Institutionalising campus diversity in South African higher education: Review of diversity scholarship and diversity education

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Abstract. Increasingly the social, educational, cultural, linguistic, religious and racial diversity of South African society is finding expression within South African institutions of higher education. Consequently, "diversity", "diversity issues" and "diversification", have become part of the education debate and policy, and pose new challenges to South African tertiary institutions. Most institutions are attempting to respond to these challenges within the context of a transformation process which impacts on every aspect of academic life from student access and support, outreach programmes, staff recruitment and retention, to academic programme development, research, scholarship and the social and learning environment on campus. This paper looks at how South African higher education institutions have met these challenges. It highlights how the ideas, initiatives or practices around diversity have been appropriated and made part of the mainstream intellectual and academic discourses. It also investigates the social and epistemological conditions of possibility for meaningful scholarship and curriculum practices in addressing the challenges posed by social diversity on campuses. More specific questions in this regard include: What counts as knowledge in diversity scholarship? Who produces and disseminates it? Who accesses it or utilises it? What is its space in the curricula?

Keywords: campus diversity, cultural diversity, diversification, diversity, diversity and curriculum, diversity and learning, diversity education, diversity scholarship, identity diversity, unity in diversity.

Introduction

Increasingly the social, educational, cultural, linguistic, religious and racial diversity of South African society is finding expression within institutions of higher education. Consequently, "diversity", "diversity issues" and "diversification", popular concepts in American academic discourses, have become part of the higher education debate and policy, and pose new challenges to South African tertiary institutions. Most institutions are attempting to respond to these challenges within the context of a *transformation process* which impacts on every aspect of academic life from student access and support, outreach programmes, staff recruitment and retention, to academic

programme development, research, scholarship and the social and learning environment on campus. This is a process, which could arguably fall under the *campus diversity* rubric.

As in the USA and India, in South Africa, *campus diversity* initiatives have received considerable support under the Ford Foundation diversity programme. However, very little has been done to document these initiatives or assess their impact on the higher education system. In response to this need, the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) undertook a Campus Diversity survey during May and June 1999. This survey aimed to serve the following main purposes: (i) to make information on diversity initiatives in South Africa available; and (ii) to provide a basis for a three-nation (India, USA and SA) comparison paper, which would reflect on similarities and differences, lessons to be learnt from diversity initiatives and implications for future work for each country and internationally; (iii) to inform CHET's future planning; and (iv) to provide a guide for possible funding in this area. This paper represents a critical reflection on some of the issues that emerged throughout the audit process.[1]

In this paper I scrutinise the position and status of diversity initiatives in South African academic scholarship and the higher education curricula. My task in this regard is to highlight how and to what extent the ideas, initiatives or practices around campus diversity have been appropriated and made part of the mainstream intellectual and academic discourses in South Africa. By default, my task also entails investigating the social and epistemological conditions of possibility for meaningful scholarship and curriculum practices in addressing the challenges posed by social diversity on campuses. I hope that this will shed some light to the reconfiguration of academic discourses in the country, the processes of production, selection, organisation, and utilisation of diversity knowledge as South African academia responds to local and global imperatives. More specific questions in this regard include: What counts as knowledge in diversity scholarship? Who produces and disseminates it? Who accesses it or utilises it? What is its space in the curricula?

Epistemological and methodological foundations of diversity scholarship in SA: a conceptual framework

In so far as the diversity initiative is concerned, there are certainly different 'intellectual formations' and consequently different intellectual and academic responses. Muller (1997, p. 198) uses the concept of 'intellectual formation' to refer to "a group of persons who share certain epistemic, political and pragmatic interests and who, because of this commonality, exhibit a common

consciousness". For him, intellectual formations conventionally share an ideology (a set of beliefs about the social order, in our case, connected to the role of diversity initiatives in systemic and institutional order of higher education) and a social-epistemology (a certain conception of knowledge and its relation to society). These constitutive conditions of intellectual formations change as social conditions change.

Muller (1996) also uses the notions of knowledge *for* and knowledge *of* to distinguish how intellectuals/academics place and position themselves in the relationship theory vis-à-vis practice, knowledge production vis-à-vis knowledge utilisation or policy development vis-à-vis policy implementation. There are those who feel constrained to deploy a positive or instrumentalist notion of knowledge (knowledge *for*) – reconstructors - and those who lean to the classic view of intellectual work that should only and always be knowledge *of* – critics. This is a very important distinction for understanding how South African academics position themselves with respect to diversity scholarship. It allows us to conceptualise and locate existing diversity practices among academia across a continuum, "from a pole of pure intellectualism (knowledge for knowledge's sake, the disengaged intellectual) through to a pole of pure activism (knowledge for power so to speak), with nuances between weak interventionism and strong interventionism" (Muller 1997, p. 198).

In Muller's view, weak interventionism involves attempts to make the results of one's work available to serve a certain cause either by means of a critique of the existing order or by means of legitimising an incipient alternative to that order. Strong interventionism goes beyond "producing knowledge to serve certain ends; it also involves actively engaging in advocacy for its implementation or utilisation" (Muller 1997, p. 199).

Today in South Africa, scholars dedicated to critical scholarship without direct interventionist concerns are very few, let alone those who are involved in the pursuit of "knowledge for the sake of knowledge" or disinterested modes of scholarship (Cross et al. 1999; Cloete et al. 1997; Cross et al. 1998; Seepe 1998; Asumah et al. 1995). Note however that the notion of "knowledge for its own sake" is open to misinterpretations as far as diversity scholarship is concerned. As Makgoba (1999, pp. 11–12) has indicated:

> It may be misunderstood as being insensitive, out of touch with reality, or even racist. This must not be confused with saying that knowledge must have immediate application or that knowledge always has to produce tangible or visible applications. The direct linking of knowledge production with application is equally dangerous and wrong. Knowledge may, for example, lead to understanding and better appreciation of processes or matters of nature. This is the invisible side of higher education. Understanding serves a critical purpose in human existence. Knowledge

production may lead to more knowledge being generated and at times lead to unexpected findings or it may be immediately applicable. So knowledge for the sake of understanding and generating more knowledge is just as vital as knowledge with tangible applications. This does not constitute knowledge for its own sake, but for the sake of understanding. In this way knowledge always has a purpose or use even if this is not tangible or immediately measurable.

As it will be illustrated, South African diversity scholarship and educational practice has shown an increasing swing towards interventionism or instrumentalism. Traditional emphasis on the pursuit of diversity knowledge as part of wider academic programmes on race, class and gender studies are giving way to the workshop-type skills-based programmes on diversity management, diversity awareness, teaching and learning in diverse classrooms, gender sensitivity, etc. There has been a shift on emphasis from understanding diversity to practising diversity, though these two dimensions are not mutually exclusive or separate.

Emerging conceptions and approaches to diversity in South Africa

How higher education institutions interpret diversity is critical to the mode and content of scholarship or research undertaken by South African academia into issues of diversity, equity and social justice, and the ways this is integrated into the higher education curricula. How scholars set up the terms for discussing diversity issues shapes their perception and response to these issues. The meanings they attach to the word "diversity" informs how higher education institutions reflect, accommodate and are responsive to the social diversity and differences which characterise South Africa. As such the intellectual discourses and practices in the domain of diversity cannot for a moment be separated from prevailing understandings that South Africans have about the meaning of diversity.

The debates that dominated the interactions between American, Indian and South African scholars during the three years of the tri-national diversity project have highlighted an important fact: there can be no single universalising model or conception of diversity that can work effectively in all contexts. While the practitioners of the three countries saw themselves as deeply involved in transformative projects to build unity in diversity, they were certainly informed and guided by different or diverging assumptions and ideals. The three groups were enthusiastic in their perception that diversity initiatives in the three countries have gained credit by notably authorising higher education institutions and activities to be considered as the pre-

eminent site in which to seek a resolution to social tensions to which democratic citizenship has become a response (Cross et al. 1998, p. 202). Higher education institutions could play an important role as site where issues of tolerance, inclusion, access, and structural inequities could be addressed effectively.

However, dominating the American diversity discourses was the assumption that these issues could be addressed within the framework of multiculturalism, still seen as part of a progressive politics. This is a highly contested assumption within the South African context where multiculturalism has been part of a strong legacy of reactionary politics in education. In South Africa, both multiculturalism and diversity, particularly cultural diversity, have connotations and historical associations with apartheid that cannot be ignored (Harper and Badsha 2000). By emphasising cultural, linguistic, race and social diversity as justification to it's racially exclusionist policies, the apartheid regime has left a negative connotation to diversity and difference. As Harper and Badsha (2000, p.16) have indicated: "There is an emergent realisation that, if we are to embark upon an organised national campus diversity initiative, we will need to rework, rediscover, redefine and hopefully find sufficient consensus on what we understand by diversity and diversity initiatives within our own South African context." This has made diversity a highly contested issue in South Africa.

Diversity has been traditionally associated with race, gender and culture. Recent literature on diversity has widened the scope of diversity to embrace various characteristics such as age and physical traits, sexual orientation, ethnic and religious background, socio-economic status, birthplace and hometown, social and political affiliations, seniority and experience, education and training and so forth. As such, diversity represents a mix of characteristics that makes each person or group unique. Goduka (1996a, p. 30) provides the following account of diversity:

> What does diversity mean? The state or fact of being diverse; different; unlike; variety; multiformity; and a point of difference. The state or fact of being diverse may be based on ethnicity/race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, religion, or class.

While there seems to be consensus on what individual or social characteristics should be taken into account in defining diversity, very little agreement has been achieved in respect to the actual meaning of diversity. As Mandew (1999), Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Student Services, at M L Sultan Technikon, has indicated, "there is no institutional consensus on the meaning of diversity", which in his opinion, "perhaps is not a bad thing". Hlongwane (1999), Student Counselling, University of Zululand, shares similar view:

"diversity means different things to different people at different places". He outlined some of these meanings as follows:

> Diversity means opening up the university to different people, all interested in studying at this university. It means that all staff should be able to meet the needs of each individual. It means accommodating as many people as possible with their differences. It means wishing to know about the other. It means different things to different people and institutions.

Chetty (1999), Executive Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor at Technikon Natal, referred to diversity as an "American word thrown around as though everyone has the same understanding". He also tried to find a definition to fit the South African context in general and his campus in particular. He sees diversity as "how to deal with difficulties being experienced and changes in our own work, whether in student services or academic sector". The idea of tolerance has been superseded. The same can be said about the idea of 'affirming' or 'celebrating' diversity, preferred by Goduka (1996a) and Boughey (1999). Note however that, out of her understanding of the peculiarities of South African society, Goduka (1999), a protagonist of 'affirmation of diversity' has positively shifted to the idea of 'affirming unity in diversity,' in her recent writings. Similar trends also emerged at the 2nd Tri-National Seminar and the multicultural conference held at the University of the Free State in 1997. Diversity has come to be seen as aimed at *embracing*, or *accommodating* or *engaging* differences. Schneider (1997, p. 128) suggests that besides diversity as new curricular content, developing capacities for 'engaging difference' is essential to the success of a diverse democracy.

Scholarship and curriculum change: key determinants

Developments concerning diversity scholarship and curriculum change have been determined by the ways institutions have responded to three major factors of both global and local nature: (i) market pressures, very often related to budget constraints and issues of institutional survival; (ii) changing modes of knowledge production and their impact on institutional programmes; and (iii) moral and cultural concerns related to the on-going transformation processes in higher education.

Striving for global competitiveness

At the market level, increasing global competitiveness and severe fiscal restraints have created a world-wide demand for certain kinds of skills, namely language, mathematics reasoning, scientific logic, programming,

associated with higher levels of education, resulting from technological change (Carnoy 1998, p. 15). These global pressures, particularly the pressure for competitiveness, have profound implications for prevailing modes of academic scholarship – production and dissemination of knowledge and its epistemological grounds – and curriculum choices – the way we select and organise knowledge in higher education. At the scholarship level, there has been a tendency to privilege applied forms of research and applied forms of knowledge. At the curriculum level, the trend is to give particular attention to maths, science and technology. Diversity issues are not specifically prioritised for programmes or they are separated from general strategic planning and transformation initiatives (Chetty 1999).

In South Africa, the vision and goals of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which informed the proposals of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), are to be achieved under GEAR (**Growth, Expansion and Redistribution**) macro-economic framework. The RDP emphasised access, expansion and massification of higher education. GEAR demands greater fiscal discipline to minimise the budget, monetary restraint to reduce inflation, a social contract based on salary restraint to protect and create employment, and limits on public expenditure. Under the circumstances, questions of rationalisation, quality, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and educational performance become more pressing than ever. There is increasing realisation that, for institutions to meet these challenges successfully, they have to engage in a "whole new game": a paradigm shift. This is approached in different ways, from developing "a strong, visionary leadership", "changing the character of the academic corpus" to injecting "an entrepreneurial approach" to university work.

In practice, institutional responses to GEAR are twofold. Some respond to the challenges from a narrow technicist view as a matter of aligning their programmes to the marketplace. Where curriculum reconfiguration is taking place, the emphasis is placed on making it more relevant to the labour market without the necessary attention to issues of race, gender and broader socio-political awareness. Where diversity modules have been introduced into the curriculum, this is generally done in an "add-on" manner. The notion that bringing diversity into the curriculum does not just improve political correctness, but can strengthen scholarship, is not widespread. The University of Zululand, for example, has adopted a pragmatic approach in its strategic planning exercise. According to Boughey (1999), who co-ordinated the exercise, programme restructuring must take into account market pressures to ensure that students are offered courses that lead to job placement. For this purpose, the courses should privilege the areas of science, commerce and business management. Mandew (1999) refers to the Technikon sector

as follows: "Because of our technical and technological orientation, the debate on diversity is not very open; the relationship between technology and diversity is not easy to establish".

Although there is an increasing awareness that curriculum reform can only be dealt with more effectively from a holistic perspective, with the necessary attention given to the wider socio-political context, there seems to be however an increasing realisation that there are limited career prospects in the arts where most diversity initiatives in the curriculum reside. Diversity is seen as belonging to a peripheral domain of values and behavioural concerns. To draw on West's (1994, p. 20) analysis of culture, there is no understanding of the 'structural character' of diversity as rooted in institutions such as families, schools, churches and mass media – television, radio, video, music, etc. This means that diversity has only received significant attention in those institutions where there has been strong institutional leadership and commitment at the management level and diversity is assumed as a civic value, which requires new norms for human competence and social practice (Schneider 1997, p. 113).

In some instances the transformation focus has shifted to efficiency due to a change overload, particularly the reporting requirements of the Department of Education (3 year rolling plans) and the South African Qualifications Authority (programme registration). Since neither of these sets of requirements deal with diversity in terms of campus climate, institutions who are already under enormous "change pressure" have relegated diversity issues to a lower priority – or simply do not have the energy or the resources to address it. Briefly, where attempts have been made to make the curriculum relevant to or responsive to wider social needs, the focus has been mainly on responding to market pressures, relevance concerns or requirements of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Diversity issues have been dealt with by default in various ways.

Policy and legislative imperatives

The 1994 first democratic elections ushered in a new vision and a multitude of new legislation aimed at bringing about social and economic transformation and laying the foundations for democratisation. As stated by Nelson Mandela in 1997, the new vision entails a nation building process, respect and protection of minorities, accommodation of those wishing to retain their cultural identity, i.e. unity and diversity (President Nelson Mandela, September 1997). Enabling legislation in this process included the New Constitution, the Labour Relations Act and the Bill on Employment Equity.

The broad aim of the Constitution is to create and nurture a non-racial, non-sexist, non-discriminatory society where all people can recognise each others differences while at the same time live in peace and harmony. More specifically, the principles and values entrenched in the new Constitution are: (i) to recognise that South Africa belongs to all who live in it; (ii) to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights; (ii) to lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which every citizen is equally protected by the law; (iii) to improve the quality of life of all citizens; and (iv) to build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. The Constitution recognises the right to equality regardless of any distinction or difference and gives no room to any form of discrimination, which, by implication, promotes a full recognition of diversity: 'The State may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth' (Section 9.3). Redress policies or affirmative action are afforded constitutional protection as mechanisms for promoting equality defined as 'the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms' (Section 9.2). The Constitution as an instrument of law does not however have an *a priori* definition of diversity or difference. This is dealt with through interpretation and practice of law.

The Labour Relations Act (1995) defines the main types of disputes that could be considered unfair discrimination, namely: (i) unfair discrimination against an employee on any arbitrary ground, including, but not limited to race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language, marital status or family responsibility; (ii) unfair conduct of the employer relating to the promotion, demotion or training of an employee or relating to the provision of benefits to an employee; (iii) unfair suspension of an employee or any other disciplinary action short of dismissal in respect of an employee; and (iv) failure or refusal of an employer to reinstate or re-employ a former employee in terms of any agreement. The Bill on Employment Equity makes provision for eradication of unfair discrimination of any kind in hiring, promotion, training, pay, benefits and retrenchment. It introduces measures to encourage employers to remove unjustified barriers to employment for all South Africans, and to accelerate training and promotion for individuals from historically disadvantaged groups. It makes provision for the establishment, by government, of institutions to support, monitor and enforce planning requirements, resolve disputes and introduce sanctions and incentives. Within the higher education system several steering mechanisms

have been put in place to promote and monitor the implementation of the legislation and policy goals reviewed in this section. These include equity plans and the rolling plans with a strong redress emphasis to be submitted to the Ministry of Education.

Complementing these measures, the State has also introduced institutions to deal with issues of diversity and the enforcement of human rights. These include the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Commission for Gender Equity. The Constitutional Court intervenes in all constitutional matters involving the interpretation, protection and enforcement of the Constitution. The HRC investigates human rights violations and monitors how the government protects human rights, including the rights of religions and linguistic communities, and promotes peace, friendship, tolerance and national unity. The Commission for Gender Equity is intended to protect people (women in particular) who have been discriminated against on the ground of gender.

Generally, the new legislative framework has gone a long way to set the principles and values for an enabling environment and represents an indispensable step for democratisation (for more details see Cross et al. 1998, pp. 20–48). More precisely, it marks the end or abolition of racially defined rights and ethnically defined areas of residence.

Searching for a new moral and cultural ground

It has been argued elsewhere that institutions of higher education are being charged with onerous tasks of cultural regeneration, attempts to resurrect old cultural certainties or impose new ones through curriculum and assessment requirements focussed on democracy issues and citizenship. They are expected to play a role in protecting or rebuilding disintegrating national cultures, restoring traditions and reinventing identities by emphasising elements of cultural heritage (Hargreaves 1995, p. 83). However, in South Africa this ideal remains peripheral as the general trend is towards aligning academic programmes to the labour market and adopting an entrepreneurial approach to university management or to use West's (1994, p. 18) phrase towards "the waning of the Protestant ethic" – hard work, deferred gratification, efficiency and competitiveness.[2] The development of campus social/integration programmes are clearly taking a back seat in some institutions where there is a firm belief that programmes that systematically promote social integration represent a form of undesirable 'social engineering' and that "these things must happen naturally". This brings into the debate the relative value of "evolutionary" versus "managed" change in higher education.

Diversity as an area of study

As pointed out by L'Ange (1999), Assistant Dean of Students, Rhodes University, most diversity initiatives are faculty dependent. The lack of a vision or lack of a conceptual/intellectual framework for developing a vision makes it difficult for institutions to link scholarship and ideas, programmes and curriculum, and staff and students. As such, many institutions have an impressionist and fragmented approach to issues of diversity; they lack a holistic perspective. For example, there has been no systematic attempt to develop a campus wide approach to curriculum transformation or diversity related research. Two main trends have emerged in diversity scholarship and education.

First, in institutional research (surveys and database) driven by central structures of several institutions, attention has been given primarily to sexual harassment, affirmative action and learners with disabilities. In some cases, the findings formed the basis for formulation of institutional policies on these issues. Gender issues represent another area, which has been object of considerable research, though not necessarily driven by central institutional structures. Second, issues such as culture, race, gender, ethnicity, identity and difference, have been part of several research programmes in the humanities or social sciences, particularly anthropology, history, sociology and education. Accounts from Rhodes University indicate for example that in the past "issues of gender discrimination, racism and xenophobia have been the subject of research undertaken by Humanities students (psychology and social science)" (L'Ange 1999). Important efforts have been undertaken at the University of Cape Town as shown in the following account:

> The most significant intervention at UCT was the establishment of the Equal Opportunity Research Project (EORP) with funding from the Ford Foundation. The EORP undertook some very useful research, which in the South African context was groundbreaking. Unfortunately, the funding of the EORP could not be sustained, but out of this project grew the African Gender Institute, which has carried out important aspects of the work of the EORP around gender. Aspects of diversity have emerged as areas of study in certain academic departments, including the Department of Psychology, the School of Engineering Management and the Graduate School of Business, as well as other departments. There has also been a strong tradition of academic attention to issues of diversity in the curriculum, especially through the Alternative Admissions Research Project, and the Academic Development Programme. The recent implementation of a foundation course in the Faculty of Humanities is one

example of a programme that has developed out of diversity studies within the institution. (Lewin 1999)

The University of the Free State, like UCT, also claims to have made considerable efforts to promote research on diversity issues: "After the university declared itself multicultural, many problems caused by diversity were encountered. Many academics started developing interest in looking at the causes and possible solutions to those problems" (Ramahlele 1999). In 1997, an important conference was held at this university on "Unity within diversity: maximising learning on South African campuses."

The Graduate School of Arts and the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand have extended their programmes to cover the African renaissance debate, democracy and citizenship education. Despite an apparent interest in the African renaissance issues and government's efforts aimed at promoting the New Partnership Programme for African Recovery (NEPAD), interest in African studies has declined in the post-apartheid South Africa. Where there is resilience, these tend to be confined to South African studies. The diversification of scholarship and curriculum is determined mainly by Western concerns and not by African concerns. Several programmes (courses and research projects) that previously focussed on the rest of the continent under apartheid have been phased out from university prospectuses. This is certainly a historical anachronism, particularly given the increasing influx of African students to South Africa and consequent diversification of the student body.

Diversity curriculum

Diversity is addressed in faculties such as Arts, Education and Social Sciences, mostly as a component of broader academic programmes and courses. Examples of these include: the Cultural Diversity and Gender Awareness modules at M L Sultan Technikon; Value and Policy Studies (both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels) at Stellenbosch; Gender and Management and Democracy Education at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels; Intercultural Communication Studies at the University of Zululand (UniZulu); Multicultural Education at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU); Cultural Diversity, Management of Diversity and Gender Studies at the University of the Free State (OFS); and several other courses in various institutions.

Other initiatives are related to student activities and are linked to community based or outreach programmes, life skills programmes and leadership training programmes organised by the departments of student

development and through participation in the structures of the residences' House Committees, Student Representative Councils, etc. (Khalo 1999; Bawa 1999; van den Berg 1999). Engagement in relevant academic programmes in some faculties is also a way of raising students' consciousness on issues of citizenship and social responsibility (Bawa 1999). Table 1 summarises some of the most significant curriculum initiatives in this regard.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the table in the light of the discussions held with the interviewees. First, as in the past there is a range of courses and modules driven by faculties and departments on race, gender, ethnicity and other identity issues as part of their academic programmes. While these programmes play a role in promoting or advancing diversity knowledge by developing in students an understanding of the complexities of diversity in society, they do very little in developing the skills needed for learners to be able to engage with differences on campus. As already pointed out the degree of diversification of these programmes is limited, particularly when it concerns promoting an African (regional or continental) agenda.

Second, there is a range of centrally-driven curriculum initiatives which generally focus on skilling faculty for dealing with the complexities of the campus environment effectivey. These include, for example, academic development programmes, cultural sensitivity or diversity training workshops. While it is difficult to assess their impact on campus life, some of these programmes have the advantage of assuming diversity as a value that should permeate all social and academic practice on campus. In the case of students, Student Development Services and Students' Representative Councils (SRCs) on some campuses have also engaged in diversity and leadership programmes for student leaders.

Epistemologically and methodologically most critical South African academics seem to have swung into a more instrumentalist view of diversity issues and adopted more principled and pragmatic positions about the usefulness of their scholarship in practice (Makgoba 1999; Goduka 1966a; Goduka 1999; Goduka 1996b; Norris 1966; Starfield 1966; du Toit 1966; and Schnell 1990). In this sense, the debate on diversity has been dominated more by practical concerns than by critical ones. Diversity has emerged as an applied enterprise or a problem solving exercise. It is more concerned with the questions *how to* (e.g. how to break barriers and bring together all sections of our student populations?) and less with *why* (e.g. why should we do so and why do some strategies work better than others?). Further, institutional practice has not been accompanied by adequate academic scholarship and intellectual practice grounded in disciplinary knowledge basis. Diversity scholarship draws on several disciplines in the humanities, particularly anthropology, sociology and educational studies.

Table 1. Selected curriculum initiatives

Name/Diversity initiatives	Institution	Location
BA Degree on Intercultural Communication (Writing for career purposes; Theory of Intercultural Communication; Conflict Resolution/Problem-Solving; Gender Studies; Information Literacy; Intercultural Mediation; and Languages – German and French)	University of Zululand	DPT of Afrikaans
Democracy Education	University of the Witwatersrand	Faculty of Education
Core Curriculum (Cultural Diversity module and Gender Awareness module)	ML Sultan Technikon	Based in faculties
Stereotype reduction seminar and awareness projects	Stellenbosch University	SRC
Value and Policy Studies		Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Leadership Training and Development Gender Studies Cultural competence programmes and public forums Coaching process for new staff for accelerated integration aimed at performance and social integration Team building for middle management	University of Port Elizabeth	Human Resources Training Unit
Student training and development programme		Student Services Humanities
Cultural programs (African music choir)	Rand Afrikaans University	Cultural Office
Providing for diversity in various music and word art programmes of the Cultural Office		
Multicultural Education	and Nursing	Faculty of Education
"Strategic programmes" Gender Studies	University of the Free State	Student Representative Council Sociology Department
Cultural Diversity Studies		Anthropology Department
Management of Diversity Programmeson cultural sensitivity		Business, Management and Leadership
Comparative and Applied Ethics Core curriculum for human sciences Language, Text and Context Gender Studies	University of Natal in Durban	Faculty of Human Sciences
Diversity and Social Justice (Integrated into legal studies)		Faculty of Law
Curriculum development initiative (Life skills programme)	University of Cape Town	Student Dev. and Services DTP
Gender Studies		Faculty of Humanities – African Gender Institute
Annual Arts Contest (Special category for traditional African music; A univ. choir for traditional African music)	Potchefstroom University	Cultural Office

Instrumentalism in diversity scholarship is reflected in the nature of the curriculum content. For example, at ML Sultan Technikon, where diversity modules have been introduced as part of core curriculum, compulsory to all learners, the focus is clearly on skills and values to shape attitudes: effective learning skills, thinking, problem-solving and decision making skills, collaborative skills, information management skills, personal values and inter-personal relationships and so forth. These are assumed as central for engaging difference and accommodating diversity on campus. As Muller (1996, p. 188) puts it, this is a case where the solution is seen as that of constructing a curriculum for citizenship that takes "a low-key stance to 'hot' cultural issues by teaching children civic and negotiation skills to deal with issues of difference."

Understandably, the knowledge dimension – diversity knowledge – is not given enough attention, given the general orientation of the technikon sector. However, their diversity modules would certainly make a significant difference if they could make provision for knowledge construction through which learners could not only engage with knowledge on diversity but also generate knowledge on the issue. As Schneider has suggested, such an approach would certainly "introduce students to intellectual diversity and contestation and help them actively develop the awareness, skills and knowledge needed to form grounded judgements, analyses, and responses in the face of, and taking account of, conflicting interpretations and viewpoints" (Schneider 1997, p. 125). In the Technikon sector, this could be addressed through a more constructivist approach to diversity curriculum.

Current diversity curricula and pedagogical practices can also be examined with reference to prevailing discourses on institutional transformation. This pragmatic instrumentalism, which dominates 'intellectual formations' in their approaches to diversity knowledge, is partly determined by the increasing pressures to respond to action-oriented issues, driven by the imperatives of transformation. In a way, one can say that so far campus diversity in its South African peculiarity has been reared by discourses of transformation because of the promises it makes for the success of this process. Its survival also depends on how much it incorporates or matches these discourses, particularly in addressing issues of social justice, equity and democracy. It can hardly find a space of its own. Some stories give accounts on how it all started: "campuses that saw themselves as too white were challenged to bring in some colour in their staff and student bodies and a mix of cultures"; "institutions accused as having Eurocentric tendencies were challenged to Africanise their curricula and, in some cases, they brought in some African Studies" and so forth.

To address this issue, I draw on Fraser's distinction between *affirmative remedies* and transformative *remedies*. For Fraser, affirmation or affirmative remedies are aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangements without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them (Fraser 1997, p. 23). Affirmative remedies are currently associated with most programmes on multicultural education introduced in some institutions to redress disrespect by re-valuing unjustly devalued group identities and the group differentiations that underlie them. Affirmative remedies represent surface reallocations of respect to existing identities or existing groups. As Goduka (1996a, p. 30) suggests, affirming diversity means to acknowledge, validate, respect, and be sensitive to the diverse nature of humankind. It means tolerance, acceptance, patronising, benevolence, or compassion. The principles of affirmative remedies are: *affirmation* and *inclusiveness*.

The main failure of affirmative remedies is their inability to promote equity and social justice effectively. Affirmative remedies can stigmatise the disadvantaged, adding the insult of misrecognition to the injury of deprivation. They tend generally to promote group differentiation. They do not effectively address injustice and inequality in the curriculum and across campus. Examples of what affirmative remedies aim to address include cultural domination resulting from factors such as: being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication associated with another culture (alien and/or hostile to one's own); non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions). Remedies emanating from "subjugated discourses" within the historically black universities (HBUs) alluded to above would fall under this category. There are examples where certain features of "own culture" when affirmed are received with a degree of embarrassment by some members of that particular culture. Some would justify this attitude as follows: "we do not want to affirm just anything in our culture; there are negative values we need to transform".

In contrast, transformative remedies are aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework, i.e. the processes that produce them. They are associated with deconstruction, which means dismantling and deconstructing the legacy of the norm of old practices in order to reconstruct and transform the Eurocentric and racist curriculum to reflect the diverse nature of the academic staff and student population. They are aimed at redressing disrespect by transforming the underlying cultural-valuational structure. By destabilising existing group identities and differentiation, these remedies would not just raise the self-

esteem of members of currently disrespected groups; they would change everyone's sense of self. They would promote solidarity, helping to redress some forms of misrecognition. Transformative remedies represent deep restructuring of relations of recognition; they destabilise group differentiation or blur it.

Therefore curricula, in the new South African educational system, require a detailed scrutiny of the socio-political basis that have historically contributed to their construction, the educational philosophies underlying their choice, and the pedagogical practices attached to them. They must be examined with the understanding that they will be presented to particular groups of students, each of whom arrives with a historical, social, cultural, religious, and class identity. Students also arrive with different learning styles, psychological dispositions and needs that must be addressed both through the theoretical construction upon which curriculum formation is based and through a pedagogy that takes into account the complexity of each student individually, and in interaction within a group (Goduka 1999, p. 110). In this regard, the table above exemplifies three key approaches worth mentioning.

The first one is the **add-on approach** in which content about diversity or diverse groups is added to the existing curriculum. It assumes two forms: (i) the form of study visits, holidays, celebrations, special lectures, exhibitions, and cultural and awareness events; or (ii) adding cultural content, concepts and themes to the curriculum without changing its basic structure or integrating them into the whole curriculum. Diversity issues are not tackled 'head on'; for example random programmes are organised or passing experts give talks (Chetty 1999). The add-on approach is often accomplished through quick fix remedies by inserting a multicultural unit or course into an otherwise unreconstructed curriculum (e.g. adding a gender studies modules to a curriculum that remains intact). It does not involve a restructuring and a challenge to **the canon** of the curriculum. It is a sort of "band-aids and aspirin" that take care of acute aches and pains, and sometimes even appear to have healed them, while leaving the underlying chronic illness untouched to fester and resurface time and time again. (Goduka 1996, p. 33) These approaches can easily lead to what Mandew (1999) referred to as 'diversity fatigue' or paralysis by lack of recognisable results and frustration. In this regard, the efficacy of some of the programmes undertaken by the newly-established 'cultural' and 'equity and transformation' offices could be questioned.

The second approach is the **affirmative approach**, which challenges the Eurocentric canon of knowledge, leading to the development of inclusive curricula which may accurately reflect the experiences, voices, struggles, victories, and defeats of all racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and other social groups. Although it may lead to an inclusive curriculum, it does not neces-

sarily require the dismantling and deconstruction of the curricula legacy of apartheid on which many South African institutions have been founded (Goduka 1996, p. 33). Programmes on multiculturalism or multicultural education established in several institutions would fall under this category. They promote knowledge of diverse cultures, which make up the South African society or converge at the institution with hope to promote relations of cultural recognition and tolerance and facilitate intercultural mediation.

The third one is a critical **transformative approach**, which not only challenges the canon, the basic structures, and assumptions of the apartheid curricula, but also provides a paradigm shift and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives. In this regard, Starfield (1996, p. 160) proposes a curriculum for diversity, which goes beyond subject content to access the underlying principles that give structure to the subject, a curriculum that includes " 'higher order knowledge' about how subject disciplines organise knowledge, and people's knowledge of how they think and learn". Within the South African context, this approach will certainly require taking seriously the question of equity and social justice as referred to by some interviewees.

Campus diversity revisited: Putting equity and social justice on the agenda

Overemphasis on culture in diversity initiatives has been an object of contestation. Under contention is the emphasis on cultural recognition at the expense of equity issues as if the problematic of cultural difference has nothing to do with social equality. The tendency to reify culture – the "symbolic order" – at the expense of the political economy renders the project of diversity less attractive. Against this background, the future of diversity initiative will certainly depend on its ability to integrate theory of cultural recognition and mediation with the theory of social justice, or cultural politics of recognition and social politics of equity. In different words, diversity initiatives require a critical theory of recognition that identifies, and supports, only those forms of identity politics that can be coherently combined with a politics of social equality. This is an important dimension that has been overlooked in diversity scholarship.

It rests with South African scholars to develop a critical theory of diversity, distinguishing those claims for the recognition of difference that advance the cause of social equality from those that retard it or undermine it. In Fraser's words: "We should see ourselves as presented with a new intellectual and practical task: that of developing a critical theory of recognition, one that identifies and defends only those versions of the cultural politics of difference

that can be coherently combined with the social politics of equality". Recognition politics that fail to respect human rights are unacceptable, even if they ultimately promote social equality. Mandew (1999) referred to this issue in a very passionate manner: "For me diversity is about power; how power is distributed within institutions and society; how we access and exercise power and who benefits from it. For me, diversity outside power means nothing."

The case of historically black/disadvantaged institutions

The table presented above also highlights the limited participation of the historically-back universities (HBUs) in diversity-related initiatives. During the interviews for this paper, very few responses were received from historically black universities. My first reaction was that diversity was not perceived as an important issue within these institutions. This brought to the fore the question that has been raised several times whether diversity is being perceived as a key institutional issue from this sub-sector of higher education. From the dialogue with scholars affiliated to these institutions, the answer seems to be "Yes" with a proviso. Note however that I base my judgement on accounts provided by the interviewees, very often tainted by some reservations: "note that this is only my personal view". Hlongwane's view is that, as any other HBU, Unizulu is still grappling with "the negativity of the past", the feeling of disadvantage or the "image of being less than other universities". In his opinion, Unizulu has not been able to grow to its full potential: "we are still struggling to find our own culture and existence". Hlongwane's view seems to be widely shared among many academics within the HBUs.

The HBUs have responded in different ways to the diversity initiative depending on what they perceive to be their own identities and challenges. While they are compelled to address the challenges posed by the Employment Equity Act, their major focus has been on their own survival through diversification to match the labour market needs and through a joint struggle for recognition: "opening the programmes to meet employability needs and to get adults into the system – recognition of prior learning." They are still grappling with centring or affirming their own identities (e.g. the fact of being a historically disadvantaged institution) instead of exposing their learners to the multiplicity of differences in which they are embedded (ethnic, language, region, etc.). They have no privileged centre in this regard and as such they tend to see themselves as vulnerable to the destabilising effects that the exposure to multiple identities and differences would create.

Jeevanantham (1999, p. 59) provides a tentative framework for understanding the general pattern of some of the responses from these institutions. In line with his framework, the HBUs could be seen as searching for an

identity forged in the context of what he calls 'similarity within difference' and the struggle for centring 'subjugated discourses' (black discourses), i.e. moving them from the periphery to the centre. He draws on Kanpol who says that:

> One way to advance the post-modern debate is to theorize about similarity within differences. To do so would allow educators better to empathize with and understand marginalized peoples, at the base of whose differences lie similarities of oppression, pain, and feeling, albeit in miscellaneous forms. (1992, p. 221)

Within a subjugated discourse, individuals come to realise that although they are different in their experiences as objects of power, they are however similar in their struggles against these power sources. Their emancipatory and democratic purpose makes subjugated responses unifying. In the case of the HBUs, it could be argued that perceptions about a common experience of disadvantage has shaped a particular discourse (subjugated), the foundation of the voice that speaks for the group of institutions and their communities of scholars. As Jeevanantham (1999, p. 55) has indicated, there are certainly other layers of identity and other subjugated discourses associated "with class, signified by the owner/worker divide; with gender, encapsulated in the male/female split; with sex, implicated in the heterosexual/homosexual break; with religion in Western and Westernised countries, captured by the Christian/non-Christian scission; with culture, grounded in the Western/non-Western cleavage and with the development contained in the first world/third world dichotomy". However, within subjugation, identities associated with race have been privileged. This mediates how diversity is perceived or conceptualised in the HBUs. These could be seen seeking the remedy for systemic imbalances through an assertion and vindication of group identity. In doing so, a multiplicity of identities is kept underground, let alone identities such as sexual orientation and religion, which are undermined for cultural reasons. As Hlongwane (1999) correctly pointed out, "these are identities we never recognised in our upbringing.

Conclusion

South African campuses have embarked upon a wide range of initiatives to foster and respond to the changes within South African society while preparing students for the realities of increasing globalisation. They are slowly but steadily redirecting their student bodies and their staff to reflect the demographics of South African society. They have developed an increasing awareness about the need to address the social imbalances inherited from

apartheid and the need to be responsive to wider social needs. The diversity project has gained momentum in this process. However, fragmentation of effort and piecemeal approach still dominates institutional responses to these challenges. In this context, the paper reaffirms the need for a leadership-driven integrated approach within an institutional planning framework which sets parameters, targets, priorities and clear lines of accountability and responsibility for the diversity project.

The paper has looked at the meanings of diversity underpinning diversity programmes, scholarship and curriculum practices and the different ways in which institutions have reworked, redefined and reinvented diversity against the background of the apartheid legacy. Their conceptualizations range from tolerance of difference, "affirmation" or "celebration" of diversity, to diversity as a strategy for *embracing*, or *accommodating* or *engaging* differences. In spite of their different or even conflicting assumptions, generally these conceptualizations converge on or point to the need for integrating the politics of cultural and identity recognition with the politics of social justice and equity, which represents a key strength in South African diversity discourse. Unfortunately this is constrained by the interventionism or instrumentalism that dominates diversity scholarship.

Briefly, the project of diversity poses serious challenges to South African scholars and higher education practitioners. First, there is a need for sustaining current research and intellectual activities around diversity, which remain under pressure vis-à-vis market and global pressures. Second, given the legacies of scholarship, their impact on current epistemological and pedagogical practices, a paradigm shift is required to ensure that the reconfiguring of programme offerings takes place within a transformative rather than merely affirmative and add-on framework, in which issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity and other forms of identity, are brought to the core of research and curriculum agenda. Third, given the legacies of apartheid, South African scholars also face the challenge of developing a critical theory of diversity, distinguishing those claims for the recognition of difference that advance the cause of social equality from those that retard it or undermine it, i.e. a critical theory that takes seriously issues of equity, human rights and social justice. This requires a re-conceptualisation of diversity in the context of the on-going social and institutional transformation in the country.

Notes

1. For a number of years the Ford Foundation has been funding Campus Diversity Initiatives (CDI's) in America and India. In recent years there has been a desire to extend this

programme to Brazilian and South African campuses. At campus level, these programmes have focused simultaneously on developing policies, practices and programmes which address the needs of an increasingly diverse student and staff population, while working towards fundamental institutional change. In 1998 CHET hosted the second Ford Foundation funded international seminar entitled "Diversity and Unity: The Role of Higher Education in building democracy" to explore cross-cutting diversity issues and concerns among higher education representatives from these various countries. In the South African context, a number of higher education institutions have already embarked upon campus diversity initiatives as part of their teaching, research, student service, or outreach programmes. The aim of the audit was to map out these initiatives in the three countries for the next Tri-national seminar held in the USA in October 1999.

2. Hargreaves points out that: "The paradox of globalisation creates *national doubt and insecurity* and carries with it dangers of resurrecting and reconstructing traditional curricula of an ethnocentric and xenophobic nature. Such curricula can reinforce educational inequities among culturally diverse groups ..." (Andy Hargreaves, *Changing Teachers, Changing Times. Teachers' Work and Culture in the Post-Modern Age* (London: Cassell, 1995), p. 83).

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