



Cape Peninsula  
University of Technology

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***IS HE CALLING US RACISTS?” –***

**THE TRANSFORMATION DISCOURSE IN A MERGED  
FACULTY AT A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**M Noor Davids**

**Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

**[davidsno@cput.ac.za](mailto:davidsno@cput.ac.za)**

# INTRODUCTION I

Ministerial Report on Transformation and Social Cohesion (*MRTSC/Ministerial Report*) (2008) reduced transformation to three critical elements,

- 1) **policy and regulatory compliance,**
- 2) **epistemological change, at the centre of which is the curriculum,**
- 3) **and institutional culture** (*Soudien, 2008*)

# INTRODUCTION 2

## UFS as a guideline. Selected principles:

- 1) an academic culture of diversity in scholarship,
- 2) intellectual space for freedom of scholarly approaches, an academic culture of engagement
- 3) representation of different population groups in governance and administration.

# BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The author joined the **merged Faculty recently**

**Antagonism** that marked his entry into the Faculty **worrying.**

**Book review** dealing with experiences of staff in a **merged Faculty of Education's** (Davids, 2012, 139),

Opportunities for academic reflection and research.

Similar experiences; by two other new staff.

Realising the sensitivity of the situation, a collective decision to release a statement at the Faculty staff meeting.

a raucous call from the back of the room while others were visibly nervous: "is he calling us racists?", was one comment.

# ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Soudien amalgamates Higgens' (2010, 1-2) 'empirical' and 'objective' approach & Raditlhalo's (2007, 5) 'ideological' approach: that most 'previously, white universities' are engaging in a barely disguised battle to maintain the *status quo*.
2. Soudien's (2010, 883) **transformation puzzle is two-fold**: structural and ideological.
3. **'Structural'**: the sociological ordering of the system, particularly the relations between of the (human) subjects,
4. **'Ideological'**, concerning the beliefs and assumptions
5. **Discursive practices** bring to the study subjective experiences which augment an understanding of structure and ideology.

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CRT

- ▶ T FW - tenets of CRT such as counter-story-telling, social justice and experiential knowledge (Solorzano 1998 123).
- ▶ As an analytical category, **Race has limitations** despite its centrality as a causal force of **racism**.
- ▶ Race and racism work in **insidious and often subtle** ways. CRT - Incidents of racism and racial discrimination can be analysed (Matsuda 1995).

# STUDIES AT SA UNIVERSITIES 1

- ▶ **Jansen**, 'social justice is about correcting the wrongs of the past and transformation is about shaping the future.'
- ▶ Since 1994, much of the transformation debate centered on racial transformation and pressures of efficiency (**Ntshoe 2004**).

**Hemson and Singh (2010)**: issues such as leadership, management and staff satisfaction or dissatisfaction, **with little on racial, gender or class inclusion or exclusion.**

# STUDIES 2

- ▶ 2007 **UFS Reitz** incident (Pattman 2010, 953)
- ▶ **Makgoba** affair, the **Mamdani** affair, and the **Shell affair** (Taylor and Taylor, 2010, 897),
- ▶ Transformation tended to focus on race and sex, at the expense of **homophobia** an integral part of the transformation agenda (Msibi, 2013, 65).
- ▶ MRTHE report: **racism and sexism** are pervasive SA Univer (DoE 2008, 13).

# STUDIES 3

- ▶ Nieman (2010): **institutional culture** does not just happen but cultivated by management.
- ▶ A university **cannot** be treated as culturally homogenous nor is it possible to generalise about a particular culture at an institution. Van Wyk (2009). This study focuses on the *sub-culture in a merged Faculty at CPUT*.
- ▶ Transformational **charters** and guidelines.
- ▶ **implement** these plans.

# METHODOLOGY

- ▶ Analytically framed: **3 categories**: structure, practices and ideology., and its theoretical framework is Critical Race Theory (CRT), a deductive method of reasoning is employed. **Deductive reasoning** works from the more general to the more specific.
- ▶ Techniques: **secondary statistical data** reports, **institutional reports, documents, and correspondence, two reflective reports and participant observation.** Ethical clearance.

# DATA&DISCUSSION:STRUCTURE WHITE +

Table 1: – Equity profile of all staff as at 31 March 2014

A	Male			Female			Total	
	C	I	W	A	C	I		W
6	35	3	30	22	46	5	54	201

- White 41.78%
- Coloured 40.2%
- Indian 3.98%
- African 13.9 %

# WINELANDS CAMPUS WHITE +

Table 2 provides data for the Winelands campus.

White	Coloured	African	Indian	Total
21	11	2	0	34
M-10	M-7	M-1	0	18
F - 11	F- 4	F- 1	0	16

White - 61.7%  
Coloured - 32,3%  
African - 5.8%  
Indian - 0%

# PERMANENT ACADEMIC STAFF: WHITE +

**Table 3: Equity profile of permanent academic staff as at 31 March 2014**

Male				Female				Total
A	C	I	W	A	C	I	W	
3	19	3	18	10	17	2	26	98

White 44.89%

Coloured 36.73%

African 13.26%

Indian 5.10%

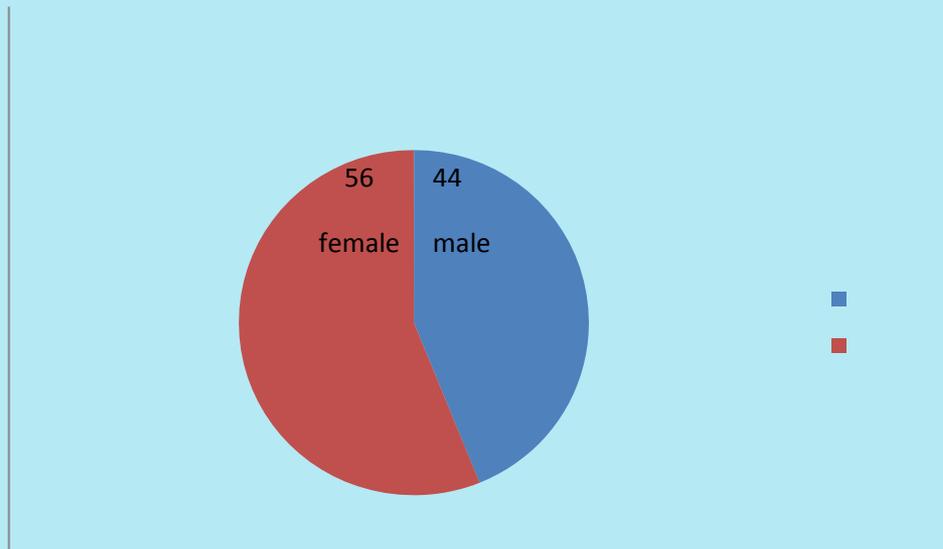
The White group dominates the academic staff profile employed on a permanent basis (44.89%), followed by the Coloured group (36.73%), thereafter the black group (13.26) and the Indian group (5.10%).

# GENDER PROFILE: WHITE MALE +

**Table 6 a: Gender profile of permanent academic staff**

Male	Female	Total
43	55	98

**Table 6 b: Gender profile of permanent academic staff as at March 2014**



The dominance of males is prevalent across the academic staff and in leadership position, such as academic heads of department, professors and top management. Very few women occupy leadership and senior academic positions. However, in the current quarterly reporting period, women are in the majority. Women dominate the permanent academic staff component by 56% compared to the 44% occupied by males.

## IDEOLOGY (1) - AUTHORITY/"LECTURER-CENTERED"

- ▶ **'Teacher-centeredness' to 'learner-centeredness' and the role of the teacher was that of 'bearer of authority and the learner as 'demander of authority' (Landman 1981)TP... *At this meeting the performance of each student is reviewed, the evaluation of the tutor-teacher is taken into consideration and the final mark is decided upon. This mark is not a mathematical average based on the marks received (even if it is 50% or more) but is a mark which takes the total situation into consideration and is an attempt at giving a more accurate reflection of the student's performance in respect of the university's criteria for what is considered outstanding, acceptable or below par. (Teaching Practice manual, CPUT). (insertions are mine).***

## IDEOLOGY (2): QUALITY ASSURANCE AS CONTROL

- ▶ Students are also subjected to a system of quality assurance and control that places them under pressure. The following quotation attests:
- ▶ *The last week of the Teaching Practice session, the fourth-year students have 'to teach all day every day'. It is during this week that they receive their final evaluations and these evaluations are unannounced walk-in visits (Staff correspondence dated 27/06/14).*

# IDEOLOGY (3): RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

- ▶ Lack of transformation: caused by resistance to change and maintenance of the status quo (Radilthalo, 2007). Teaching Practice assessment CHE (2010)
- ▶ Teaching Practice is an uneven area and represents a significant challenge to quality in the sector. The following response was received in favour of the *status quo*:
- ▶ ***I am extremely concerned that the TP programmes are being labelled fragmented. By whom was this decided? Was this discussed in the FP and ISP and is this the feeling of the academic staff? Where is the minutes of such a meeting where this matter was discussed and when this conclusion reached? Do the new TP members know how the current programmes were developed over the years to come to what it is currently? TP is not just a technician exercise and should be grounded in theory and well thoughtout academic principles as the current programmes are. These programmes were curriculated a number of years ago by the academic staff members as TP cannot be separated from the academic programme.***

# IDEOLOGY (4): EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS QUALITY

- ▶ The external moderator ensures that graduates comply with a high standard of practice before they enter the profession. For the first time in a few years, there are no potential failures in the fourth-year Teaching Practice module, which provoked the following response from the external moderator:
- ▶ *Morning Norman (pseudonym). You still haven't given me the names of the failure students. I saw 6 potential failure students last year and about the same in each of the previous years so it would worry me as an external moderator if suddenly there were none this year. Maggie (pseudonym).*

# PRACTICES (1) HOSTILE; OFFENSIVE

- ▶ The following is an edited extract a statement:
- ▶ *We find that some staff members, often speak to us in ways unbecoming at an institution of higher education. One of us had to face the indignity of taking instructions from a fellow staff member who spoke rudely to him. The staff member (white), refused to work closely with him(black). The incident which is just one of many brought undue suffering and impacted negatively on his performance. A formal grievance was lodged with the university authorities. He was also accused of being lazy. Another lecturer asked him in public to see his job description when he refused to carry out her (white) instructions. One of us stated that she is often spoken to crudely and has been ordered by a colleague in the following way: 'I want you to come to my office' or 'I need you to do ...' And, 'sorry if I come across hard but that is the way I am, I don't mean it personally'... . This lecturer also stated that white and coloured students pay little attention to her when she enters the classroom, which she interprets as a sign of disrespect and contempt. One student said to her, 'Your accent is not nice'. Other older staff members speak to her in a rude manner which she found offensive (Abridged statement).*

# PRACTICES (2): DISMISSIVE; CONTEMPTUOUS; DENIALIST

- ▶ This statement elicited the following response from a white staff member who felt insulted because black staff subjected her to listen, against her will:
- ▶ *...I also do not believe that I am worthy of your veiled insinuations that there is racism on our campus. This allegation has never before been directed towards me, no matter that it was in a generalised comment. I am a part of the general staff. I was offended and insulted. I am aware of others who have also tried to welcome you.*

# PRACTICES (3):WHITE ENTITLEMENT; TERRITORIAL; EXCLUSIVE

- ▶ The story speaks of territorialism, exclusivism and control in the context of curriculum and teaching.
- ▶ *I worked as a full-time, permanent lecturer in 2003 and 2009. I was part of a group of 5-6 **'core group' lecturers**. The head of the programme named the group and established a very strong sense of ownership of everything related to the programme. Other lecturers who taught on this programme were not part of the 'core group'. The core group consisted of white females who had worked together for many years in the **previous college of education** era. I was not from that era and I was the only person of colour in the group. None of them were as academically qualified as I was - I had a Master's degree. At least **two of them did not have any degree**. They owned the programme with distasteful territoriality. While they were hard-working and productive in many ways, they conducted the culture in the group meetings with an entitlement to maintain 'their' ways of doing and knowing – a white, dominant, history-preserving disposition which left me feeling perturbed. (Extract from reflective-report).*

# PRACTICES (4): VICIOUS, RACIST

- ▶ **Lamenting lack of transformation in the Faculty, the lecturer decided to resign:**
- ▶ *I and the few other lecturers of colour waited to see transformation ... I (and every other lecturer of colour) knew that the faculty was not interested in transformation. The 'core group' would have been the best starting point – the faculty failed to set the **domination and bullying straight**.... These white women were destructive to the well-being of a number of colleagues. One of the members of the core group was openly racist and claimed that she was glad that 'we' only had four black students (by 2009) because she can't remember their names because they 'all look the same'. (Extract from reflective report)*



# CONCLUSION- RECOMMENDATION

- ▶ Ministerial Report (2008): **an approach that includes diverse academic culture, an engaging approach and substantive representation of different population groups in governance and administration (DoE, 2008).**
- ▶ Faculty leadership, under the CPUT Transformation office,
- ▶ Productive institutional (Faculty-based) participation process to construct a programme from the bottom.
- ▶ 'Cultural audit' to identify the expectations, values and commitment of staff to reveal the staff's 'dreams' (Niemann, 2010). In a similar initiative UFS. used various models to develop an 'Appreciative Inquiry' approach
- ▶ 'Transformation indaba'. Given the support of, and experiences from, other faculties and universities, transformation of the structural, ideological and pedagogical practices should be intensified to close the theory-practice gap that presently exists.