(O)mission statements: Deficit and surplus messages in two universities' strategic development plans in South Africa

ABSTRACT

This paper interrogates the mission statements and strategic development plans of two universities in South Africa in order to unpack both the deficit and surplus messages embedded in them. One of the universities is located in a rural setting and was classified as formerly disadvantaged, while the other one was a formerly white and privileged university. This article is a qualitative study and employs a content and discursive analytic approach, together with McLaren's (1994) typological framework on the four forms of multiculturalism in order to interrogate the mission statements and strategic development plans of the two universities in question. Both the mission statements and the strategic development plans are examined for the ways in which they discursively identify who is included and excluded from the realisation and attainment of the missions and development plans of the two universities studied. The article argues that specific discourse patterns emerge from the two universities' mission statements and strategic development plans to the extent that either marginalising messages or promissory and empowering messages are conveyed inadvertently in the inscriptions. The article ultimately suggests that there is a need for a shift from a deficit discourse to looking critically and reflexively at current university practices and shortcomings in the use of discourse patterns to include or exclude significant agents in both the crafting and implementation of the principalities embedded in their mission statements and strategic development plans.

INTRODUCTION

South African universities can generally be categorised into three moulds: the formerly prestigious, resource-endowed white sites; the formerly disadvantaged, rural, under-resourced and largely black sites; and the former technikons, or technically-oriented sites. After the politically driven mergers in the latter half of the 1990s, two visible brands emerged: the historically disadvantaged and the historically privileged universities with each binary generating and projecting tacit discourse messages that inveigh contesting scalar pedagogic and sociocultural capital. Mission statements articulate ways of envisioning futures by signposting an ensemble of institutional practices that map transformational agendas (Chaput, 2008:176). The rhetorical assemblage shaping mission statements and strategic development plans circulates altered practices that are market-focused as well as new material organisations of the institution, perhaps going beyond the corporate anthems of the 1980s.

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Universities are perceived, in South Africa and elsewhere, as autonomous providers that are responsive to the needs of students, delivering an improved student experience and driven by a mission to increase local and global socio-economic mobility through successful participation in higher education. In this regard, universities are academic and research sites that promise to deliver high-quality student experiences and are, consequently, accountable to three stakeholders: students, employers and the public. As John Wilkins (2013:1) avers, "a university that cannot do research work is a university in decline" and he sardonically adds, "it is time to confront the sausage-making model [of the university]."

In an informational leaflet, the office of the Provost at the University of Oxford discusses academic integrity with regards to "using one's own words" as an opportunity to "learn and grow" (Oxford University, 2013:3). University learning implies the process of knowledge acquisition from authorities in a specific discipline; it is a conscientious process of accessing knowledge and "appropriating that discourse into one's voice" (Bakhtin, 1990:127). The process of synthesising, analysing and evaluating information and knowledge is critical in tertiary institutional learning. The thrust of today's universities on preparing students for a career is an oversimplification of the university mandate where, essentially, the university intended curriculum has been supplanted by the skills drive.

Currently South Africa has twenty-six universities. Prior to 1994, and since then, binarisms have continued to play a significant role in the categorisation of these institutions, as administrative and discursive communities struggle to explain and manage patterns and trends in higher education. The binaries between the advantaged and disadvantaged universities, the historically marginalised and those historically centred, universities characterised by diversity and those limited to specific chromatic populations have continued to dominate the performances and ratings of tertiary education in South Africa. Based on systematic research papers (van Schalkwyk, 2008; Parkinson, Jackson, Kirkwood, & Padayache, 2008), universities in South Africa have established the existence of a dearth and paucity in the reading and writing quality of first-year students and have, consequently, called upon the resources of each university towards the curriculation of variously labelled programmes that critically have to address the reading and writing needs of these cohorts of learners. Such programmes have been called Academic General Literacy English (AGLE), Academic Language Literacy (ALL), Language Skills (LS), Unit for Academic Literacy (UAL) and other names, but the point remains that such programmes have confounded teaching and research space in university curricula in order to address the challenges of reading and writing at the proficiency and articulation levels expected at universities. These have become the forte of specialised intervention and re-orientation programmes whose sole mandate is redress as a consequence of "deficient" post-secondary students enrolling at universities.

It is from such realities that universities craft their (o)mission statements and strategic development plans such that conversations between the curricular perceptions and realities can be ongoing productive processes. This article, in investigating the wording of the mission statements and strategic development plans of two diametrically opposed universities, seeks to identify and discuss the ideological paradigms embedded in these institutional marketisation strategies

(Swales & Rogers, 1995). The bracketed "o" in mission statements highlights the caesura between mission and omission, the unstated and elided materiality of transformation, with all the accoutrements of class, privilege and academic visibility entrenched in the mission statements and strategic development plans of the two institutions studied in this article.

1. HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

South African higher education institutions found themselves confronted with a novel academic and identity project in 1994. The new government embraced reconciliation and invested in outcomes-based education (OBE) and the "rainbow nation" as new agendas that sought to redress fundamental problems of socio-economic inequality and the racially profiled, disproportionate access to prestigious institutions of higher education. OBE and the notion of the "rainbow nation" privileged solidarity and inclusiveness. In tandem, affirmative action became the rallying call on the political agenda. The nagging question has perennially been: does affirmative action condone and embrace academic mediocrity in higher education? Philosophical and epistemological questions on the academic role and function of the university appear to have been subordinated to "sausage-making university models," practical "skilling" commitments and redress challenges.

1.1 Historical background of the first university

The one university in this study is the oldest in South Africa, having been established in 1829. It is a liberal university, but because of racial legislation and the consequent admission policies, it started off as an educational college with a wholly white enrolment. The gold and diamonds that were discovered in the north at the turn of the 19th century raised demands for skills, and this boosted private funding for the department of mineralogy and geology at the university; the medical school was established in 1918, as was engineering. On its website, this university acknowledges the contribution of funds bequeathed by Alfred Beit and mining magnates such as Julius Wernher, Nick Oppenheimer and Otto Beit. It boldly states that a state grant was only paid as late as 1928, almost a hundred years after the establishment of the institution. This university also boldly inscribes its liberal framework and opposition to apartheid between 1960 and 1990, a worldview that enabled it to achieve a 50% black-white ratio by 2004 with just fewer than 50% of the enrolled students being female.

1.2 Historical background of the second university

The other university in this study was established in 1976, a hundred and forty-seven years after the privileged one. This latter university, because of the racially exclusive prescriptions of the University Education Act (1959), was established "to provide tertiary education and training to the educationally disadvantaged" (University of Limpopo, 2013:1). Like its predecessors, this marginalised institution was set under the academic trusteeship of the University of South Africa (UNISA), with a college status until this was ratified in 1970. In 2005, it was mandated to merge with a previously independent medical school, a task that has been beset by teething problems to the extent that there are fissures that demand a

reversal of the merger as at 2013. Funding has largely been through an annually budgeted state grant, including an abysmally insignificant trickle from research initiatives and small-scale collaborative partnerships. In a nutshell, the different geometrical and financial scales of the two universities apparently have magnified the pedagogical position of one and the salient disempowerment of the other site (Swyngedouw, 1997), to the extent that the older university enrols its majority from successful schools, serving a high number of its students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds while the 1976 institution remains a site for underprivileged candidates.

Jonathan Jansen, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State, observes that "existing universities struggle to sustain themselves given massive backlogs in infrastructure … They cannot find the quality expertise to teach across disciplines at the levels required. We poach from one another and hire outside our borders…" (Jansen, 2013:66). Three recurrent motifs are evident here: the urgent need for adequate infrastructure, the lack of quality expertise and the need for staff incentives in order to retain them. These imperatives, it would be plausible to assume, should generally feature in the (o)mission statements and strategic development plans of the two universities in this study as matters that entrench institutional dichotomies and perceptible class differentials.

2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Robert Balfour (2017:3) argues that the strides made in South African educational provisions between 1995 and 2004 cannot be underestimated. He emphasises that the new thrust in higher education aspired to quality provision, equal access, and the generation of new knowledges suited to the needs of a modern South African democratic dispensation. The "intellectual project", however, has been slow in part because changing institutions and political structures can be undertaken more easily than changing people and values, or developing a new generation of academics (nGAP). The #FeesMustFall, and #DecolonizeTheCurriculum movements spanning 2015–2016 were a reaction to the impact of higher education costs within a system in which high levels of student debt and failure had become unacceptably "normal", and to the slow pace of institutional change (read "transformation" and "employment equity"). Government and funding agencies claim that they function according to the needs of society. Universities make these interpretations of the "epistemological needs" and the "intellectual project" through academic plans and mission statements (Chaput, 2008:188). The problem identified in this article is that each mission statement publicises the university's epistemological ideoscape and explains the university's proclaimed relationship to the broad materialist terrain defined by research dollars and the numbers of students – undergraduate and postgraduate.

2.1 Research questions

The main question
The article seeks to answer the following main research question:

How are marginalising and empowering messages (in)advertently conveyed through (o) mission statements and strategic development plans at two historically different universities in South Africa?

Sub-question
The sub-question emanating from the main question is: how are instances of (in)definiteness of events and processes conveyed through the lexicalisation of modals, articles and themes in the Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) of the two universities?

The article therefore investigates the ineluctable fusion of access, democratic participation and academic citizenship together with internationally distinctive academic pursuits, since this fusion generates the friction between two opposing functions of the university. In a nutshell, how is the borderline between public service and free market logics negotiated?

Apologetic mission statements and strategic development plans in South African universities are curiously steeped in a redress narrative over previous historical and political injustices. Whereas this paper is keenly aware of history's explicit and implicit complicity and duplicity in the current burdens of previously marginalised universities, it is also compelled to look at current privileging practices such that the dangers of essentialising can be more fully appreciated.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is a qualitative study and employs a content and discursive analytic approach, together with McLaren's (1994) typological framework on the four forms of multiculturalism in order to interrogate the (o)mission statements and strategic development plans of the two universities in question. Both the (o)mission statements and the strategic development plans are examined for the ways in which they discursively identify who is included and excluded from the realisation and attainment of the missions and development plans of the two universities studied. To reach this goal, polarity and tense – categorical positive or negative statements using tone – are analysed in the MSs and SDPs to establish instances of hedging and modality. Though universities in South Africa appear to be driven by a "massification drive" aimed at redress, there seems to be a widening gap between formerly privileged and underprivileged universities to the extent that vulnerable demographic groups and vulnerable geographies continue to be practically and discursively marginalised.

Jansen (2013:64) peremptorily suggests and guides "a word frequency count" of the national president's 2013 state of the nation address as a test of official "priorities." He observes, from this word count, that "the salutations acknowledging dignitaries contain more than 150 words … but the words 'school' and 'university' or 'college' appear once each. The word 'history' or the phrase 'the past' appears 6 times but the word 'future' only once. The word 'quality' is completely absent but the word 'inequality' shows up 8 times" (Jansen, 2013:64). This absence of critical markers and words in a discourse on "quality" and the "future" makes the same constructs unimportant characteristics of the national priorities that the president charts.

Following on the practices of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1993; Jansen, 2013; Apple, 1996; Makoe & McKinley, 2008; Janks, 2010), this article identifies words and phrases that reveal a recursive frequency and intensity in the documentations of two universities' (o) mission statements. These words and phrases are also examined for their positioning at specific moments in relation to other words surrounding the recursive patterns in order to establish the discursive complementation, extension and promotion embedded in the recursive patterns. In the penultimate instance, the article analyses how agency and responsibility are framed in the mission statements and the strategic goals of the two institutions as part of the marketisation of universities (Fairclough, 1993) and the instantiation of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Ultimately, the article seeks to reveal how faculty, teaching staff, the administrative staff and students are portrayed in the light of the legitimate conclusion that mission statements and strategic development plans seek to negotiate inclusion and identity amongst critical economic stakeholders in South African tertiary education.

Teun van Dijk (2014:1) suggests that an application of the principles of critical discourse analysis (CDA) focuses on a study of the relations between discourse, power, dominance and social inequality. Because of the comparative and contrastive approach adopted in this article, the framing principle is on understanding the institutional inequalities that emerge from the (o) mission statements and the SDPs of the two universities investigated here. The imperative is to establish ways in which the discourse embedded in the documentation (re)produces institutional differences that eventually result in differential educational experiences. We contend that the wording legitimates, mitigates, "naturalises" and often conceals the historical and present-day inequalities such that audiences begin to take for granted the one university's institutional dominance over its counterpart. Table 1 below is used to conceptualise the analytic framework:

Table 1: Conceptual and analytic framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Linguistic feature	Explanation
Pronouns "our", "we"	Inclusive "we" and exclusive "we"; "them" and "us" Generic use of s/he Choice of voice: first person, second person and third person or omniscient
Definite and indefinite article usage "a"/"an" versus "the"	Textual presuppositions; "the" is used for shared information
Thematisation syntax "outstanding teaching and research" at the first versus "redress and emergence" at the second	What is fore grounded in specific clauses and What is deferred/implied/unsaid?
Sequencing information History of dispossession at the second university versus history of international research achievements at the first university	Sequence sets cause and effects. How is new information presented?

Logical connectors	Conjunctions are additive, causal, adversative or temporal. Which category of conjunctions is predominant in the SDPs and MS, and why?
Lexicalisation Overlexicalisation Relexicalisation	Choice of words: different words could construct a similar idea differently. What specific lexical choices emerge? What options can be identified in the range of lexical choices?
Lexical cohesion	Use of synonymy, antonymy or collocation to provide connections across stretches of text
Metaphor	Yoking ideas together and for the discursive construction of new ideas: sense of renewal, stasis, permanence, endurance, strength and/fragility
Euphemism	Deliberate choices that hide negative implications
Voice	Active and passive voice construct agency differently. Participants in the SDP and MS come through differently through the use of the active or the passive voice.
Mood	What regular or recurring forms do the clauses take: questions, assertions, claims, offers or commands?
Polarity and tense	Positive polarity or negative polarity? Tense sets up the in/definiteness of events occurring over time. The historical present tense is used for timeless truths.
Modality (degrees of un/certainty)	Logical possibility and social authority; the use of modals, adverbs and tag questions, even rhetorical questions for persuasion and affirmation.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Mission statements

Mission statements establish institutional legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991); they interpret institutional and global realities (Tierney, 2008) and are an outcome of competition in the realm of institutional politics (Morphew, 2006). Strategic plans implicitly, and often explicitly, state a change in organisational structure or a move toward change. Change can be a difficult process and sometimes requires time. It is important to get stakeholders and employees on board with the decision-making process, and an expertly articulated mission and vision statement accomplishes these imperatives for the organisation. Articulating and repeating the positives of the move toward change in the organisation enables stakeholders and employees to stay engaged and motivated. Decision-makers and architects of goals should emphasise the current mission statement to employees, which clarifies the purpose

and primary, measurable objectives of the organisation. A mission statement, therefore, is meant for employees and decision-makers in the organisation, and entrepreneurial sponsors under the aegis of research entities. As clients of capital (Dougherty, 1994), universities craft their (o)mission statements in order to project efficiency and responsiveness to the overt and covert demands of local and global markets.

At the first university, established in 1829, the architects of this document assert that the institutional mission is to "be an outstanding teaching and research university, education for life and addressing the challenges facing our society." The second university claims to "be a world-class African university which responds to educational, research and community needs through partnerships and knowledge generation – continuing a long tradition of empowerment." The first statement is made up of seventeen words; the second is marginally longer at twenty-four words. Whereas there might be variations in lexical choice, these mission statements both focus on teaching (quality), research and life-long expertise, as evident in "outstanding" and "world class", which are both in the superlative. The pedagogic energy of these discourses is animated by competitiveness. In addition, the statements legitimise capital investment since they are steeped in the race to fulfil the demands of capital (Ayers & Carlone, 2007).

What differs slightly is the emphasis in the second university's statement: that all the above are to be executed within a "long tradition of empowerment." As Fairclough (1998:40) states, "… texts always draw upon and transform other contemporary and historically prior texts." He privileges the insights of Kristeva (1992:102) who defines intertextuality as. "… the insertion of history into a text and of this text into history." Cook (2001:39) calls this phenomenon "bricolage," "parasitic discourse[s]" that "… find a place in the time and space of other discourses and are seldom alone … they borrow so many features from other genres that they are in danger of having no separable identity on their own". This university's establishment, as already indicated, was through the tutelage of UNISA, and under the 1959 University Education Act, "empowerment" was not the purpose of establishment; rather it was a gesture of appeasement by the apartheid regime. Furthermore, this gesture of appeasement could be read as propelled by the marginalising practices of the legislation then, and was quintessentially driven to "disempower." It is evident that "empowerment" in this mission statement reinvents "bricolage" in reference to the historical black resistance to apartheid. To that extent, "empowerment" apparently evokes the partisan and "apologetic" admission policies operational at the latter university. The first university, in contrast, reaffirms its "meritocratic" admissions through its deliberate focus on "postgraduate" rather than undergraduate niche areas – its pedagogic enterprise is driven by economically competitive activities at the global level.

4.2 Strategic development plans (SDPs)

A strategic development plan normally follows an eight-point process: conducting an environmental scan; identifying key issues, questions and choices to be addressed; defining

the organisation's values, vision and mission; transferring the vision and mission into a series of operational goals; agreeing upon key strategies to reach the goals; creating an annual plan (the plan must consider value and appropriateness, feasibility, acceptability and cost-benefit analyses); summarising the decisions; and finally, building in procedures and modifying strategies. In defining a strategic development plan, the processes suggested above are framed and articulated in a specific discourse where language participates in, and constitutes part of a particular social practice (Fairclough, 1998:45; Levin, 2007). Strategic development plans are, in themselves, managerial discourses – in this study specifically enacted at university sites. Apparently, students and academic staff do not own these management discourses. There is a definitive hiatus emanating from the effectiveness of such discourse, and levels of resistance to this discourse may result in coercive enactment or inculcation of specific economic narratives that inform the institutional knowledges and research foundations.

The privileged university asserts that its core business is "research, teaching and learning." It further entrenches these meta-academic signposts by insisting that these ought to "be conducted very successfully and at a very high level." The lexical item "research" occurs 49 times in the 15-page Strategic Development Plan, 2010–2014. This collocates variously with "quality", "high quality", "postgraduate", "dissemination", "international profile" "collaboration", "expertise" and "problem-based." One telling key point is that the research at this university should aim at "focus, levels of internationalisation, visibility and collaborative support levels." Based on this research-led imperative, the university foregrounds its "responsibility to produce the next generation of academics for South Africa and the rest of the continent." This activity will further enhance the university's "leading position as a university on the African continent and as a global meeting point between North and South." Within this discourse pattern, other lexicalisation features lend credibility and impetus to this university's strategic goals: "niche", "consolidate", "concentration of expertise", "postdoctoral research" and "intellectual hub." Institutional legitimacy and supremacy are foregrounded in discourse terms that privilege uniqueness, intimating a scalar epistemic distinction at global levels.

The second university, previously disadvantaged, has its distinct discourse patterns that differ significantly from those described above. Initially, its SDP is a simple MS Word document that is visually less appealing than the PDF version of its rival. The lexical item "research" occurs 24 times in the 11 page SDP, 2011–2015, almost half as often as in the other university's. "Research" in the second university's SDP collocates with "improving", "creating" "strategy", "output", "income", "applied", "incentives", "commercialisation" and "profile." There is ample evidence from the SDP of this second university to suggest that it is a novice in the field of research, hence, the aim to "improve research output." This "improvement" is coupled to the goal of "creating institutional awareness of the importance of research." In order to accentuate the importance of local research, this university aims to "introduce basic research methodology courses at the undergraduate level." Quite unlike the first university which "globalises" its postgraduate research mandate, the second university perceives research as "a third stream income generator" where stakeholder participation in conferences and

workshops should be "followed by compulsory publication in an accredited journal." Because of the paucity in research activities of an academic and international stature at the latter university, one of the strategic plans to address this lack is "mandatory publication of theses submitted for Master's and Doctoral level studies." In fact, the strategy here explicitly states that each thesis submitted for examination must be "accompanied by a journal-ready article." Herein lies the "coercive enactment" of this second university's measurable research deliverables: the scale is local; the university mediates the future employees (students) and the national business and industry nexus.

Whereas such "mandatory publication of journal articles" has become the forte of the second university's internal research development plan for increased visibility, a google search on the National Electronic Theses and Dissertation Portal (NETD, South Africa, a portal manned by the National Research Foundation) revealed startling gaps. The second university has 798 deposits while its rival had a staggering 5 681 M and D theses in its depository as at December, 2013. On the individual URLs of the two universities, the older one's library categorically states that it does not keep Honours dissertations: these are kept in their respective departments. This "marginalisation" of "novice" research attests to, and implicitly privileges, postgraduate research. The same university had 67 PhD theses between 2003 and 2013. From the Department of Computing Science, for instance, the total M and D theses in the same period stands at 958. Such detail is unavailable on the second university's URL.

The constitutive problem-oriented, interdisciplinary approach of critical discourse analysis allows this study to draw conclusions based on the underlying desiderata of the SDPs of these two universities. First, the selective wording identified above amply demonstrates that language indexes and expresses institutional research power in the first university, and fragility in the second. Secondly, the languaging of the SDPs suggest uneven distribution of expertise at the two sites and this is specifically evident in the deployment of conceptual metaphors and analogies. Whereas in the first university the research globalisation and competitiveness rhetoric focuses on the interconnectedness of scholarship, the second university is driven by a lacklustre quantification and economisation of research knowledge in order to elevate its current hierarchy in the profile of the 23 universities in South Africa.

A third derivative from the SDPs relates to how these become enacted in admission policies at the two universities, including the subsequent assessment practices there. Contrary to its objectives, the initiative of higher education transformation has been mystified by failing to understand its initiative of demographic inclusivity and diversity. Many misinterpret its multifactor existence by confining it to a confused poverty eradication strategy. This is because critics of race-based redress argue that socio-economic status is becoming a more reliable proxy for redress since the emergence of a black middle class. This is premised on the convenient assumption that the black middle class has already managed to buy its way out of educational disadvantage and the use of a race proxy in university admissions is becoming less accurate, and needs to be supplemented with socio-economic status, a proxy which currently reflects a negligible correlation with educational disadvantage. The

ideological interest of deracialising society must not come at the expense of effectively addressing the legacy of racial inequality of apartheid. Hence, the danger is not within a race-conscious society; what is wrong and dangerous is a race-prejudicial and oppressive society which breeds discrimination. In order to create a non-racial higher education system and society, the racial inequalities have to be eliminated.

What race-based redress does is to provide a more inclusive higher education system, whereby the races which were previously denied access to higher education are also given fair opportunities to participate in the educational programmes of higher education. The desired result is to get to a point where the higher education system is reflective of the demographics of South Africa. Whereas there is such a concerted move towards this goal at the prestigious and meritocratic university, there appears to be a monochromatic admission policy at the other university, where, amongst other challenges, a "compensatory assessment regime" seems to be pervasive. There is, in fact, an urgent need to understand why schools fail and how they could begin to address the problems they face, with the hope of using such information to inform the strategic development plans of a more accurate proxy to measure disadvantage.

4.3 Other flagship indicators

The inscription of "surplus" and "deficit" messages in the two universities' mission statements and their respective SDPs apparently goes deeper to assign and consign each of the institutions to a vexed ideological load of the English language. The older institution prides itself on an international academic programmes office that is "mandated to lead the development of internationalisation", stating further that this "think-tank, on which all deans are represented, assists the deputy vice-chancellor on issues of policy that relate to internationalisation." In addition, this older university has initiated a "semester study abroad" feature where, in 2008, the programme was able to distribute 506 students to study abroad. Logically, it lives up to its buzzword motto: "No integration in isolation." The same university has a partnership called USHEPiA (Universities Science Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa), a partnership which, since its inception in 1996, has provided 64 full degree fellowships – 35 in Science, 26 in Humanities and 3 in Food and Security. As at 2012, 28 of the USHEPiA fellows had graduated with PhDs and 6 with Master's degrees. For this institution, instead of a "brain drain", it is geared to turn this negativity into a "brain circulation."

Under the mandate of USHEPiA, the following table demonstrates the extent to which this university has attracted students from other African nation states:

Table 2: Enrolment by selected nationality at the first university in South Africa, 2012

Nationality	Enrolment	Nationality	Enrolment
Angola	22	Seychelles	1
Botswana	412	Namibia	293
Lesotho	139	Zimbabwe	890
Malawi	7	Tanzania	120
Zambia	136	Swaziland	52
Mozambique	60	DRC	50

All in all, this privileged first university, in 2012 alone, had 2 188 students from other African states and in excess of 4 000 international students.

On the occasion of Barack Obama's visit to Africa in 2013, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated the significant flagship of this university:

> Unless Africans want to remain the consumers of other people's knowledge and innovations, the recipients of wisdom with no critical capacity locally to interpret, challenge or advance alternative views of the world; unless we think all global technologies are locally appropriate and that we do not need the capacity to develop locally relevant solutions; unless these are our views, African countries need to further their own research capacities …. That research capacity resides in research universities (www.uct.ac.za/ downloads/uct.ac.../vc_dr_max_price_obama_event.pdf).

The rhetoric of "critical local research capacity," "alternative views," and "relevant solutions" that pervades the Vice-Chancellor's speech blends with the mission statement and the strategic objectives of this university. It is a discourse that reverberates with "research power" and further concretises the institution's identity, destiny and the ownership of this mission by its architects and relevant stakeholders.

Another flagship for a university establishment is its publication count, and this index influences directly the amount of funding that a university receives from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Research output is, essentially, "the textual output … of original, systematic investigation(s) undertaken" by an institution in order to gain knowledge and understanding. Research without peer review is inadequately interrogated, hence, peer review is a fundamental prerequisite. Whereas there is a way in which the two universities stand comparably in terms of research and publications, there is also overwhelming evidence that the older university has accrued greater "cultural and academic capital" than the younger and previously disenfranchised one. The older one houses its own university press (which publishes monographs and books) while the younger one has only one journal, *South African Journal of Development and Transformation*, housed in the Faculty of Management and Law.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Language practices play a crucial role in shaping both linguistic repertoires and attitudes towards ownership of specific strategies, targets and mission statements, as demonstrated in the selections used in this paper. Ascribed and essentialised institutional identities emerged from the linguistic profiling and graphological patterning of the two universities studied. In problematising the practices and publicly enunciated marketing discourses of the two universities, the research and academic capacitation promised by the institutions demonstrated both deficit and surplus investment possibilities. Historical and pedagogical promises to the local and global, each institutional promise is framed in competitive discourse constructions against the other corporate markets enable each institution to negotiate niche solidarities with envisioned partners, and in the process, each institutional promise is set in competitive discourse constructions against the other. Pragmatic and selective wording of the SDPs and mission statements apparently becomes a sine qua non of empowerment and disempowerment possibilities at each of the respective universities. Through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and McLaren's forms of multiculturalism model, it is possible to suggest that discourses construct identities, power and research knowledge systems by presenting specific ways of envisioning the future as commonsensical, indisputable and natural. Each institution's mission statement, strategic development programme and other flagships of identity inscribe what this paper calls "profits of distinction", associated with upward social mobility in a corporate framework that is unquestioned by the institutional discourses analysed in this article.

Even if the concession is made that the older university has been in existence longer, and its funding base is comparably more robust, the number of researchers and research areas at each of the institutions is a demonstration of the power as well as the ability to produce effect between the archetypal dichotomies of old and new universities. The older university has 33 "A" rated researchers, 6 "P" rated ones (prestigious awards to researchers younger than 35) and 377 rated "B" (internationally acclaimed researchers), "C" (established researchers) or "Y" (promising young researchers) according to the National Research Foundation (NRF) as at December 2013. Their signature research themes are the following: Brain and behaviour initiative, Cities in Africa, Drug Discovery, Marine Research, Minerals to Metals, and African Climate and Development Initiative. Without comparable data from the younger university, it may be prudent to intimate that the older university demonstrates, in its articulation of mission statements and SDPs, a thinking that goes beyond originary subjectivity and focuses on those critical processes that affirm its academic and research positioning relative to its nemesis and the other universities in South Africa.

5.1 Mapping the future

The 2015–2016 "fees must fall" protests involved students from both historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged universities. They attracted widespread media coverage and sparked solidarity protests globally.

The two diametric responses – little media attention given to earlier protests at the historically black university in this study versus widespread coverage and international solidarity for protests at the historically white and privileged university – are an unembellished reminder of post-apartheid South Africa's entrenched inequalities.

Apartheid-era inequalities have not been sufficiently interrogated or removed. In fact, marketing and administrative decisions taken since the end of apartheid have entrenched educational and socio-economic inequalities. The most far-reaching of these was the university merger process, which was meant to provide equal depth and breadth in "academese" to all racial profiles in SA. It was hoped that mergers would improve historically black universities' research and graduate output, provide comparable liminality and give them access to enhanced infrastructure and financial support systems.

But ironically, these mergers actually deepened inequality and this rift explains why the cries of students at historically black, disadvantaged universities are ignored while their middle-class counterparts garner so much attention. A process that was supposed to redress past inequalities has had the unintended effect of entrenching, and in some cases widening them.

From an optimistic perspective, mergers could lead to substantially better access and greater differentiation in course offerings to cater for diverse students. But this would require taking a different approach to the current corporatisation and business model that universities have adopted. In fact, the merger proposed at the previously disadvantaged university fell through and the two that had been strange bed-fellows have since divorced and stand alone now under a re-branded onomastics.

It would demand that those who design mission statements, education policy and run institutions be open to critique, and open to unexplored ways of thinking and pursuing knowledge. This kind of leadership would be more able to recognise a university's responsibility in relation to society, its mandate in respect of goals and responsiveness to "quality-in-massification."

Educational philosopher Steven Burik (2012) argues that critique is a matter of enhancing the possibility of dissent and the diversity of interpretations. It involves complicating what is taken for granted and pointing to what has been overlooked in establishing identities – largely borne in the imprimatur of the university mission statements and strategic development plans. Crucially, critique is an active opening up of the university's "missioning" statements that is necessary for other ways to find an entrance.

University strategists and leaders must be bold, informed by hindsight and reflecting on the #FeesMustFall fiasco. They must do the unthinkable and remain open to possibilities perhaps not yet explored. This also means they should be open to being questioned and challenged – a matter of being provoked to think differently in relation to the challenges of decolonising the curriculum and accessing higher education.

Student and staff activists have clearly begun to interrogate the links between social and environmental issues and their universities' investment choices. For university management, these questions present an opportunity to think about how their mission statements and investment portfolios could be used address the social concerns of the diverse students and staff who actualise the institutional vision/s. Universities – being both institutional investors and sites of educational enquiry – can thus ultimately find improved investment solutions that create a more sustainable future for generations of students to come.

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