



BUILDING AN ANTI-RACIST ACADEMY:
Plotting a Pathway for Youth (the Next Generation of Academic)

Presentation at the Annual
South African Sociological Association
Conference
June 30 – July 3, 2013
University of South Africa, Sunnyside,
Pretoria, South Africa

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The contents



Background


- South African academy is perhaps the most colonized space.
- It is a site for production and reproduction of a variety of discourses which keep in place certain colonial and apartheid structures which have as their intent the maintenance of Eurocentric hegemonies at the level of thinking, teaching and learning, research and the production, dissemination of knowledge and therefore dominate the larger material world.

- Implication of changes in the global scale to the universities of South Africa
 - South African universities are under pressure to confront the complex transformation, currently taking place in the economic, political, scientific and social climate in the 21st Century,

- The university's response to the external challenges represented by knowledge-driven , global economy is increasingly contested in its quest to balance better the economic purpose of higher education with its cultural, moral and intellectual purposes.

- The apartheid legacy
 - Which saw higher education in South Africa skewed in ways designed to entrench the power and privilege of the few.

- Higher education institutions established in the 20th Century were incorporated into a system which was subsequently shaped, enlarged and fragmented with a view to serving goals and strategies of successive apartheid governments..

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- It was in this context that the new higher education policies of South Africa's first, and second democratic government sought to reshape the system into one that met the goals of equity, democratization, responsiveness and efficiency.
 - The post 1994 saw unprecedented changes in South African higher education. The first two years were dominated by the massive, participatory drive towards policy formulations to address the issues of racism and equity that culminated in a report from the National Commission on Higher Education in 1996



1. Higher education act

Attempted to neutralise the university systems to be inclusive of everyone in every aspect

2. The White paper 1997

- The White Paper, which acknowledges the achievements and strengths of the education reforms in the post 1994,
- The paper showed limited ability of higher education to meet the moral, political, social and economic demands of the new South Africa as characterized by the following notable deficiencies:
 - i. An inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class, and geography; In particular, the shortage of highly trained graduates in fields such as science, engineering, technology, and commerce.
 - ii. Teaching and research policies which favored academic narrowness and closed-system disciplinary programmes.
 - iii. fragmentation, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness of governance of higher education with too little coordination, few common goals, and negligible systemic planning.
 - iv. Contested democratic participation and the effective representation of staff, and students in governance structures at the institutional level in many campuses.

3. 2001 National Plan for Higher Education of 2001

- It gives effect to the vision for the transformation of higher education system outlined in the White Paper 3.
- The Document provides implementation framework and identifies the strategic interventions and levers necessary for the transformation of higher education system as the key engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society.
- It intends to develop a higher education system that will contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national and Southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality.

This National Plan proposes the following:

- a. To provide access to higher education to all irrespective of race, gender, age, creed, class, or disability,
- b. To produce graduates with skills and competencies necessary to meet the human resources needs of the country;
- b. To promote equity of access and to redress past inequities through ensuring that the staff and students profiles in higher education progressively reflect the demographic realities of South African society;
- c. To ensure diversity in the organizational form and institutional landscape of higher education system through mission and programme differentiation, thus enabling the addressing of regional and national needs in social and economic development;
- d. To build high-level research capacity to address and knowledge needs of South Africa.
- e. To build new institutional and organizational forms and new institutional identities through regional collaboration between institutions. Clearly, these frameworks signaled the need for institutions to change their institutional culture and unify the elements of the Higher Education that were fragmented from the past.

Its important to note ,

- A relationship is drawn between the apartheid-based norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions within institutions and new cultural norms that, it is assumed, will come with the establishment of a critical mass of diversity initiatives opening doors to person who were denied in the past.
- By implication, new entrants to South African higher education will be carriers and creators of different cultural norms and practices that reflect the demographics, new demands and needs of the country.
- The Higher Education Regulatory Documents have a common theme which emphasizes the central role the universities in the movement towards a knowledge-based economy should play.
- These documents give hope to the fundamental transformation of the institutional culture
- We note that, throughout the reform documents, the new policy of the government was and continues to be underpinned by the following principles: equity and redress; democratization, effectiveness and efficiency; development; quality; academic freedom; institutional autonomy and public accountability.

How has the policy documents plotted the transformation of academy in relation to equity and racial concerns?

- The White paper 1997, sort for an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class, and geography; In particular, the shortage of highly trained graduates in fields such as science, engineering, technology, and commerce.
- The 2001 National Plan intended to develop a higher education system that will contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national and Southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality.
- It also provided implementation framework and identified the strategic interventions and levers necessary for the transformation of higher education system as the key engine driving and contributing to the reconstruction and development of South African society.
- However, we seem to have had
 - Excellent documents and policies but the implementation of these policies wanting
 - Lack of well defined implementations infrastructure

- However, we contend that
 - In spite of all the interventions since 1994, there has not been significant transformation of the academy.
 - We argue that transformation of an academy must
 - go beyond the governments reforms and policy change
 - Be participatory and should involve all stakeholders actively
 - Encompass a reflection into the past, acknowledging our present situation and plotting a way forward
 - That factors such as racism, equality and equity are major barriers to transformation
 - Concerns of implementation strategies, personnel and infrastructure

In this paper, we explore the challenge of racism, towards building an anti racist academy as well as plotting a pathway for the next generation of academics. We ask the following question as we explore:

- What is racism?
- What are its tendencies ?
- What are the barriers to the transformation of the academy in this regard?
- What is the transformation we desire in South Africa?
- What is the role of academics in realising transformation towards plotting their role in the transformation
- What is the role of African academics towards realising transformation in the academics?

What is racism?

- According to Caleb Rosado, racism is a product of the privilege that prejudice rationally tries to defend.
- Prejudice is a pre-judgemental inflexible rational attitude towards another which incorporates fear and ignorance and does not change in post-judgement even after evidence of the contrary. It operates at the cognitive, emotional and behavioural level. Fear strikes at the bottom of prejudice, it's the fear of losing the power of privilege that sustains prejudice
- **Racism is a socially constructed reality at the heart of society's structures. Racism is the deliberate structuring of privilege by means of an objective, differential and unequal treatment of people, for the purpose of social advantage over scarce resources, resulting in an ideology of supremacy which justifies power of position by placing a negative meaning on perceived or actual biological/cultural difference**
- Racism and Prejudice are rational, cultural and structural phenomena that aim to defend power.
- Racism goes beyond prejudice (an attitude) to structure this power advantage politically, economically, culturally and religiously within a social system,
- These could manifest either as in personal bias) or as complex phenomenon | social realm as in the role apartheid played in South Africa giving social advantage to some at the expense of others perceived to be inferior and undeserving.
 - Colour is not the issue but the systems that perpetrate evil against others and then justify that evil by blaming the victims just as gender is never the issue when women feel discriminated upon. Otherwise sex change would be a prompt solution to such. But the systems which benefit men at the expense of women and then justify the evil perpetrated by putting the blame on gender.
 - Therefore racism is the meaning we give to the colour of the skin to suit our advantage

What are its tendencies

- **Cognitive tendencies**
 - What people believe about others. Based with stereotypes, social scripts that exaggerates and generalises inaccurately about a group or category of people
 - Such social scripts are usually reinforced and sustained through shared beliefs
 - Maybe favourable or unfavourable towards the other
- **Emotional tendencies**
 - Its in the feelings that Others arouse in an individual
 - May be negative feelings (fear, flight or fight etc.) or positive (confidence, joy and comfort)
 - These feelings may stem from memories of previous encounters or socialised beliefs and conviction and may hang on even after the cognitive has been proved otherwise; otherwise sustaining prejudice
 - They is due to the inherent need to feel psychologically superior ; which in its self is a state of inferiority
- **Behavioural tendencies**
 - In its tendency to engage in a discriminatory manner towards a group or category of people on the basis of colour, social status, religion and gender among others