

**Rights, Regulation and Recognition: Studying Student Leaders’
Experiences of Participation and Citizenship within a South
African University**

Andre Keet* and Willy Nel

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, South Africa
*E-mail: *Andreke@nmmu.ac.za, NelWN@ufs.ac.za***KEYWORDS** Governmentality. Misrecognition. Recognition Theory. Student Citizenship as Action (SCA).

ABSTRACT Citizenship as action is generally understood to refer to the capacity to exercise rights and responsibilities, the proficiency to express membership, and the capacity to participate and claim equal recognition. Constraints in any of these spheres result in misrecognition: a notion which emerges as the overarching grid on which student leaders frame their experiences of active citizenship within university settings. This study shows that student leaders seldom perceive their high levels of participation within the formalised processes and structures of the university as active-student-citizenship. Instead, it is intuited as acting out scripts in an overregulated space from where their feelings of misrecognition stem. Thus, the study highlights the need to rethink student citizenship against the backdrop of the university as an institution embodied in techniques of regulation and governmentality, generally aimed at producing adapted platoons of students.