

ACUSAfrica Colloquium

Advancing Critical University Studies:

Critical University Studies and the Battle Against Global Racism

Report

The ACUSAfrica network, launched in 2019 with the *Emancipatory Imaginations: Advancing Critical University Studies* Winter School, hosted an online colloquium in February 2021.

The aim of the colloquium was to build the ACUSAfrica network to advance critical and radical approaches to the study of higher education through a combination of practical and intellectual work. As such, it constituted three sessions, which located the colloquium within the intentions to 1) build the network, especially in Africa; 2) grapple with questions of the study of the university within the African context; and 3) engage with the battle against global racism, especially as it plays out in higher education.

**An initiative of
Nelson Mandela University,
Queen's University Belfast
and the University of Ghana.**

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September 2021.



CRITICAL
UNIVERSITY
STUDIES

SESSION I

Building the ACUSAfrica Network

FACILITATORS

André Keet

Dina Zoe Belluigi

Michael Okyerefo

DATE

15 February 2021

TIME

17h00-19h00 SAST



Building the ACUSAfrica Network

The ACUSAfrica network was launched in 2019 with the *Emancipatory Imaginations: Advancing Critical University Studies* Winter School.

The aim of the Winter School was to bring together scholars and practitioners with an interest in the critical study of higher education from across the globe to consider the prospect of “‘other’ ways to study universities that are meaningfully different from the various strands of conventional higher education studies; and to explore a flexible configuration of Critical University Studies that is capable of plural and different forms of higher education imaginations and futures” ([Keet & Belluigi, 2019](#)).

Since then, the network has been able to launch its [website](#), which includes a [resource library](#), and is engaged in a book project based on the scholarship that emerged from the Winter School. In this session, a number of scholars and practitioners who attended the Winter School reported on the work they have been doing related to advancing Critical University Studies since.

Michael Okyerefo opened by discussing the situation of the ACUSAfrica network within a ‘connecting web of ideas’ and foregrounding the roots of the university within Africa. Aslam Fataar then presented on the South African chapter of the network that is in the process of being established.

Jason Arday and Dina Belluigi reported back on the progress of the book project that they are co-editing with André Keet framed around the question: How is Critical University Studies to be ‘advanced’? Jenny du Preez introduced the webinar series that will offer opportunities throughout the year for focused discussion of studies or issues related to Advancing Critical University Studies, and the first webinar organised by herself and Roxana Chiappa Baros to be held on the 17th of March.

Sharon Stein, Michalinos Zembylas, Su-Ming Khoo, Christi van der Westhuizen, Luan Staphorst, André Keet and Dina Belluigi also all presented on the scholarly work that they have been doing in relation to CUS, spanning decolonisation of Higher Education (HE), critical internationalization studies, gender equity in HE, post/conflict academia, pedagogies, institutional culture(s), and the mapping of CUS.

For more on this discussion please find the blog and video by clicking [here](#).

After the presentations, the participants broke away for more in-depth discussions on how to advance the ACUSAfrica network.

Discussion One

In this discussion, it was suggested that the ACUSAfrica network create thematic sub-groups to allow for more focused conversations in order to tap into and build on the various interests of members. To do this, the network would need to find a way to identify special interests amongst the members. It was also proposed that ACUSAfrica work towards collaborating more with like-minded networks and institutions.

Institutional culture emerged as a potentially generative theme to be explored within the ACUSAfrica network. CANRAD (Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy) is currently working on a book project exploring institutional cultures along with other Nelson Mandela University colleagues, and there might be possibilities for a colloquium/seminar/book launch on this topic in collaboration between CANRAD and ACUSAfrica. The book might provide a springboard to further the conversation on institutional culture(s), which is such a challenging topic.

Another proposal was a multi-university approach to studying institutional culture with ACUSAfrica assisting in expanding the reach of such a project. It was foregrounded that discussions around institutional culture in South Africa have tended to focus on historically white universities, with race as a primary category of analysis. Efforts should thus be made to look at institutional cultures within historically black universities, and provide space for academics and students from these institutions to share their experiences. There should also be an explanation of how other categories, such as language, serve to exclude and marginalise in these institutions.

The interlocutors also highlighted the question of complicity of academics, students and administrators in maintaining problematic institutional cultures and that this area requires more research. A suggestion was also made that it should be considered how the scholarly work of Critical University Studies might be put into practice in the administration of universities.

Another issue raised was how to study the issues of publishing and publication matrices in Africa.

Discussion Two

In this discussion there was considerable engagement with how members feel they fit into the network as individuals and global South or North scholars, and how their disciplines contribute to the network.

An expectation was also expressed that the ACUSAfrica network define some rules of engagement. This documentation would serve as an ethos to protect scholarship from marginalised contexts. Particular concern was expressed about knowledge from South Africa and Africa being used to advance the careers of global North academics in the network, especially through neoliberal assessment criteria of UK institutions that reward so-called 'engagement' with the South.

The discussants also queried how the network will look inward and address understanding, positionality, research, binaries, conscience, representations, and relationships that perpetuate neo-liberal practices of the North. Key for the discussants was that members of the network interrogate spaces of coloniality in their disciplines and production of knowledge.

At the heart of this discussion was the question around how to build intellectual solidarity in meaningful terms and what individual and collective contributions might be made to the network.

Discussion Three

This conversation began with a critical question: Do we find ourselves in institutions that are rooted in the principle of best practices, are responsive to societal problems, and generate ideas to create a difference in society? This articulation resonates with the idea of the University as a public good, and therefore, the discussants felt that ACUSAfrica could assist in moving beyond the fatalism, or loss of mission, of universities. They also identified ACUSAfrica as capable of informing the practice of transformation in Higher Education.

Thinking differently about internationalisation was another area of work raised where the network might be able to contribute, along with how to learn across borders. Similar to what other groups had noted, there was a call for ACUSAfrica to negotiate the language and translation of decolonization, pedagogy, internationalization and cultural studies.

A number of approaches that the ACUSAfrica network might take up in their critical exploration of the University were suggested. These included: mapping cultural studies, trying to determine the edges of critical literacy, and exploring how visual art might assist us to see and hear ourselves differently and interrogate who we are and where we are going.

Discussion Four

The discussants indicated that it would be important to understand ACUSAfrica in order to inform how members might contribute towards it. They provided a number of practical, actionable suggestions that the ACUSAfrica network might implement: One, a call for papers to expand CUS scholarship. Two, inviting early career academics to build critical concepts and extend epistemological disruption in the framing of decolonization, Africanization and Critical University Studies. Three, the formation of reading groups on key topics to widen understanding of ACUSAfrica, which would inform modes of participation. Four, the circulation of ACUSAfrica material to postgraduate students. Five, to have the network engage with disability studies. Six, to hold accessible cultural events and webinars. Seven, to create an ACUSAfrica newsletter for circulation. Eight, to embrace 'wisdoms' that are often neglected by the University spaces e.g. popular culture.

SESSION 2

Critical University Studies, African Studies and Higher Education Studies

SPEAKER

Paul Zeleza

DATE

16 February 2021

TIME

17h00-19h00

SAST

Transforming African Universities and Epistemic Cultures in the Post-COVID-19 World

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated the systemic deficiencies and inequalities in healthcare systems, economies, businesses and educational institutions at all levels around the world. African universities have been particularly affected. What does this portend for the future of these universities, and for the production, consumption and dissemination of scholarly knowledges?

In this paper, Paul Zeleza argues that universities face various alternative and overlapping futures involving three interlinked scenarios: restoration, evolution, and transformation. The scenarios encompass every aspect of university affairs from the modalities of teaching and learning, financial models, leadership skills, and institutional governance systems to modes of external engagements. In this context, it is critical to interrogate the desirable transformative trajectories for African universities and African studies as a constellation of knowledges on, about, and for Africa.

Constructing new futures for African universities and knowledge economies entails institutional, intellectual, ideological struggles and negotiations, and different ways of studying and assessing the value proposition of universities not only for students and other internal stakeholders, but also for African countries and societies and African diasporas in their complex national and transnational dimensions, articulations, and intersections.

Please click [here](#) to watch the recording of Prof Zeleza's provocation.

Prof Paul Tiyambe Zeleza



Paul Tiyambe Zeleza has been at a dozen universities in six countries on three continents and the Caribbean region. He held distinguished academic and administrative positions in Canada and the United States for 25 years as College Principal, Center Director, Department Chair, College Dean, and Academic Vice President before taking the position of Vice Chancellor (President) and Professor of the Humanities and Social Sciences at the United States International University-Africa in January 2016.

In the early 2000s he worked as a consultant for the Ford and MacArthur foundations on their initiatives to revitalize higher education in Africa. His research project on the African academic diaspora conducted for the Carnegie Corporation of New York in 2011-12 led to the establishment of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program in 2013 that has to date sponsored nearly 400 African-born academics in the United States and Canada to work with dozens of universities in six African countries. He was President of the U.S. African Studies Association in 2008-2009.

He has published more than 300 journal articles, book chapters, reviews, short stories and online essays and authored or edited 28 books, several of which have won international awards. His most recent books include *The Transformation of Global Higher Education, 1945-2015* (2016) and *Africa and the Disruptions of the 21st Century* (2020). He has presented nearly 250 keynote addresses, papers, and public lectures at leading universities and international conferences in 32 countries and served on the editorial boards of more than two dozen journals and book series. He currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford Bibliographies Online in African Studies.

He has received numerous awards from major universities for his scholarship. In July 2013, he was recognized in *The New York Times* as one of 43 Great Immigrants in the United States. In May 2015 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, at Dalhousie University for outstanding personal achievement. In 2015 he was a fellow at Harvard University and has held the positions of Honorary Professor at the University of Cape Town since 2006 and at the Nelson Mandela University since 2019.

He is currently a member of the Administrative Board of the International Association of Universities, the Advisory Board of the Alliance for African Partnership, as well as Chair of the Advisory Council of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Kenya Education Network, and member of the University of Ghana Council.



Discussion summary by Qhama Noveve

After Prof Zeleza's presentation, the participants broke away into groups to delve more deeply into the ideas raised.

Discussion One

In the first discussion in response to Prof Zeleza's provocation, several issues were raised related to Higher Education and COVID-19. One of the main questions was: How do we look at justice in Higher Education under the circumstances of COVID-19? The group also queried how this might translate to, or be applied in, the university space. For example, the idea of 'vaccine apartheid' was raised and tied to broader questions about the accessibility of technology, especially in the context of the move to online learning. These issues speak to the many contestations around the reproduction of inequality, and the creation of inclusive spaces where participation and civic democracy within universities can be prioritised. COVID-19 provides an opportunity to deal with these matters with urgency, as they need to be resolved if Nelson Mandela University is to claim the visions and goals of being a first-class African university.

The group also asked: How has the University as we know it evolved, and what will it look like in the future? Universities are not immune to change, and they require adaptability and the ability to create minimal negative effects on their communities in order to advance their mandate as vehicles for cultural, social and economic development. However, the group also noted how universities have been resistant to change. For example, the standard mode of teaching involves lecture rooms with one person speaking, be it physically or on digital platforms, thus reproducing a Western style of education and knowledge production. Students also barely interact with the communities and cultures that they learn about in the classroom. With little community engagement and co-construction of knowledge, it is difficult to reimagine the University in another form. This is an issue frequently raised in the area of critical pedagogies. Perhaps paradoxically, COVID-19 has forced us to have more interaction with one another. While Zoom fatigue can be a challenge, the conditions of the pandemic have led to us meeting often with those in different parts of the world, something that was not as frequent before.

For the University to become a safe space to accommodate its diversity, it needs to open itself up for social critique beyond Critical University Studies. This will require a more robust and honest environment that will allow different perspectives from all fields to contribute to the transformation agenda. The exclusive nature of the University is yet to be dismantled, as the general perception is still that of a space for only the elite. This also raises questions of epistemic justice because the University may knowingly or unknowingly be reproducing this injustice in the way in which it is built and structured.

The group expressed a hope that, during this pandemic, certain disciplines would not be framed as more valuable than others. Science and medicine took centre stage in the early debates around the virus, which is only natural as we are all looking for answers that will lead to the development of an effective vaccine. However, it

is also important that we take a transdisciplinary approach, especially in the social sciences and humanities as the field offers valuable solutions and contingency plans in tackling the ripple-effect of the pandemic in other spheres of society.

Discussion Two

Responding to Prof Zeleza's provocation, the second group noted that COVID-19 has made gaps and inequalities in higher education more visible, which has raised questions about the sustainability of the current neoliberal capitalist model of the University and its austerity measures for profit generation. There are obvious limitations to the move online, with accessibility being one of the main challenges. However, the move online has offered an alternative space for expression and participation and the use of different tools. This can be taken as a positive experience because we no longer have the clear line of division between work and life. Work is now an integral part of life, enmeshed with our daily activities at home and in our local contexts. This has taught us adaptability and flexibility. It is still unclear whether online teaching has improved student performance despite the inequalities and barriers to learning, and one of the challenges may be that it is because there is an assumption that both academics and students have access to the necessary tools.

Discussion Three

The third discussion focused on how experiences of higher education institutions in the Global North and the Global South have been impacted by COVID-19 differently. It was suggested that the reasons could be attributed to structural issues and the access and funding resources of different universities. Leadership at this time of crisis is crucial, as there needs to be leadership to drive reimagining the University today and in the future. Concern was expressed regarding the ways leadership within universities has been groomed to promote an anti-Black culture and academic bullying that would make it almost impossible to implement the needed changes to effect public good and social justice. A culture of just governance should be cultivated and taught at earlier stages when individuals enter the academy, rather than only at associate professor level. There also needs to be much more value attributed to diverse experiences. As such, it was suggested that we employ an intersectional approach in how we serve the transformation agenda across all social geographies.

In terms of reimagining the University, it was proposed that we need to ask the question: What type of students are we producing? The common concern here is the managerial nature of the academy, and that for us to move forward we need to do away with institutional cultures that are marginalising and alienating. There needs to be a development of appropriate pedagogies that will cater to student diversities. In this way, the University would become a space of continuity rather than one that expects acculturation.

It was also noted that funding has become one of the key concerns in the crisis. It was suggested that both government and universities should start looking at students as investments for the future and not just economically. The topic of mental health was also raised as it is an important aspect of our lives that has a grave impact on

the way we relate to and interact with the University. Moving from analogue to digital has come with its challenges, but the effects are sometimes emotive and that of affect. The issues presented by Prof Zeleza have been in existence before. Now, it was proposed, we need to ask ourselves: What is the future for African universities? In the context of COVID-19, which has exposed and exacerbated inequalities and structural challenges, how will Africans be the agents of social change?

Discussion Four

This group had a mixture of discussants from across the globe, and also with a variety of different relationships with the University. There were three main areas of discussion that emerged in response to Prof Zeleza's provocation:

The first was the issue of funding. One aspect of this topic was the question of the impact of funding on students. One example raised was the way in which students can become 'developmental cases' or 'rescue projects' for funders, and the need for students to be able to have a different kind of relationship with funding. Another aspect was funding and its relationship to government and to corporates. The aspect of contributions both financially and otherwise from those in the diaspora was also raised.

The second area of discussion was around mental health in terms of COVID-19, but also in relation to the turn from analogue to digital and issues around the digital divide.

Finally, a point raised was that most of the problematics in African universities that Prof Zeleza identified in his talk existed pre-COVID, many actually by him in his work. So the question was asked: How does COVID-19 bring these problematics to the fore, or what does it contribute to discussions around the nature of the University or what the African university should be? And, what can we learn about agency in this space and context?

SESSION 3

Critical University Studies and
the Battle Against Global Racism

SPEAKER

Shirley Anne Tate

DATE

18 February 2021

TIME

17h00-19h00

SAST

**'If you were
a white man
they would have
negotiated with you
the minute you were
approached': Bodies of
value in academic life**

Abstract

This provocation looks at how white (anti-)racist empathy can be the location of white fragility, white innocence and white racist hate speech. It uses the often heard prefatory disclaimer 'If you were a white man ...' as an ameliorator of offence in its very reiteration of white, male bodily value. 'If...' simultaneously conveys the (im)possibility of the Black woman's skin value and the dis-value of Black feminist (decolonial) theoretical production, knowledge and experience because of institutional misogynoir in academia. 'If...', as white male supremacist (anti-)racist empathy, remains possible because of the white unquestioned skin privilege which entails work environments ruled by hate/disgust/contempt for Black women. Black women are interpellated as white problems through the racial dissection of the white gaze which continues to replay the colonial HuMan as a point of comparison. The psychic, material, corporeal and carnal life of institutional misogynoir is maintained through the (im)possibility of 'If...'.
Please click [here](#) to watch the recording of Prof Tate's provocation.

Prof Shirley Anne Tate

Shirley Anne Tate is Professor and Canada Research Chair Tier 1 in Feminism and Intersectionality in the Sociology Department, University of Alberta, Canada, and an Honorary Professor at the Nelson Mandela University in the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation. Previously, she was Professor of Race and Education, the first appointment of its kind in the UK, and founding Director of the Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality at Leeds Beckett University. As a Cultural Sociologist, she is a qualitative researcher interested in intersectional thinking. In her writing, research and teaching she draws on Black feminist, gender, critical 'race', queer, and Caribbean decolonial theory within her overall focus on Black Atlantic diaspora studies and emerging identifications.

Shirley's research interests include the body, 'mixed race', domestic and care work, beauty, Black intersectional identifications, migration, positive and negative affect, the culture of Britishness, food, 'race' performativity, decoloniality, transracial intimacies, skin bleaching/lightening/toning and the politics of skin. She has for some time been developing an area of work on racism's affects within the micro-practices of institutional racism which has an academic and practitioner/activist audience in South Africa, The USA, Brazil and the UK. Her 2015 book on decolonising skin bleaching in Black Atlantic zones has had a wide academic interest within the UK and South Africa.



Her recent publications include her 2019 book on decolonizing sambo (Emerald), and the chapters 'Anger, psychic institutional pain and silencing in academia' in *Scholarly Engagement and Decolonization: Views from South Africa, The Netherlands and the United States* (African Sun Press), 'The student of color attainment gap in higher education and the institutional culture of equality, diversity and inclusion' in *Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education* (Springer), and 'Love for the dead: sambo and the libidinal economy of "post-race" conviviality' in *Rethinking the Past for a New Conviviality: Opposing Colonialism, Anti-Semitism, Turbo-Nationalism* (Cambridge Scholars Press). ”

Discussion summary by Hashali Hamukuaya

After Prof Tate's presentation, the participants broke away into groups to delve more deeply into the ideas raised.

Discussion One

The first discussion group found Prof Tate's presentation interesting. Members were pondering whether the presentation would have been different if it were a Black man. If it had been a Black man in the situation Prof Tate described, would the experience have been different, and to what extent? In other words, there is a conception that gender plays a role when it comes to racial matters, especially in the job market and with promotions. There were also questions focused on the implications of racial matters in the higher education space, especially in post-apartheid South Africa. As in the other groups, there was a discussion around race, promotions and professorship. A thought-provoking question put forward was: How do we value people? To what extent should race equity policies play a role in society and institutions? For example, policies directing how many Black academics should be hired or promoted.

A group member questioned the notion of white supremacy, asking why it is called white supremacy and whether it exists. Their rationale was that we are all born with the same mind and abilities, so why is there a movement insisting that Black people are oppressed? This movement against Black oppression paints a picture that all Black people are oppressed. We only become oppressed once we believe we are oppressed. An analogy was made that race can be used as a shield or a spear.

Another thought-provoking question was whether it is possible to build a nation when distorted emotions regarding race are present in society and affect social cohesion. The emotions referred to were disgust, contempt and hatred towards people and their bodies and how people are viewed in terms of colour. It was put forward that we need to find a way to construct an inclusive society for all races and genders in various spaces. The construction has to start with the new generation, especially children, as only then will we see a real change where colour differentiations are present. It was accepted that there is still a long way to go to change the narrative. It was also highlighted that people are still in denial that race plays a role in society.

A group member questioned the effectiveness of policies directed to redress the past's effects by including Black people in different spaces in society. Being aware of racial issues and having a system to deal with conflict such as harassment is not adequate when we are not allowed to talk openly about it in a respectful manner without fear or prejudice.

Young, aspiring Black academics feel like they are being excluded, and it is a form of racism even as white people do it with "kindness". For example, white people will be given opportunities that matter and have positive outputs in developing their career. Another example provided was that Black academics with experience and Master's degrees are often overlooked when it comes to supervising students. These academics are instead mostly given roles to assist their white counterparts to

supervise. To grow in the academic space, one needs experience and other skills to produce academic material. However, Black academics are denied obtaining such skills and experience. In short, it was suggested that racism in higher education has been masked by, or portrayed as, kindness.

Discussion Two

In response to Prof Tate's provocation, the second group expressed the difficulties related to having discussions regarding race in classroom settings. With the decolonising of the curriculum, it has been challenging to engage with diverse students due to the sensitivity of racial topics, while consistently trying to remain politically correct. White students and even lecturers will often express their views, trying to defend a position only to forget to remain politically correct. As a result, white colleagues end up being labelled racist or ignorant. Lecturers have observed that students, especially Black students and students of colour, are uncomfortable having racial discussions and choose to remain silent. Ironically, throughout the group discussion, the white voice was dominant, silencing the Black voice and causing a lacuna in the conversation. Even after making this point, the Black voice continued to remain silent and reserved. The group agreed that we need to be more aware of positionality and strategies adopted to foster meaningful engagement to cultivate anti-racism.

Some members wanted clarity on the meaning of unconscious bias and where we should draw the line between conscious and unconscious bias. This was related to Prof Tate arguing against the existence of unconscious bias and instead interpreting unconscious bias as an excuse. A group member was insistent that unconscious bias exists when looking at scientific material, but it was agreed it could not be a defence for racism (wilful ignorance). A question that remains unanswered is who is responsible for driving the narrative and ensuring institutional change occurs.

Lastly, the question of what value a Black woman has to an institution was raised, as well as how they should negotiate their value. It was suggested that a Black woman is valuable for an institution to be perceived as transformed, but Black women are considered less valuable in nearly every other instance. The University will use Black women academics as alibis to convey that they are transformed even though this is not the case. For example, the institution will market that it has a centre for women and gender studies and focuses on gender inequalities. The group's general sentiment was that the system in place is not inclusive, and it is designed to marginalise certain races and classes of people, resulting in protests. Protests have now become a tool to bring to light the voice of the marginalised and the victimised.

Discussion Three

This discussion centred around race matters in society. Most of the attendees believed they must negotiate around the concept of race, considering it a sensitive topic. White supremacy and racial segregation still exist throughout the structures in society and affect our social life. Lecturers from all races believe they cannot teach and have discussions with students openly about race as it invokes unpleasant

memories from past experiences. Black scholars from the United Kingdom shared their experience, referring to it as a cultural war with white supremacy. They further expressed their dismay about the difficulties black, POC and ethnic minority academics face in order to excel and eventually be elevated to professorship. It was noted that the institutional white culture purposefully hinders Black students and scholars from progressing because if there is an increase in Black excellence or professors, it is assumed that standards have dropped due to racist stereotyping. The measurement of standards in society, including institutions, is determined according to race, and it is even worse for Black women. The white counterparts in the group had difficulty understanding their white privilege and how it affects black, POC and minority ethnic people.

The Black academics emphasised that they felt their white counterparts were being friendly because they felt pressure to act in this manner, instead of wanting to. In other words, that there is no genuineness in relationships across races. Several Black academics felt they were being silenced. Interestingly enough, the white attendees were more assertive in the discussions, and Black people more reserved. However, there were contradictory views on the topic. Black people felt like they are being marginalised by white supremacy wherever they go, and at the same time, they did not know where they belonged. To summarise, Black academics felt they are not being treated equally compared to their white counterparts, and that the system is designed for white people to excel, subject to a few exceptions.

Discussion Four

Members of the fourth group loved the paper Prof Tate had presented and acknowledged the importance of having discussions about race. Group members professed that racism is not static and that it moves in different forms. White academics in the group admitted that they have witnessed white colleagues in power marginalise Black colleagues but chose to distance themselves from the events. The rationale of distancing themselves was to avoid being victimised by white colleagues.

The group continued discussing the impact of microaggression in higher education against Black people and the related power dynamics. It was noted that Black colleagues are groomed to believe that it takes 20 years to become a professor, and white people make sure to use that against their Black counterparts to restrict their growth. A significant concern was that white lecturers would make Black lecturers feel like they are not good enough for promotions even when they exceed the requirements. In other words, it is perceived that white people are delaying Black excellence. Furthermore, as mentioned in a previous discussion, institutional racism is covered up with "kindness". For example, it was suggested that white professors purposefully undermine and delay black subordinates' progression and compensate them with a "handshake" after shattering their self-worth. It is perceived that by just being white they meet the institution's standards resulting in career progression. The group expressed that gender determines the extent of institutional racism and misogyny.

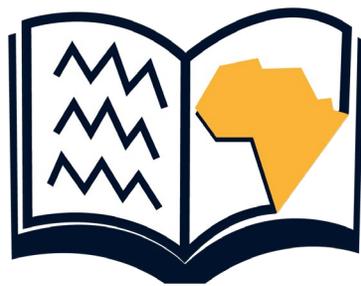
It was observed that in South Africa there is the continuous maintenance of white

power in universities, and it becomes particularly apparent when evaluating the number of white people in positions of power compared to Black people, including professorships. There is no inclusivity within higher education systems, which is a systemic issue. Furthermore, policies have been drafted and people talk about these issues, but progressive steps are not taken when the time arises. An example used was imagining a Black person from a rural background entering the higher education space at a tertiary institution with a dominant white institutional culture. It is expected that the student behave in a particular manner in order to “fit” in. Therefore, African students’ perspectives are silenced. The transformation in institutions cannot be achieved if South Africa’s history and colonial past are not considered. There are many micro-dynamics in academia relating to race. For example, when a Black academic is promoted to HOD/professorship there is a stigma/stereotype that it is to achieve quotas and not on merit. A burning question on this issue was: What strategies can be deployed to navigate the dynamics of race within higher education?

There is much emotional labour involved in talking about racial experiences, especially personal experiences, as it usually comes at a personal cost. In many instances, those who tell their stories of experiencing institutional racism are deemed a problem by other colleagues and are silenced. Those in power deny the occurrence and defend the institution. An interesting question posed was: When a Black person tells of a lived experience, whose responsibility is to amplify it and ensure institutional transformation occurs considering the inequality in the structures in higher education? Furthermore: How do we transform the current narrative for change to occur?

From a Black perspective, it was put forward that we take institutional culture in higher education for granted. It was identified that perception plays a role in what people consider institutional racism. For example, a white lecturer could have the intention to support the student, but due to cultural misunderstandings, the lecturer comes off as racist.

Lastly, it was submitted that institutions do not have faces. A person’s experience is influenced by those in power. Questions were raised about whether racial issues at institutions are an institutional problem or a deeply personal problem. With so many academics voicing their lived experience, it was concluded that it is an institutional problem whereby white culture is dominant within the space to a point where it has adverse effects on Black cultures.



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