Health Science student) observed, "It is stated in the Bill of Rights, but people are still discriminated, there's still some apartheid left even though now we say we are free". Another student, Sisanda (aged 23, female, Logistics student) expressed that: "I feel this way because things have been changed since people like Mandela fought for our rights and for all of us to be united as one and work together to make South Africa a better place. We share things now and eat, seat in the same place".

What is Your Understanding of Non-racialism?

Responses to the question "What is your understanding of non-racialism" varied from "non-discrimination" and "no racism" to not having an opinion. The responses were categorised into five main themes. The first theme included views that incorporated the existence of 'race', and defined non-racialism broadly as "good 'race' relations". Six subthemes emerged under this theme. They related to issues of discrimination; racism; diversity; unity between 'races'; harmony and understanding between 'races'; and equality of opportunity, and the self determination of 'races'.

Responses that were classified under the subtheme "No discrimination or labelling" ranged from views of "no discrimination on the basis of 'race', gender, or religion", to "respect irrespective of race". For example, Ayanda (aged 22, male, 2nd year Health Science student) formulated non-racialism as: "Treating every one with equality irrespective of their skin colour. And not judging the person by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character". Sibusiso (aged 22, male, 3rd year Logistics student) wrote, "The absence of prejudice with regard to one's pigmentation. It is in simplicity looking beyond skin colour/race in individuals. It is not attaching negative things on people on the basis of colour. To me non-racialism means a better life for all without the racial barrier". Similarly, Colomy and Brown (1996) explain that several sociologists maintain that one of the most significant master trends of modern social change is movement toward increasing inclusion. Their central contention is that restrictive, primordial conceptions of community premised on kinship, language, class, race, gender, ethnicity, religion,

sexual orientation and so on are giving way to social systems organized around more inclusive and abstract conceptions of membership.

Another significant subtheme that emerged was that non-racialism implies harmony and unity between racial groups and the ability to communicate and understand each other. Note, for example, the following student responses: "Being able to interact with other races without restrictions or boundaries" or "as long as there is common understanding". A number of students also regarded equality, freedom and the right to self-determination as implying non-racialism; for example, "Non-racialism is the meaning that people are treated equally, not based on their race/culture. It also means not to be racial in the way you see people".

The second theme consisted of responses that ranged from a view that typified non-racialism as being "racially blind" or "not seeing skin colour", to identifying 'race' as a construct used for economic control. The reasons for the above responses have to be read and interpreted in light of students' understandings and definitions of non-racialism. Most students understood non-racialism in terms of positive 'race' relations.

Do You Believe that South Africa is a Non-racial Society? Why?

A strong theme that emerged in the responses, especially in response to answering "No" (South Africa is not non-racial society), regards the legacy of apartheid. Many subthemes were related to the effects of apartheid for, example; "created walls of anger and distance"; "apartheid led to the centrality of 'race' in society"; "older people not forgiving or still acting racist"; and "apartheid created continued race-based socio-economic inequalities" all of these subthemes emerged. In summary, within the subtheme relating to the apartheid legacy, respondents indicated that the walls of anger and distance created by apartheid led to the centrality of 'race' in society, which in turn has caused the older people to be unforgiving or to still behave in a racist manner, which has created continued race-based socio-economic inequalities. Habib and Bentley (2008: 5) concur with the students' sentiments and argue that the resultant debate is then accompanied by charges that members of the aggrieved group are being treated as second-class citizens. This then deflects the na-

tional debate and gives it an orientation away from what should be its major focus: how to politically and economically empower a majority that has been historically excluded as a result of apartheid. In addition, a Zodwa, 21 years old, female, 3rd year Business Science student wrote, "No matter how much we try not to make race an issue, some people or certain groups of people refuse to let go of the anger of the past or to let go of what happened in previous years". Some respondents wrote without much evidence of emotion, for example, "South Africa is a young country with a colourful history, to me it seems people still judge people and have a lot of animosity against each other because of the history of some people". In connection with such an attitude, Habib and Bentley (2008: 6) argue that the big challenge in this agenda is "how to ensure redress, promoting the political and socio-economic affirmation of those who were historically excluded, while simultaneously retaining the commitment of the descendants of those who were historically advantaged".

The themes that emerged were related to views on continued racism and discrimination as reasons for their responses. These responses ranged from, "exposure to racist and discriminatory comments and ideas", to "actual experiences of racism and discrimination". Other responses ranged from "experiences of racism and lack of respect", "discrimination at a management level in private business, and Black Economic Empowerment", to "exposure to racist comments and ideas by neighbours and lecturers, and in the media regarding political parties".

Race Relations at NMMU

Interestingly, regarding the question dealing with students' views about 'race' relations at NMMU, four themes emerged from their responses. The first theme incorporated views that 'race' relations are "very bad" and "unequal", and "that there are racist elements at the university". Responses in the subthemes included views that political organisations bring racism; that 'race' is a very sensitive topic at the university; and that division and racist prejudices exist. The subtheme that economic inequalities entrench white privilege was also categorised under this theme.

The second theme that emerged was one of indifference, where students simply indicated

that they had no view on the topic or had no problem with 'race' relations; for example, "...haven't experienced any racism at the moment". The third theme, however, typified 'race' relations as "very good" and "positive". The subthemes here presented NMMU as being vibrant and appreciative of diversity, equal and with no discrimination, and a place where "we are free" and race no longer matters. The fourth theme that emerged dealt with students' views that race relations at the NMMU were "not bad" and that "it was getting better because there are efforts dealing with it". For example, a student observed, "They [are] pushing to equalise standards of education and they are developing a well-coordinated strategy to help us with this factor".

Efforts at Improving Race Relations at NMMU

Students felt that it is important to improve race relations, "as we are all one", "because of Ubuntu",²² and for religious reasons. Additionally, a number of students felt that a lot still needs to be done; for example, residences need to be integrated and students should be forced to work together. A student commented, "residences should be made to equally accommodate all students" and "it can be done by mixing the students in residents, like in a room where there can be a white and black or coloured person". "Hostels should be more integrated". According to Colomy and Brown, "Interactional citizenship refers to a set of vague and diffuse, but vitally felt expectations and obligations that pertain to interactional displays of respect, regard and dignity for the person" (Colomy and Brown 1996: 375).

Regarding efforts at NMMU to improve race relations, some students indicated a lack of awareness of such efforts. The subthemes here ranged from stating that "very little was being done" and that "the culture remains the same". For example, Vathiswa, 20 years old, female, Business Science student, wrote "I do not think that there are any efforts at the NMMU and if there are then they should be advertised more. NMMU as a whole should promote more bonding of their students to improve relations between races and all the students". While Monwabisi, 21 years old, male, Law students, was of the view that "Yes, it happens but [has] no lasting effect", and furthermore, that "we do not

have enough activities that encourage race relations, the last was [in] 2011" to "nothing can be done" to the view that efforts extend psychological scars.

According to McKnight and Chandler (2012: 76), "schooling cannot be seriously considered a neutral, value free, merit-based institution in which racism exists...and the norms of dominant culture are absent". However, public schools have the potential to be the true laboratory of democracy that teaches students how to live the principles of life, liberty and equality only if hegemonic frameworks like white privilege are interrogated and evaluated in critical ways.

DISCUSSION

Harkavy (2006: 33) argues that "when colleges and universities give very high priority to actively solving strategic, real world problems in their community, a much greater likelihood exists that they will significantly advance citizenship, social justice and the public good". If universities are universally perceived as structures that advance democracy (i.e. social justice, human rights, and inclusivity in education), Harkavy (2006: 1) further maintains that the goal of universities should be to contribute significantly to developing and sustaining democratic schools - effectively educating students to be democratic, creative, caring, constructive citizens.

For the attainment of inclusivity, social justice and transformative practice, Habib and Bentley (2008: 39) assert that "acknowledgement of the past and its impact on the present, legitimacy of political institutions, respect of the rule of law, improved relations of trust across race, dialogue and a human right culture". For universities to achieve such an acknowledgement effectively, their service will need to be transformed into a coherent, representative, competent and democratic instrument; it should be representative in such a way that it reflects the major characteristics of the country's demography, and have a democratic ethos directed by an attention to human rights. To fulfil this role effectively, the service will need to be transformed into a coherent, representative, competent and democratic instrument for implementing government policies and meeting the needs of all South Africans. Similarly, Swartz (2011: 16) believes that, "the university's vision contains many broad

indicators about the role of the university internally and in wider society, and of course the core values; excellence, respect for diversity, Ubuntu ... integrity and taking responsibility. Internally, this will provide a framework of reference to make value judgements on how best to deal with the very difficult tensions and trade-off in the university". At its core, Swartz (2011: 16) further argues, "NMMU's public purposes must entail a clear commitment to the promotion of public good and public value, democratic norms, values and practices, non-discrimination, social justice, social equality".

CONCLUSION

South Africa is a multicultural society, and in 1994 former State President Nelson Mandela along with Desmond Tutu promoted the idea of the Rainbow Nation, which united the country in its diversity. However, today, South African politics, lived experiences and even social circles seem to be defined by 'race'. Racial identities, as a matter of descriptive fact, still run deep even if denied. Default traits are associated with the colour of one's skin, and prejudices between racial groups are explicitly expressed. This stereotypical thinking can be exceptional or typical, but either way it is irrational.

In this study, of particular interest was how these students' responses could add value to the institutionalization of a new campus cultural climate and the institutional transformation agenda. The authors' contention is that students are the major stakeholders in higher education, however, researchers and policymakers rarely include the individuals who are the focus of education in the development of solutions to their own problems. Although individuals or groups are often asked their opinions about their plight, they are seldom asked to participate in the development of programs or models that will improve their lives.

The stated mission of NMMU (c2015) is "To offer a diverse range of quality educational opportunities that will make a critical and constructive contribution to regional, national and global sustainability".³ However, as NMMU exists in the context of South Africa, where racial inequalities exist, NMMU is not exempt from such inequalities. The problems confronting historically disadvantaged universities or campuses of new, merged institutions that were once dis-

advantaged, have not gone away. This is irrespective of whether these institutions were incorporated into or merged with historically white universities, which are today multicultural universities, predominantly middle class in their student intake, and better equipped and better staffed than the historically disadvantaged institutions.⁴

In this study, most students' intuitive understandings of non-racialism were in line with the use of racial categorisation. For them, non-racialism implies, mainly, a lack of discrimination and racism, a harmony between races, or a constitutional equality. Some students defined non-racialism as acknowledging that race is a construct, that it is not based on biological or genetic realities. In addition, some seemed to define it as not seeing skin colour, while some linked this also to the imperative of socio-economic equality.

On the basis of the above understanding, most students felt that South Africa is not a non-racial society; in other words, not without racism and discrimination, or that South Africans do not see people without seeing skin colour. Responses indicated that students identified the legacy of apartheid as an important reason for this, especially because of the anger, the continued centrality of race in our society, as well as the on-going racial socio-economic inequalities. Many students also mentioned actual exposure to racism and discrimination as the reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the central arguments that the paper seeks to advance, there is a need for the reconfiguration of the academy as a public sphere in which marginalised individuals and groups of students become agents against their own marginalisation. There is a need for the intersubjective grounding of the principles of social justice in communicative reason, as articulated in account. Further, there is a need for the expansion of the scope of democratic expression and deliberation, looking at how students' intuitive understanding and lived experiences become informative in such a process. Citizenship based on the principles of non-racialism, inclusivity and social justice has been less explored by scholars in the academy as structuring concepts in their approach towards a transformative and emancipatory university agenda.

The authors advocate for the centrality of students' understanding and lived experiences as a means to illuminate the ideological and sociological positioning of those marginalised.

In line with Honneth's theoretical framework as explicated in this paper, in order to enact a new form of institutional transformation based on social justice and inclusivity, such a process will occur largely as a result of a function of how individuals reciprocate acts of recognition and respect in relation to each other. This does not imply ignoring the complexity and the intricate nature of inequality and oppression as systemic social order. In this paper, the authors are of the view that to understand the complexity of social relations and how they are implicated in institutional cultures and the broader institutional transformation project, the unravelling and exploration of the ways in which misrecognition and disrespect is experienced by individuals should be prioritised. To understand this complex reality, more systematic framing should be explored of the relationship between individuals and structures and how students' experiences can be validated by more progressive institutional approaches towards transformation. The students seek for ways to reinforce their dignity and solidarity grounded on the negation of injustice and marginality. The question is how to enact forms of citizenship whereby students discover self-esteem and not act in terms of duty. The authors suggest that university policies need to facilitate action in relation to experiences of solidarities and the quest for dignity and freedom. Universities in their quest to resolve institutional transformation challenges enact policies that less respond to struggles for recognition, for solidarity, for human presence, and for integrity.

NOTES

- 1 As noted by the Centre of the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (NMMU c2005), The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) is a value-driven university working towards optimizing the potential of its internal and external communities for the sustainable development of the African continent. Accordingly, Vision 2020 declares the NMMU: "To be a dynamic African university, recognised for its leadership in generating cutting-edge knowledge for a sustainable future." Drawing from the iconic former State President Nelson Mandela, the NMMU adopted the values and principles of transformation and equity, respect for diversity, people-centeredness,

student access, engagement, excellence, innovation, and integrity. The historic establishment of political democracy in 1994 brought with it a new reality, and hope, to forge a society based on equity, non-racialism, and democracy. The Constitution of South Africa contains some of the world's most progressive ideals and policy directives to restore human dignity and respect for all people, irrespective of 'race', class, gender, and nationality. In particular, it proposes the fundamentals for dismantling the iniquitous social and economic relations of the apartheid past. However, South Africa, like many other nations in the world, continues to suffer from the socially constructed expressions of race and ethnic differences. The false idea of racial categorisation, a discontented heritage from colonialism, is proving to be a growing burden on nation states and ordinary people vis-à-vis conflict, violence and dehumanisation. This questionable condition has also found prominent spaces in discourse, cultural theory, and ideological choices. Hence, a duality has come to exist in the world, where some people engage in celebrating race and identity, while others are attempting to reconstruct the basic humanity of all people. The reconstruction process, in particular the abstractions of human dignity, respectfulness, and hospitality, cannot be achieved wholly by protocols or policy statements. It requires a process of engagement, which must stand upon peoples' episteme and cultural consciousness to both learn and unlearn approaches, attitudes, and behaviours. Accordingly, a system of deliberate compacts must come to bear over the environment, including the academic environment.

- 2 See the 2001 journal article by Mzamo P. Mangaliso, 'Building competitive advantage from ubuntu: Management lessons from South Africa'. 'Ubuntu' is a Southern African concept and very commonly used in South Africa among the Nguni tribes. "Ubuntu can be defined as humaneness—a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness—that individuals and groups display for one another. Ubuntu is the foundation for the basic values that manifest themselves in the ways African people think and behave toward each other and everyone else they encounter. One of the most important attributes of Ubuntu is the high degree of harmony and continuity throughout the system". www.studymode.com/essays/African-Philosophy-Essay-1572549.html
- 3 For more information regarding the mission, vision and values of NMMU, consult www.nmmu.ac.za/About-NMMU/Management—Identity/Mission,-Vision—Values.
- 4 In this regard, see Adam Habib and Kristina Bentley (2008), 'Racial Redress and Citizenship in South Africa'.

REFERENCES

- Althusser L 1976. *Essays in Self-criticism*. London: New Left.
- Banks JA 2004. Teaching for social justice, diversity and citizenship in a global world. *The Educational Forum*, 68: 289–98.
- Banks JA, Banks CA 1995. *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

- Bhorat H, Lundall P, Rospabe S 2002. The South African labour market in a globalising world: Economic and labour legislative considerations. ILO Employment Paper 2002/32. Geneva: ILO
- Carr W, Kemmis S 1986. *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge, and Action Research*. Abingdon, Oxon: Falmer Press.
- Centre for Inclusivity 2014. Strategic Plan Document, June 2014. From <<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/About/YearReport/2014/Annual%20Report%202014.pdf>> (Retrieved on 15 March 2015).
- Colomy J, Brown D 1996. Goffman and Interactional Citizenship. *Sociological Perspectives*, 39(3): 371-381.
- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). From <http://www.acts.co.za/constitution-of-the-republic-of-south-africa-act-1996/> (Retrieved on 9 December 2014).
- Cornelissen S, Horstmeier S 2002. The social and political construction of identities in the new South Africa: an analysis of the Western Cape. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40(1): 55-82.
- Creswell JW 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five Traditions*. London: Sage.
- Delpit L 1995. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New Press.
- Department of Education 1997a. *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Department of Education 1997b. *National Plan for Higher Education White Paper*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- Deranty JP, Renault E 2007. Politicizing Honneth's Ethics of Recognition. *Thesis Eleven*, 88: 92-111.
- Dixon JA, Tredoux CG, Durrheim K, Finchilescu G, Clack B 2008. 'The inner citadels of the color line': Mapping the micro-ecology of racial segregation in everyday life spaces. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 2: 1547-1569.
- Duncan N 2003. 'Race' talk: discourses on 'race' and racial difference. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27: 135-156.
- Folger R, Cropanzano R 1998. *Organizational Justice and Human Resource Management*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gay G 2000. The importance of multicultural education. *Educational Leadership*, 61(4): 30-35
- Guba EG, Lincoln YS 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In NK Denzin, YS Lincoln (Eds.): *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 105-117.
- Habib A, Bentley K 2008. *Racial Redress and Citizenship in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Harkavy I 2006. The role of universities in advancing citizenship and social justice in the 21st Century. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 1(1): 5-37.
- Heritage J 1998. Conversational analysis and institutional talk. In: D Silverman (Ed.): *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 161-182.
- Honneth A 1990. *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*. CW Wright (Ed.). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Honneth A 1995. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Honneth A 1996. *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Hutchings K, Pulkkinen T 2010. *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought: Beyond Antigone?* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kumashiro KK 2002. *Troubling Education: Queer Activism and Anti-Oppressive Pedagogy*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Kumashiro KK 2004. *Against Common Sense: Teaching and Learning toward Social Justice*. New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Ladson-Billings G 1994. *The Dream keepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings G 1995. Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(3): 465-491.
- Machin D, Mayr A 2012. *How to Do: Critical Discourse Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mahlomaholo MG 2010. Towards sustainable empowering learning environments: Unmasking apartheid legacies through scholarship of engagement. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 24(3): 287-301.
- Mangaliso MP 2001. Building competitive advantage from Ubuntu: Management lessons from South Africa. *Academy of Management Executive*, 15(3): 23-33.
- Mare G 2001. Race counts in contemporary South Africa: An 'illusion of ordinariness'. *Transformation*, 47: 75-94.
- Maxam S, Henderson JE 2013. Inclusivity in the Classroom: Understanding and embracing students with "Invisible Disabilities." *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership*, 16(2): 71-81.
- McKnight D, Chandler P 2012. The complicated conversation of class and race in social and curricular analysis: An examination of Pierre Bourdieu's interpretative framework in relation to race. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44 (1): 74-97.
- Mead GH 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ministry of Education 2001. *National Plan for Higher Education*. Pretoria: Ministry of Education.
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. From <<http://splan.nmmu.ac.za/Vision-2020>> (Retrieved on 21 November 2014).
- Nieto S 2000. *Affirming Diversity: The Socio-political Context of Multicultural Education*. 3rd Edition. New York: Longman.
- Sennett J, Foster D 1996. Social identity: Comparing White English-speaking South African students in 1975 and 1994. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 26(4): 203-211.
- Sleeter CE 1996. *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*. Albany: State University of New York Press
- Steyn M, Foster D 2008. Repertoires for talking white: Resistant whiteness in post-apartheid South Africa. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31: 25-51.
- Swartz D 2011. Competing Ideas of the Contemporary University: Rethinking Elements of the NMMU Academic System. Discussion Document, Unpublished.
- Wale K, Foster D 2007. Investing in discourses of poverty and development: How White wealthy South Africans mobilise meaning to maintain privilege. *South African Review of Sociology*, 38(1): 45-69.

ANNEXURE A

Table 1: What is non-racialism?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>
1. What is non-racialism?	1. Non-racialism means positive 'race' relations 2. Non-racialism means 'race' is not real 3. No opinion 4. No such thing as non-racialism	No discrimination or labelling No racism Unity between 'races' Diversity Harmony and understanding between 'races' Equality, self-determination and freedom 'Race' a construct, not reality Do not have an opinion Non-racialism does not exist

Table 2: Is SA a non-racial society? Why do you say so?

<i>Question</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>
2. Is SA a non-racial society?	Why do you say so? 2. Racism and discrimination, also xenophobia 3. SA is non-racial 4. Changing society and forward looking 5. 'Races' will always differ	1. Apartheid legacy continues Apartheid legacy created 'walls' and anger; we situate 'race' at centre of society Older black people not forgiving White people still acting Apartheid Continued socio and economic imbalances between 'races' Exposure to racist and stereotypical comments and ideas Experiences of racial conflict and discrimination Xenophobia Blacks and Whites only tolerate each other Different 'races' socialize and live together Youth more non-racial Equality in constitution Racism exists but is changing Time for finding a common humanity 'Races' will always differ

Table 3: How are race relations at NMMU?

3. How are 'race' relations at NMMU?	1. Very bad relations, inequality, racist elements 2. Indifferent 3. 'Race' relations very good, pleasant 4. Each campus has its own manifestations of 'race' 5. Not bad and there is progress	Political organizations bring racism Sensitive topic Divisions, racist elements and prejudices No relations, issue neglected bad fake relations, most still racist Economic inequalities entrench white privilege at NMMU No view No problem with them Vibrant and appreciate diversity Equality, no discrimination, good relations Excellent, we're free, 'race' no longer an issue Different at each campus NMMU makes efforts, it's getting better
--------------------------------------	--	--

Table 4: Efforts at NMMU

5. View on current 'race' relation efforts at NMMU	1. Acknowledge current efforts but give positive suggestions going forward	Integration and equality Unite different 'races' Bring past racial issues and do anti racial campaigns Still racial division and still lot of work to be done Non-racialism events extend psychological scars Non-racialism is an illusion because people are different No lasting effects, therefore, no improvement Evaluation of lecturers at NMMU No racial discrimination and we are equal No view
	2. Know about current efforts but pessimistic about future of non-racialism	
	3. More focus on discrimination in classrooms	
	4. Non-racialism exists	
	5. No view	
6. What should we do at the NMMU to build a non-racial society?	1. Academic focus on building non-racialism at NMMU	Use English as medium of communication Focus on teaching and learning Conduct research and promote non-racialism Progress towards building non-racialism NMMU is non-racial Activities to impact on communities Educational activities and campaigns to bring students together Nothing can be done Non-racialism an impossibility Focus on the future Individual change Encourage equality and fairness Abolish racial categories Don't know
	2. Positive view of non-racialism at NMMU	
	3. More activities geared towards building non-racialism at NMMU	
	4. Pessimistic about non-racialism at NMMU	
	5. Change towards non-racialism is a process	
	6. Abolish racial categories	
	7. Do not know	