

A decolonial approach to a socially just curriculum?
A case study of a first-year common course in an emerging post-apartheid university eMzansi Afrika

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Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Msakha Mona

Signature:

Signed by candidate

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List of acronyms

- CBD: Central Business District
- CHE: Council on Higher Education
- COVID 19: Coronavirus Disease of 2019.
- DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training
- DVC: Deputy Vice Chancellor
- HE: Higher Education
- HEI: Higher education institution
- LEP: Language in Education Policy
- MANCO: Management Committee
- MIC100: Mpumalanga in Context
- NSFAS: National Student Financial Aid Scheme
- PanSALB: Pan South African Language Board
- PCCCUMP: Proposal for a Core Common Course at UMP
- SADC: Southern African Development Community
- TUT: Tshwane University of Technology
- UCT: University of Cape Town
- UMP 2022: a strategic plan of the University of Mpumalanga.
- UMP: University of Mpumalanga
- VC: Vice Chancellor

Multilingual Glossary:

- Ayoba: a greeting and an expression of a positive experience.
- Eish: exclaims range of negative and positive emotions.
- Hoihoi: 'hello' in Tsotsitaal.
- Inkomu: xiTsonga for 'thank you'.
- mSwati: a Swati person. "m" denotes 'a person who identifies as'.
- Nguni a group of languages that includes siSwati; isiXhosa, isiNdebele, and isiZulu.
- Siphethfo: siSwati for 'conclusion'.
- Tinanatelo: clan or praise names that accompany surnames.
- vaTsonga: Tsonga people. "va" denotes 'people who identify as'.
- Yho: Often exclaims state of shock.

Abstract

A decolonial approach to a socially just curriculum? a case study of a first-year common course in an emerging post-apartheid university eMzansi Afrika.

This qualitative case study sought to explore whether and how the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) imagined social justice in its first-year common course, MIC100 (Mpumalanga in Context). The UMP is one of the only two universities established after apartheid in South Africa, and it does not have a colonial and apartheid history. However, its newness does not absolve the UMP from coloniality, thus the study found that the institution is implicated in coloniality due to its existence within a higher education environment that is pervasively Eurocentric. Thus, the study explored how the UMP worked with this complication through its curriculum in MIC100. Theories of social justice and decoloniality framed the study. While pointing out some of UMP's complicities in coloniality, the study found MIC100 to have made significant moves towards social justice and decolonization. The main data for this research was the students' reviews of MIC100, student interviews, and the UMP's documentary data which were analyzed on NVivo. Among the implications of the study, is the need and call for universities to be more intentional in responding to the decolonial question in ways that achieve social justice. Therefore, the findings reveal some of the strategies that were employed in MIC100 that can be adapted by educational institutions, lecturers, and curriculum designers. The strategies include efforts to recognize black students and their cultural products such as African languages; and creating teaching and learning environments where students can feel ayoba.

Keywords

social justice; decoloniality; higher education; ubuntu; translanguaging; curriculum

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Hoihoi!

Egameni laYise, leNdvodzana, neleMoya loyiNgcwele, ngitsi tandla tindlula inhloko! Bayethe Smakadze, mnikati wami, mnikati wemphilo, mnikati welwati!

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Pfumela ndzi ba hi xiChangana, ingani se ndzi bonga Xikwembu hi xikoxana xa ka Nkuna. Kokwana NwaNkuna iwunwana wavanhu lava va ngandzi kurisa hirirhandzu! Nwankuna aku ri nyanga leyikulu swinene, kambe undzihlohletele swaku ndziya esontweni nalexikolweni. Masiku manwana yaSonto, kokwana aandzi vutisa, ‘akuri njani axikolweni’. Hinkwawu malembe lawa ndzi nga tsama nayena, kokwana aadivanisa xikolo nakereke ngaku ixilo xinwe. Kambe sweswi ndza swivona swaku uphazame angaphazamanga – hikanene kereke akuri xikolo eka mina. Ndzi dyondze swaku masungulo ya vutlari iku chava Xikwembu...

59 Poortjie akuri kaya ra NwaNkuna. Kaya rero akuri xikolo lexikulukumba ekamina. Eka kaya rero ndzi dyondze rirhandzu! Ndzi dyondze vumunhu. Ndzi dyondze swaku munhu warhandziwa naloko angarina nchumu. Ndzi dyondze swaku ku rhandza Xikwembu swifambelana na ku rhandza vanhu vaxona. Ekaya rero ndzi dyondze swaku vutomi abyihelanga lani misaveni. Ndzi dyondze kuyingisela mitorho. Ndzi dyondze kuyingisela moya. Ndzi dyondze swaku kuna swilo swakutala lomu xilungu xingapfuneki. Ndzi dyondze swaku kuhanya kutlula kuva na mali. Ndzi dyondze swaku kuhanyisana hi ku hlayisana hi swona vutomi. Hi kwalaho naPhD leyi yibuka tindlela ta kutirhisa dyonzo ekuhanyisaneni hi kuhlayisana.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
List of acronyms	iv
Multilingual Glossary:	iv
Abstract	vi
Keywords	vi
INKOMU: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VII
List of figures & tables	xviii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The establishment of two new universities in democratic South Africa	1
1.3 Situating UMP	3
1.4 About MIC100	4
1.6 Problem statement	6
1.7 Rationale	7
1.8 Aims & objectives of the study	8
1.9 Structure of the dissertation	9
1.10 My non-neutrality	11
1.11 Implications of my positionality for the research	15
1.12 Some of my experiences in academia	16
1.12.1 O-Week	17
1.12.2 Nonrecognition at undergraduate level	18
1.12.3 Black Label on the radio	19
1.12.4 To be or not to be inspired?	20
1.12.5 My 'formal' entry to the decolonial mission	21
1.12.6 My involvement in MIC100	21
CHAPTER 2: NDZI FAMBE NJANI? (METHODOLOGY)	24
2.1 Introduction	24
2.2 Research design	24
2.3 Research sample	25

2.4 Data collection methods	26
2.4.1 Student course reviews	26
2.4.2 Interview questionnaires	26
2.4.3 Interview with MIC100 lecturer	26
2.4.4 Documentary data	27
2.4.5 The MIC100 curriculum materials	27
2.4.6 Participant-observations	27
2.5 Open-ended/flexible approach to data collection & analysis	28
2.6 Challenges	29
2.6.1 Covid-19	29
2.6.2 Teaching staff & logistics for interviews	30
2.6.3 Reflexive & ethical challenges	31
2.7 Ethics clearance	31
2.8 Context of data collection	31
2.9 Access to data	32
2.10 Coding & analysis of data	32
2.10.1 A note about students' biographical data	39
2.10.2 Thematic analysis	39
2.10.3 Documents analyzed	40
2.10.4 Ongoing data analysis	42
2.10.5 Reporting	43
2.11 Conclusion	43
 CHAPTER 3: INDLELA KULABAPHAMBILI	 45
3.1 Introduction	45
3.2 The founding of decoloniality/decolonial theory	45
3.3 The problem of race	48
3.4 Bantu Education	52
3.5 Decoloniality & knowledge production	55
3.6 Ubuntu and Mphahlele's African humanism	57
3.7 Indigenous Knowledge Systems towards decoloniality	59
3.8 Decoloniality in the social sciences	61
3.9 A review of social justice	63
3.10 Social justice through a decolonial curriculum	67
3.11 Theories of language in the post-colony	69

3.12 Language policies in colonial & postcolonial Mzansi	72
3.12. 1 PanSALB	72
3.12.2 Language in education	73
3.12.3 Higher education language policy	74
3.13 Conclusion	78
 CHAPTER 4: MASUNGULO YA UMP	 79
4.1 Introduction	79
4.2 The Higher Education Act of 1997	79
4.3 National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa	79
4.4 CHE's advice on establishing new universities in Mpumalanga & the Northern Cape	80
4.5 Development framework for new universities	81
4.6 The New Universities Project Management Team	86
4.7 UMP 2022: A seven-year strategic plan	86
4.8 UMP Annual Reports to the Minister of Higher Education & Training	88
4.8.1 Access	88
4.8.2 Success	88
4.8.3 Efficiency	89
4.8.4 Research output	89
4.8.5 Possible overreliance on quantity	89
4.9 MIC100 as a core part of UMP's foundation	90
4.10 Conclusion	91
 CHAPTER 5: UMP'S DISCURSIVE TRAJECTORY: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS	 92
5.1 Introduction	92
5.2 The idea of an 'African' university	92
5.3 The question of development	94
5.4 Analysing some of UMP's values	99
5.4.1 Ubuntu	99
5.4.2 Diversity	100
5.4.3 Collaboration	101
5.4.4 Adaptability	102
5.4.5 Relevance	102
5.4.6 Inspiration	102
5.5 Possible implication of UMP's discourse for graduate attributes	102
5.5.1 Resourceful, responsive & responsible	103
5.5.2 Confident & effective communicators	103

5.5.3 Ethically & socially aware change agents	104
5.6 Conclusion	104
CHAPTER 6: THE MIC100 CURRICULUM	105
6.1 Introduction	105
6.2 What is MIC100?	105
6.3 The explicit presentation	106
6.4 Reimagining the regulative discourse through MIC100	107
6.5 The Regulative Discourse in MIC100	111
6.6 Shifting ideological assumptions about students	119
6.6.1 Interpersonal relationships	119
6.6.2 Economic access	120
6.6.3 Culture and language	120
6.7 Conclusion	121
CHAPTER 7: UBUNTU	122
7.1 Introduction	122
7.2 Locating HE in UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals	123
7.3 Phila ngiphile: towards defining ubuntu	124
7.5. Does ubuntu moralise education?	125
7.5.1 "...we are here today as South African because of it"	126
7.5.2 "I now know that hating is a disease"	127
7.5.3 Look at things at a different view	128
7.6 Ubuntu as classroom praxis	129
7.6.1 "... but it is my language and I am proud"	130
7.6.2 "This is an awesome phenomenon to live by"	131
7.6.3 "I no longer expect anyone to behave like me"	134
7.7 Ubuntu as pluriversal	136
7.8 Ubuntu and the contemporary university	137
7.9 Conclusion: "we are all united, in one way or the other way"	138
CHAPTER 8: COLONIALITY THROUGH LINGUISTIC HIERARCHIES	140
8.1 Introduction	140
8.2 Some theoretical considerations on language(s)	140

8.3 Contextualising South African languages	141
8.4 Language practice at UMP	146
8.5 Linguistic hierarchy in personal encounters	147
8.5.1 What kind of language is that? English as authority	147
8.5.2 Testimonial injustice in a Toyota Quantum: accent as permission to speak?	148
8.5.3 A Sample of language repertoire in Mbombela Campus	151
8.6 Conclusion	154
 CHAPTER 9: TRANSLANGUAGING IN A TYPICAL MIC100 CLASSROOM	 155
9.1 Introduction	155
9.2 Contextualising language dynamics in MIC100	155
9.3 Examples from class sessions	156
9.3.1 Kuyasheka, not diarrhoea: shuttling for meaning across languages	159
9.3.3 I am who they see.	160
9.3.4 “i-identity buwena bakho”: Africanising George	161
9.3.5 Musho! Students unpack their loci of enunciation in writing	161
9.4 Making a case for translanguaging	165
9.4.1 Benefit one: dignifying and recognising marginalised languages	165
9.4.2 Benefit two: encouraging students to learn more languages	169
9.4.3 Benefit three: making teaching and learning more vibrant and engaging	171
9.5 Some examples of linguistic power-sharing	175
9.6 Conclusion of chapter	176
 CHAPTER 10: FEELING AYOKA!	 177
10.1 Introduction	177
10.2 Undermining the project of self-hate	177
10.3 Person before knowledge: An African Humanist approach to learning	178
10.4 Positive self-esteem a foundation for confidence: students’ perspectives	179
10.4.1 “this burden of ‘race’”	179
10.4.2 “Nkambule msutfu’mswati”	181
10.4.3 “I symbolize the people who taught me everything”	183
10.5 Towards a future where graduates feel ayoka	186
10.6 Conclusion	187
 CHAPTER 11: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	 188
11.1 Introduction	188

11.2 Framing injustices in education through decoloniality	188
11.3 Verdict on MIC100?	188
11.4 Recommendations from the case study	189
11.4.1 Foregrounding the hidden curriculum	189
11.4.2 Expanding decolonial practices beyond individual courses	190
11.4.3 Urgency of the language question	191
11.4.4 MIC100 as data for UMP's decision-making	191
11.4.5 Addressing the trap of dichotomy	192
11.4.6 The need to recognise stubbornness of coloniality	192
11.4.7 A sophisticated approach to purpose	193
11.5 Siphethfo: To Conclude	194
11.5.1 Introduction	194
11.5.2 The question of recognition	195
11.5.3 The question of language	195
11.5.4 To restore, to heal and to be ayoba	196
11.6 Final remarks	196
 REFLECTION: "IT IS WRITTEN": A REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS OF THIS DISSERTATION	 199
 REFERENCES	 201
 APPENDICES	 215
Appendix 1: List of documents analyzed	215
Appendix 2: Interview schedule for 2019 MIC lecturers	216
Appendix 3: Interview schedule for 2019 MIC student	219
Appendix 4: MIC course outline 2020	224
Summary of assessment components and their mark weights	230
Appendix 5: MIC weekly programme term one 2020	231
Appendix 6: Sample of Self-description Assignment	255

List of figures & tables

Figure A : Example of labeling process from the preliminary content analysis	32
Figure B : Initial bundling of 2019 and 2020 student reviews	33
Figure C : Example of final reviews selected for full analysis	34
Figure D: Student interview responses coded in NVivo	35
Figure E: Coding of interview with MIC100 lecturer	36
Figure F: Example of a disaggregated parent code, and child codes	37
Table A: Typical phrases in UMP's daily life	149
Figure G: example of child codes in initial coding of student course reviews	137
Figure H: Example of course material	153

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The South African higher education (HE) sector has been criticised for being westernised and for perpetuating coloniality. Thus, scholars have called for South African universities to be decolonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Mamdani, 2019; Nyamnjoh, 2012). The universities at the centre of the decolonial critique were established in the colonial and/or apartheid era. In this context, decolonisation refers to the efforts “to reimagine and rearticulate power, change, and knowledge through a multiplicity of epistemologies, ontologies and axiologies” (Sium et al., 2012: iii). However, since the advent of democracy, two new universities have been built. The University of Mpumalanga and the Sol Plaatje University were established in 2013 and 2014 respectively, and they provide interesting opportunities to consider decolonization in Mzansi’s¹ HE. In other words, the new universities provide opportunities to think about teaching and learning in a post-apartheid context. Established within a Western modernist imaginary structure that still requires a form of decolonization, they are implicated in the decolonial question. The decolonial question concerns issues of social justice. In this study, I argue that this is due to on-going coloniality at South African universities which leads to the marginalisation of black people². That argument contextualises this research project, which explores whether UMP works towards social justice in its curriculum. And, if so, how? With that in mind, this case study focuses on UMP’s flagship common course MIC100, which it launched in 2018, four years after UMP opened its doors.

1.2 The establishment of two new universities in democratic South Africa

In 1994, democratic Mzansi inherited a higher education system from the colonial and apartheid eras:

Apartheid ideology and planning resulted in higher education institutions that were reserved for different “race”, ethnic and language groups and allocated different ideological, economic and social functions in relation to the reproduction of the apartheid and capitalist social order (Badat, 2015: 176).

¹ In siNguni, South Africa is referred to as Mzansi Afrika, or shorthand ‘Mzansi’.

² South Africa’s government uses ‘black’ as “a generic term which refers to Africans, Coloureds and Indians (a) who are citizens of the Republic of South Africa by birth or descent; or (b) who became citizens of the Republic of South Africa by naturalisation (i) before 27 April 1994; or (ii) on or after 27 April 1994 and who would have been entitled to acquire citizenship by naturalisation prior to that date” (DTI, 2021). However, in this study, ‘black’ refers to those with an African heritage either by birth or descent. Hence, ‘black’ and ‘African’ might be used interchangeably.

While under apartheid, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were unequally resourced based on the social categories listed by Badat above, the newly formed provinces of Mpumalanga and Northern Cape were without universities for almost two decades post formal apartheid and the advent of the democratic dispensation.³ The establishment of new universities was undertaken within the broader aim of transforming HE “to meet the development goals of a democratic South Africa” (Badat, 2015: 179).

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE), South Africa’s Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) “first announced his intention to establish universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape in his budget speech on 25 March 2010” (2011: 1). The minister, Dr Nzimande, established two task teams (for Mpumalanga and Northern Cape) “to investigate the development of appropriate models for the proposed universities” (CHE, 2011: 1). The CHE used the two task-team reports to advise the DHET minister. In its consideration of the reports, the CHE agreed:

... that there is a need to expand the higher education system to rectify the imbalances and inequities of the past and to address high-level skills and knowledge needs, which is a pre-requisite for social and economic development (CHE, 2011: 1)

While the above statement points to the need to redress inequalities in the country’s HE sector, demand for higher education continues to grow. In his speech announcing the new councils and the names of the new universities, then President Gedleyihlekisa⁴ Zuma indicated that enrolment numbers in HE had increased by 50% between 2001 and 2012. In 2001, 603 000 students were enrolled; in 2012 the total was 935 000 (Zuma, 2013). Increasing demand for HE is part of the rationale for their establishment.

The increase in demand is also reflected in the National Development Plan, which “envisages an increase in higher education enrolments from 17.9 per cent in 2012 to 25 per cent by 2030” (Zuma, 2013). New universities are, thus, established on this quantitative rationale, notwithstanding the qualitative factors some of which are discussed below.

³³ Before the transition to democracy in 1994, South Africa had four provinces, namely Orange Free State, Cape, Natal, and Transvaal, and four ‘independent’ homelands. In 1994, these divisions were abolished, and the country was divided into the current nine provinces. What is now the Mpumalanga province used to be part of the then Transvaal province.

⁴ Having observed that South Africa has a history and current practice of ignoring people’s African names in favour of their European sounding names, all our democratic presidents thus far have African names yet only their ‘English’ names are dominant. Thus, Gedleyihlekisa is one of the names of our former president who is predominantly known as Jacob.

The quotation below summarises how the DHET qualitatively imagines the new universities:

As South Africa's first new institutions of higher learning since 1994, the planned universities are envisaged as symbols of our new order, of democracy, inclusiveness, growth and opportunity. These institutions must become an enduring source of pride, both nationally and provincially. They must be able to attract the best academics in South Africa, the continent and the world. The hallmark of these new universities must be academic excellence underpinned by quality leadership (2012: 3)

The DHET has outlined seven principles underlying the development of the two new universities, as follows (2012):

1. Expansion of national academic capacity
2. Comprehensive universities designed for growth and flexibility
3. Equity, access and success
4. Quality and academic excellence
5. Supporting infrastructure, facilities and services
6. Place-relevant and engaged
7. Sustainability

Some of these principles have direct implications for the design of their curricula. This research will therefore explore how the Mpumalanga in Context (MIC100) curriculum responds to these principles.

1.3 Situating UMP

Chapter Four (The Founding of UMP) provides a detailed context. For immediate purposes, I provide summary details. UMP is the province's first stand-alone university. Both it and the satellite campus of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) are situated in Mpumalanga's provincial capital, Mbombela. The province covers 6.3% of South Africa's land mass, and contains 7.2% of the country's population (DHET, 2012: 10). Out of nine provinces, Mpumalanga has the fifth largest economy (ibid.), with a strong concentration on "mining and utilities, manufacturing, transport and community services sectors" (ibid.).

UMP has a satellite campus in Siyabuswa, kwaNdebele. In 2020, UMP had 4353 students: 73 per cent were from Mpumalanga, while the bulk of the remainder came from the other South African provinces; 1.7 per cent were from the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and 0.5 per cent from countries outside the SADC (UMP, 2020). The first ten years of UMP focused primarily on undergraduate offerings, "thus ensuring that equity of access in the context of redressing past inequalities leads to equity of outcomes" (CHE, 2011: 6). The

university offered 58.1 per cent bachelor's degrees and 37.49 per cent diploma qualifications, while the remaining offerings are advanced diplomas, honours and master's degrees.

According to CHE, UMP should be relevant to Mpumalanga's social and economic needs by focusing on:

... career-oriented and vocational programmes at the diploma level, which would contribute to addressing the development of scarce technical skills. This should be complemented by the development of a limited number of professional and general formative programmes at degree level in line with identified provincial needs (CHE, 2011: 6)

CHE's view of what UMP must focus on resonates with the principle of place-relevance outlined by DHET in 2012. The research will explore whether and/or how the MIC100 curriculum meets that goal.

UMP lists the following graduate attributes (UMP, 2020). Its graduates should be and demonstrate:

- Resourceful, Responsive and Responsible
- Sound Discipline Knowledge
- Innovative and Entrepreneurial
- Confident and Effective Communicators
- Ethically and Socially Aware Agents
- Adaptable

The study will therefore also explore how MIC100 works towards achieving these graduate attributes, particularly for undergraduate students from different disciplines.

1.4 About MIC100

Mpumalanga in Context (MIC100) has several key, overlapping features. It is a first-year common course, it is a service course open to students from different qualification streams, and it is a social science course that introduces first-year students to key social science concepts such as culture, identity, history, and knowledge systems.

The establishment of new universities in South Africa is part of the process of redress. This increases the availability of HEIs and falls under the redistribution dimension of Fraser's (1997) approach to social justice. However, the present research focuses on the curriculum as an instrument of social justice. In turn this makes Fraser's (ibid.) recognition dimension of social justice the central issue. The recognition dimension makes it possible to explore whether

and how the MIC100 curriculum facilitates parity of participation. By parity of participation, I mean a diverse range of students who can participate equally as people with recognised knowledge and as people who produce knowledge. Fraser and Honneth later (2003) add a third dimension, the political one. Although both the economic [redistribution] and cultural [recognition] dimensions are political by implication, the political dimension as a third dimension in its own right “furnishes the stage on which struggles over distribution and recognition are played out” (ibid.: 17). This third dimension is also referred to as “representation” (Morreira, 2019), and it refers to “who can make claims for social justice and how those claims are read” (ibid.: 168). The third dimension, therefore, entails a consideration of UMP’s student demographics in order to deal with the question of belonging, namely whether students feel culturally and intellectually ‘at home’ there. The three dimensions are not mutually exclusive, and will be treated as overlapping elements in order to explore how decolonization becomes a process of restoring social justice.

Morreira explains the link between decoloniality and social justice in the South African context. This link occurs upon critically recognising “that the knowledge and cultural capital that first generation students bring with them to the university may not be recognised as valid forms of knowledge and as valid forms of cultural capital” (2019: 166). Although Morreira makes this point while unpacking a course that seeks participatory parity in a historically white university, her emphasis on recognition remains relevant to MIC100, because MIC100 addresses the question of recognition in its course objectives. Morreira’s application of Fraser’s theory of social justice to address higher education challenges that resulted from colonialism, shows that decoloniality and social justice are far from mutually exclusive in South African HE. Thus, this study argues that a socially just curriculum is likely to take the decolonial option to address the colonial injustices that have shaped HE.

One of the stated key objectives of MIC100 is to encourage and improve “self-awareness and ignite a respect for our rich African history, heritage, culture and knowledge systems” (MIC100 course outline, 2019: 3). This objective fits within processes of social justice, as will be illustrated in the literature review, and chapters 6-10. Given that knowledge in South African HE has been dealt with in predominantly Eurocentric ways, often marginalising African experiences (Soudien, 2010: 22), MIC100’s goal is worth exploring as an intervention towards social justice through decoloniality.

In terms of this study, “social justice [located in HE] relates to the struggle by those who have been marginalised by the Western academy and [is] about seeking legitimacy for knowledge that is embedded in their own histories, experiences and ways of viewing reality” (Le Grange, 2016: 3). Le Grange’s view of social justice in the academy focuses on knowledge as a key concept, and it resonates with some of MIC100’s objectives.

While the concept of social justice is broad, Le Grange’s definition points to a knowledge approach to social justice, which is also termed “cognitive justice” (Leibowitz, 2017; Le Grange, 2016; Makoelle, 2014). Cognitive justice is a concept that “proposes to give recognition to alternative paradigms especially those that are derived from indigenous forms of knowledge” (Makoelle, 2014: 507). According to Makoelle, cognitive justice is part of the process of achieving social justice, since learning cannot be equitable without cognitive justice.

One can trace the origins of much of the social injustice in South African HE to the imposition of modernity/coloniality by European settlers and their descendants, which the decolonial project seeks to address. Coloniality refers to “the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist world-system” (Grosfoguel, 2011: 14-15). What MIC100 seeks to achieve, can be located within the decolonial project in that:

[t]he decolonial project aims to foreground subjugated knowledge, creative and intellectual foundations in the “global South” and within the margins of the “global North” (Rodríguez, 2010: 59).

Therefore, I am of the view that the extent to which MIC100 stands as a socially just curriculum is closely related to the extent to which decolonization is achieved in the course. The literature review below engages more thoroughly with these key concepts.

1.6 Problem statement

How to realise social justice by decolonizing the curriculum in Mzansi’s HEIs has been explored mostly, if not entirely, within institutions inherited from the colonial and apartheid eras. If we do not monitor the new universities, we might miss the chance to foster a decolonial education, and allow coloniality to thrive.

The establishment of UMP may be a response to the redistribution dimension of justice, but one cannot measure the recognition dimension simply by establishing a new university or by increasing physical access to higher education. Being new does not automatically free a university from coloniality and its darker side, which is Western modernity (Mignolo, 2011;

Quijano, 2000). This study will explore the extent to which UMP's MIC100 responds to the recognition aspect of justice in the South African HE environment by focusing on the problem of coloniality in its curriculum.

1.7 Rationale

Coloniality has tampered with and constrained the participation of black people in educational and epistemic processes. As decolonial scholars have pointed out, facilitating black people's ability to participate in the field of knowledge production in ways that are fair to them is an act of justice. Therefore, I am convinced that the problem of coloniality is one of social justice.

MIC100 exists within a problematic settler-colonial society (Veracini, 2011). This is because the colonial structure on which South African academia was established "has not been redressed in post-apartheid in any serious way" (Le Grange, 2016: 5). There is a pressing need for SA universities to be decolonised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Mamdani, 2019; Njamnjoh, 2012). Therefore, an inquiry into a new institution such as UMP provides an opportunity to interrogate the extent to which coloniality – colonial structures and relations – still impacts on a new, post-apartheid university's ability to adopt a clean-slate approach. Moreover, in the case of UMP, MIC100 provides an opportunity to explore the possibility of new approaches and models for decolonizing and transforming the curriculum. Hence, I explore and report on MIC100 as an exemplar of what is possible in the pursuit of decoloniality and social justice.

Since coloniality affects all aspects of life (Grosfoguel 2011), the problem of coloniality in South African academia, particularly HEIs, is linked to the broader colonial problem in South African society. However, this research will focus on academia due to its central place in knowledge production.

The University of Mpumalanga implicates itself in the decolonial question by seeking 'Africanness' in its vision. The university aspires "[t]o be an African University leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation" (UMP, 2019: 12). The 'development' agenda further implicates UMP in modernity, which decolonial scholars such as Grosfoguel (2011) argue is the other side of the coloniality coin (Grosfoguel, 2011: 13). The problem with 'development', according to decolonial scholars, is that it echoes Eurocentrism. It tends to prescribe a single (European) developmental path that all should follow. In other words, "the fallacy of developmentalism consists in thinking that the path of Europe's modern development must be followed unilaterally by every other culture" (Dussel, 1993: 67-68).

However, the West sometimes forgets the history of its own ‘development’, because the colonized have always had a role and agency in modernity. It is worth noting that “modernity was, almost from the start, a North–South collaboration—indeed, a world-historical production—albeit a sharply asymmetrical one” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2015: 116). The research will therefore foreground and complicate the paradoxes involved in the desire to be modern. This is necessary because UMP is an institution that seeks Africanness as part of its identity while also wishing to participate in modernity. Given the argument that modernity is “both a singularity and a plurality” (ibid.: 120), this research represents an opportunity to explore how UMP navigates the different realisations of modernities in a postcolonial context.

UMP’s vision raises the question of what it means to be an ‘African’ university in a postcolonial context. Several scholars have already tried to determine what an African university should look like. About five decades ago, Ajayi proposed that an African university is one that finds its relevance by being immersed in the local realities of African people (1973: 12). More recently, for Le Grange the process proposed by Ajayi – of legitimising the realities of local people who have been historically marginalised by the academy – is an exercise towards social justice (2016: 3). According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, “[a]n African university as opposed to a university in Africa must be a centre of ecologies of knowledges” (2013: 49). Following Ndlovu-Gatsheni, clearly there are many universities in Africa, particularly South Africa, but can they be seen as African? I argue that the gap between a university being in Africa and the same university being African depends on how such a university responds to the problem of coloniality. The case of UMP, therefore, presents an opportunity to engage with these conceptions of an African university.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Ajayi, and Le Grange frame the *idea* of an ‘African’ university as a socially just institution. Since UMP is a post-apartheid university without a colonial and apartheid history, MIC100 provides a rare chance to explore the *practical* application of steps towards realising such ideals by interrogating the implications of the “decolonial option” (Mignolo and Escobar, 2010). Findings from this study, it is hoped, will furnish the higher education sector with an example of options for decolonizing university curricula. The study, and its findings, will contribute to the struggles and debates already expressed in South Africa’s public universities.

1.8 Aims & objectives of the study

The objectives towards reaching this aim are as follows:

1. To locate the question of social justice in higher education within the decolonial project.
2. To locate the University of Mpumalanga within the coloniality that overshadows higher education in Mzansi in order to explore how the institution navigates such coloniality.
3. To locate the MIC100 curriculum within the context of social justice and decoloniality by linking the course to the preceding objectives.

1.9 Structure of the dissertation

Most of the chapters that follow emerged directly from the data analysis. I elected to report on the key themes from the data as separate chapters, rather than summarising them only as ‘findings’. I chose this route due to the elaborate nature of the data, which warrants dedicated space to unpack each key theme. This choice also fosters analytical distinctiveness. Nevertheless, the chapters can and should still be read in relation to each other.

Chapter Two – ndzi fambe njani? (Methodology): In xiTsonga, after someone has taken a journey, there is a greeting that checks in about the journey, where the question ‘ufambe njani’, meaning ‘how did you go?’ is asked. The respondent (the person who took the journey) then responds by narrating their journey. ‘Ndzi’ means ‘I’, thus, ‘ndzi fambe njani’ will be a narrative of the journey that I took to fulfil the study. This is what is ordinarily known as the **methodology**. In the methodology chapter I unpack the details of the steps I took towards this research. I explain the type of study, as well as the types of methods that I used. I also explain the types of data and how they were collected and analyzed.

Chapter Three – Indlela kulabaphambili (Literature review and conceptual framework): the siNguni proverb ‘indlela ibuzwa kwabaphambili’ means the route is known from those who have taken the journey. Hence, the literature review and conceptual framework chapter is my consultation with those who have taken a similar journey because they have dealt with and thought about the issues raised in this study. It is from kulabaphambili that I bring out the main conceptual framework that I have used in this research. The chapter looks at the question of coloniality and its impact on education. I also review scholarship on social justice in order to relate it to education in general and higher education in particular. I use scholarship on curriculum to frame the MIC100 case study. The chapter also touches on subareas such as ubuntu, and language justice.

Chapter Four – Masungulo ya⁵ UMP: this chapter, which is mostly based on documentary data, explores the background and early stages leading to the establishment of UMP. The chapter

⁵ XiTsonga for ‘the beginning of’.

examines some key decisions and relevant policies that the government and UMP's inaugural leadership relied on to establish the institution.

Chapter Five – UMP's discursive trajectory: a thematic analysis: This chapter, which is also based on documentary data, discusses UMP's self-representation, i.e. the ways in which the university speaks about itself in official documents. The thematic analysis unpacks UMP's position in relation to issues of social justice and decoloniality.

Chapter Six – MIC100 Curriculum: This chapter assesses the MIC100 Curriculum by approaching it from different perspectives. The chapter takes a twofold approach, namely descriptive and analytical. The descriptive aspect summarises the material that makes up MIC100, while the analytical aspect uses theory to interpret the students' responses, in particular how they received the curriculum. The analysis of students' experiences in MIC100 then continues into chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10 in ways that delve into the key themes, as captured below.

Chapter Seven – Ubuntu: This chapter looks at the key theme of ubuntu, which emerged from the data. The chapter discusses ways in which the concept of ubuntu was used to further social justice in MIC100. The chapter also evaluates the implications of ubuntu against what we imagine is the purpose of the contemporary university.

Chapter Eight – Coloniality Through Linguistic Hierarchies: This chapter sets the context for the next chapter, discusses traces of coloniality that manifest through language attitudes in South Africa, and considers the implication of these language issues for UMP.

Chapter Nine – Translanguaging in MIC100: This chapter reports on the translanguaging practices that were implemented in MIC100. Using examples from the classroom, student assessments, and students' course review data, the chapter shows the ways in which translanguaging contributed to social justice in the course.

Chapter Ten – Feeling Ayoba! (a boost of self-esteem): This chapter assesses the impact on students' self-esteem through their engagement in MIC100. The chapter interprets the data against one of the challenges of coloniality, which is the generally low levels of confidence experienced by the colonized. Thus, I will use the students' responses to discuss the potential of a decolonial curriculum to respond to the issue of a colonized peoples' negative self-image.

Chapter Eleven – Recommendations and Conclusion: This closing chapter consolidates the research findings and offers recommendations based on my overall impressions of the case study.

Appendices – The appendices contain some of the documents referred to in the chapters. It contains only those documents needed to make sense of the dissertation. Documents such as policy frameworks are not included. Therefore, the appendices comprise:

1. Interview Schedule for MIC100 Lecturers
2. Interview Schedule for MIC100 Students
3. MIC100 Course Outline
4. MIC100 Weekly Programme
5. Sample of Self-description Assignment

1.10 My non-neutrality

I hold the view that who I am, where I come from, and what I have experienced, matter for the study that I undertook, particularly for the kind of analysis that I conducted and the arguments that I make in the dissertation. Moreover, some of my lifeworld has struggled to find adequate expression in the process of this study and of writing. From a decolonial perspective, it is important that I bring out my locus of enunciation and demonstrate its impact on my approach. By locus of enunciation, I mean what decolonial scholars refer to as “the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks” (Grosfoguel, 2011: 5). For purposes of locating myself in relation to this study and defining my locus of enunciation, I explicitly include culture. The cultural, in my context, includes language and religion.

Ngingumjita wase Afrika, ngimnyama. Ngitalwe, ngaphindze ngakhulela la eMzansi. Fede ngingumAfrika lotichenyako, futsi ngingumzalwane losindziswe yiNkhosi Jeso Khresto.

Labanye labangikhulisile bekutinyanga – magriza lotala make namagriza lotala babe. Kuneskhatsi lapho ngeliviki linye bengivayela tinkholo letihlukahlukene: everyday uma ngingekho esgila, bengilekelela Gogo LaNkuna ngespani sakhle sebunyanga. Bengimsita ngetintfo letifana nekutolika, kushaya tingomane, nalokunye nalokunye. Bese ngabo Tuesday and Wednesday bengiya emadras, labekusgila sema-Muslim. Hayi ke, ngeLisontfo bengiya ekerk. Lokuba yinxenye yetinkholo letihlukahlukene kungente ngacava kutsi no man, ileve ihlangahlangene blind ngendlela lesingeke siy’cedze ngekwenyama. Ngakho ngibona ngatsi ngeku naka kwenyama kuphela siluza lokunyenti lesingakhoni kukubona nga see, lokunje

ngekwe moya. Sibese sinciphisa lukhono lwetfu lekwakha i-verstan. That's why ke kule-PhD ngine jive ngalobungamla lobengamele umgelezo ne-verstan.

Fede, letenkholo lenginitjele ngato ekucaleni tisuka ekutseni ngizule ngahlala etindzaweni letihlukahlukene, lapho bekutfolakala khona tonkhe letinkholo. Ngihleli eL'phisa, boZwelisha, Cork, Poriki, naseKapa. Letindzawo le bengihlala kuto tibese tiba nemtselela elwimini lami, ku-belong-a kwami, nangendlela ngidenka ngayo indzaba ye-development, nalokunye nalokunye.

Sibuye kulenzaba ye-taal. Lokuzula kwami kungente ngangabi ne-taal ley-one or stayela se-taal lesihlala samukelwe van die one. Umzekelo, xiChangane lexi ndzi nga xi dyondza eJoni, ndzi xi dyondzise hiswaku andzi tshama navanhu vakuhuma eMzambiki, lava ava tele ntirho eJoni. So loko se ndzivulavula xiChangane lexi exikolweni xale Mpumalanga, an hlekiwa, van bwela swaku ni munhu wale handle. Hi marito manwani, xiChangane xa mehe axin yendla ndzi nga yamukeleki kamachangane yala Mzansi. Kambe xiChangane lexi ahi xi dyondza exgila a xinga fani na lexi axi khulumiwa katiko leri an tshama karohe eMpumalanga. Futhi ni swi kume kola kaPhD swaku Xitsonga lexi xa le bukwini xi tlhlanganisiwe hi vavhangeli vale Switzerland, lava avalava kutolika bibeke hi xiTsonga. Ngenca yesbongo sel'thaima, kutsiwa l'lwim lami siSwati, nanoma mine ngitikhulumela imix-masala. So li-olady belis' khulumisa ngel' lwimi lababe. The time ngigeleza eJozi, 'i-home language' yami beku siZulu. SiZulu ng' lelinye letilwimi les'bhaca ngato ekubandlululweni ngebuhlanga nangebuve eJozi. Ngakho ke, lomlandvo wemalwimi lengikhule ngawo ubalulekile ngobe unemtselela kulendlela lengicabanga ngayo – angicabangi ngendlela lecondzile. Futsi kute lulwimi leliy' one lengitotsi fede fede ngispanisa lona. Lo mlandvo lengiw' fake lana wemalwimi, unemtselela kulendlela lengihlatiya ngayo kulel' phenyo. Lama-chapter e-language kule PhD aveta kabanzi lokuhlanga-hlangana kwelulwimi mayelana nale-case study. Noma loluphenyo lungasi mayelanala nemlandvo wam we taal, lomlandvo ubalulekile endleleni lengiveta ngayo tincazelo kulol'phenyo. Lukhono lwami lwetilwimi lebe nekubaluleka endleleni lingichumana ngato nebafundzi, nasendleleni lengiphenye ngayo la.

Mayelana nendlela lengicabanga ngayo nge development ne modernity, la ngichamuka khona kube nemtselela endleleni lengicabanga ngayo ngentfutuko. Ngicabanga ngentfutuko ngendlela lengavumelani kakhulu ne-Euromodernity” (Dei, 2012) – ngijula grand grand kule-concept lapha ku-literature review. Umzekelo, kuhlala naboThokoza kungente ngabona mense

labafuna intuthuko ngetindlela letifuna bake bahlukane nemagugu emhlaba. Kepha nami ngitikhanda sengikhanuka magugu emhlaba ngenxa yesgila, i-kerk, ne-media.

Nanome kutfutfuka nge kwesingamla kungaveta tinyanga njengebantfu labaswele ngenca yekungalandzeli magugu emhlaba, mine ngibone magriza lotala make aphila ileve lehle kundlula bonkhe bantfu lengike ngadibana nabo. Ngekwe singamla bekangaka gelezi, kepha ikhalenda bekayati blind, neti nje ngekubuka imvelo – tinkanyeti, inyeti, njalo njalo. Magogo bekavamise kutfolana tigulane letingalapheki etibhedlela tes'lungu, letifaka ekhatsi nabo Bara lekusibhedlela sekugelezisa. Ngicaphele kutsi loku bebangigelezisa kona esgila bekungachazi kutsi magriza ukhona njani kulapha bantfu, nalaba labahlule tibhedlela.

Ngiphuma emndenini lophuphako. Maphupho bekuyi ncenye yetindlela tekwati kagogo. Ngisase primary, njalo ekuseni besivuka sichazelane maphupho. Ka-baie maphupho etfu bekahlangene netintfo letentakala in real life. Kusobala kutsi loku kube nemtselela endleleni lengibona ngayo lwati. Sengize ngicabanga kutsi sine kutishaya-shaya ngalendlela lesakha ngayo lwati kutemfundvo yesingamla – futsi ng'bona ngatsi kusayoba so size siyekele kwakha lwati ngendlela yabongamla kuphela. Even nale-PhD, sengiyabhala nje, but not ngemoya wam wonke ngoba ilandzela indlela letse tfi!

An English translation of the above:

I am an African male who is racially classified as black. I was born and raised in South Africa. I am a proud African who subscribes to the Christian religion, and I believe myself to be saved by Yeshua Christos.

I was partly raised by my paternal and maternal grandmothers, both traditional healers. There was a point in my upbringing when some of my weekly activities were as follows: daily, outside of school hours, I would help my grandmother with traditional healing activities such as translating for her clients, playing drums, and all other tasks associated with her healing practice; on Tuesdays or Wednesdays I would go to madrassa, which is a Muslim school; then on Sundays I would go to a Christian church. One of the consequences of this multi-religious exposure is that I am convinced that life is deeper and more complex than we can comprehend in the physical realm alone. I believe that by focusing only on what is perceptible to our physical human senses, we miss many other dimensions of existence that should be contributing to our processes of meaning-making. Hence, my struggle with this PhD to communicate my ideas through academic means that are deeply embedded in Eurocentric linear 'logic'. The process of writing the dissertation is detached from the ways in which I was

raised to deal with knowledge – a blend of oral traditions and spirituality – which hardly finds expression in academic modes of enquiry, such as the current PhD study.

The religious background I have described above was possible due to my geographical location, for I lived in areas where all these religious beliefs and institutions were accessible. My geographical location also influenced important factors, including my language practice, sense of belonging, and my conception of ‘development’.

In the context of language, my moving to different parts of the country meant that I did not have one language or dialect that was ever fully accepted as the right language. For example, the xiTsonga that I learnt while in Gauteng was because I lived with and around migrant workers, many of whom came from Mozambique. When I spoke this dialect in Mpumalanga in the community and in school, I was reminded that my dialect was foreign. Thus, my legitimacy as a South African was questioned. Yet the xiTsonga that I learnt at school was also divorced from the one that the community I lived with in Mpumalanga spoke. Interestingly, I found out through this PhD that the xiTsonga in the books is an outcome of Swiss Missionaries who coded the language using Swiss orthography to translate the bible for use by vaTsonga. Due to my father’s surname, I have been told that I am mSwati, regardless of my actual language practice. Our mother spoke with us in the language of our father. When I went to the schools in Gauteng my ‘home language’ at school was isiZulu. This is also one of the languages of survival against xenophobia and tribalism in Gauteng.

As a social scientist, my language background has sophisticated how I think, which is not necessarily linear, and I do not necessarily operate neatly within any specific language. This language background also influences the kinds of analysis I undertake in this study. The chapters on language will bring out some of these language complications in the context of the case study. Although the study is not about my own language background and practice, my linguistic locus of enunciation is a significant factor in how I make meaning in the study. This language background has shaped my pedagogic relations with students, and the type of data I was able to collect and analyze.

My locus of enunciation has also complicated my conception of ‘development’ and ‘modernity’, as I have been exposed to configurations of human ‘development’ that do not always conform to standards of “Euromodernity” (Dei, 2012) – a concept which I discuss in detail in the literature review. For example, being surrounded by traditional healers exposed me to people who sought ‘development’ in ways that often required them to detach to some

extent from material possessions. On the other hand, I have often longed for Euromodernity, which the education system, the church, and the media have all encouraged.

While traditional healers, at least the ones I have been surrounded by, could be considered by Western developmental standards to be ‘lacking’ in modern development and material possessions, I found my maternal grandmother to be one of the most functional human beings I have ever encountered. She ‘lacked’ Western education, and thus would be considered illiterate, yet she had a profound sense of the calendar, which she based on her observation of the environment, including the stars and the moon. She has often received patients whose illness could not be treated at ‘Western’ hospitals such as Chris Hani Baragwanath academic hospital in Gauteng. I often observed that what I was taught at school could not explain how Gogo (grandmother) could successfully heal people, including those who returned home unhealed by Western institutions.

I am also from a family of dreamers. Dreaming was part of Gogo’s epistemic configurations. During my primary school days, almost every day we would narrate our dreams to each other in the household. Very often, our dreams would have connections with things that would happen in ‘real life’. This locus of enunciation influenced my own epistemic configuration, to the extent that I am convinced that how we approach knowledge in academia is limiting – and I think it will be so for as long as we insist on following the Western epistemic script.

1.11 Implications of my positionality for the research

The above background is not all there is to who I am and where I come from, but I have summarised it here to help a reader who might have questions about some of the issues emerging in this dissertation. One challenge I foresee is the question of citations, because some of the knowledge I have is tacit, and has no particular ‘academic’ source. Thus, my locus of enunciation is part of my ‘literature’, for the former hold memories and knowledge that may not fit well into Western forms of rationality and the established rules, procedures, principles and texts that make up the ‘Western canon’. This Western form of rationality of which I am critical includes an over-reliance on writing itself and the language of such writing (‘academic English’), which is detached from my ordinary lived reality. Moreover, I also find that official library knowledge generally validates the ‘Western canon’, while a great deal of knowledge systems from my locus of enunciation lies on the periphery of academic inquiry. While I will, for purposes of fulfilling the requirements of the PhD, be guided by the academic instruments that I have chosen, including the choice of methodology, I am convinced that some of these instruments and approaches to knowledge production cannot adequately facilitate epistemic

processes that comprehend most of the human experience concerning the different subjectivities and loci of enunciations in which we exist – including spiritual loci. Some of the dangers of following the Western hegemonic logic towards knowledge production are explained by Walter Mignolo as follows:

By locating knowledge in the mind only, and bracketing ‘secondary qualities’ (affects, emotions, desires, anger, humiliation, etc.), social actors who happened to be white, inhabiting Europe/Western Christendom and speaking specific languages assumed that what was right for them in that place and which fulfilled their affects, emotions, fears and angers was indeed valid for the rest of the planet and, consequently, that they were the depositor, warrantor, creator and distributor of universal knowledge (2009: 177).

I am, therefore, wary that the fulfilment of academic modes of enquiry, particularly in an institution that is implicated in coloniality risks the perpetuation of “Eurocentrism as the hegemonic perspective of knowledge” (Quijano, 2000: 542). This does not mean that the study of how to move towards a socially just and decolonized curriculum is pointless. As the case study will demonstrate, MIC100 shows that it is possible to open up academia to ways of thinking, being, and doing that coloniality has marginalised.

Decolonial theory makes a case for a researcher to be explicitly present in their own research. For instance, Mignolo argues that “in order to call into question the modern/colonial foundation of the control of knowledge, it is necessary to focus on the knower rather than on the known” (2009: 162). While this research is not focused mainly on me, I intentionally bring myself into focus, to avoid the Eurocentric pretence of neutrality in knowledge production. One of the implications of embracing my presence in my own research and writing will be the direct link of this dissertation to myself, as opposed to ‘the researcher’. Thus, I write in the first person. I also come from a rich heritage of storytelling, which forms part of my enunciation in this dissertation.

1.12 Some of my experiences in academia

Here I discuss briefly personal experiences that have shaped this research project. This minor discussion is also a continuation of my locus of enunciation that I described above.

My first experience of profound depression was in 2009, the year in which I came to the University of Cape Town (UCT) for my undergraduate degree. Throughout all the suffering I had been through, including being discriminated against as a child due to my skin colour and my language, I never thought I would one day be suicidal. But the year 2009 made that a reality. I do not think UCT was solely to blame for my depression, but upon reflection, I have been

able to confirm that the institution was a key player. Never have I felt so much inadequacy on a daily basis until my university days, especially in my first year.

I spent the first semester of my first year searching for other opportunities to study in the Western Cape. I was convinced that I would not succeed academically at UCT. I even attended the workshops on how to deal with academic exclusion in advance before I even wrote any exam. I could not bear the thought of going back home, to the dry and government-forsaken village of Cork in Mpumalanga. So, I was building a plan, that if I failed at UCT, the following year I would not crash my family's dreams as they would still see me leave home when varsity opened, and I would still be going eKapa⁶ – which for them is a place that represents many of our hopes.

1.12.1 O-Week⁷

Orientation was fun. I could mix with white people, and others who seemed closer to whiteness. I could show them that I danced better. I also connected well with other black students, especially from South Africa, regardless of their language – besides English and Afrikaans. Thus, in the dining hall and the Jammie Shuttles⁸, I was thriving. My cultural capital was working for me – what could go wrong? However, when registration time came, and I needed to choose courses, I realised that my cultural capital could not help me. Until the departmental presentations that were part of what I found to be information overload, I had no idea what anthropologists and sociologists did. I had read about these careers in the prospectus, but they still did not make much sense. All the formally educated people that I had access to had careers as teachers, nurses, drivers, etc. In fact, I did not think I would need their input because I had made up my mind about studying Film Production. I thought I would study towards actually making films, as this linked with my interests in storytelling. However, students could only get into the Film and Media Production stream in their second year, upon completion of an acceptable project for evaluation. Thus, a first-year student in the Film and Media department had to enrol in Film and Media Studies, alongside courses from other departments to make up the minimum number of courses required for a minimum of two majors. I ended up enrolling in three majors namely, Film and Television Studies, Media and Writing, and Drama. These still resonated with my interest in storytelling and performance.

⁶The Cape Town city in South Africa is colloquially referred to as eKapa. This is localised word the is derived from the Afrikaans 'Kaaip'.

⁷ Orientation week, which comprises of the first two weeks of university before classes start.

⁸ The official buses of the University of Cape Town.

1.12.2 Nonrecognition at undergraduate level

In my first-year classes, I was shocked to witness the way white students and more ‘affluent’ students from other races, including black, interacted with lecturers and debated with them confidently. On the other hand, I struggled with hearing lecturers – the amount of English was deafening for me. Moreover, examples that were used in class were often divorced from my reality and that of other black students with whom I shared some cultural background. In one class discussion on Television Drama, a lecturer asked for examples of programmes we were familiar with that could be part of the discussion, but I could not relate to the majority of the content mentioned by fellow students. A black friend of mine whispered to me a series that I also grew up watching – *Emzini Wezinsizwa*. I then encouraged him to raise his hand and contribute with that example. He raised his hand, and the lecturer pointed to him so he could speak, and my friend said with a big smile, “*Emzini Wezinsizwa*”. The lecturer kept saying “what? come again?”, and my friend’s confidence kept dropping as he repeated the name of the series. When the lecturer finally got the name, he did not engage with the series as part of the class discussion – my suspicion is that the lecturer did not know what that series was. But such a series exists, people who watch them attend these classes, and we sit on the sidelines of class discussions. What also became clear in these classes was that a significant amount of the film and television content that was used in the curriculum relied on students having access to cinemas or DSTV⁹. But some of us had no such access, so we grew up watching the free content that was available to us.

In terms of film discussions, I was hearing about the majority of the films for the first time in class. However, I was amazed that some students, especially white and the ‘affluent’ black students, knew about these films. It then struck me that I had never been to a cinema my entire life, except for a handful of *bioskop*¹⁰ experiences where we watched Van Damme at school or religious content at a church crusade. But during class, it felt like the problem was me. I felt like I did not meet the needs of the curriculum. I know many other films and television content that my family could access for free, but the curriculum engaged with little of it. I could have related to the likes of *Hlala Kwabafuleyo*, as opposed to *The Sopranos*. I used to hear about this and thought it was a music show, because the only soprano I knew was for singing. If I had

⁹ A paid-for/subscription satellite television provider in Mzansi.

¹⁰ While ‘bioskoop’ means ‘cinema’ in Afrikaans, in the townships and villages *bioskops* were organised in venues such as schools, churches, etc and would often show films that were dated. In terms of language use, while the two words mean the same thing in different languages, it was clear in our use that ‘bioskop’ and ‘cinema’ represented different phenomena – the latter referring to the more affluent experience found in towns and cities.

been given the opportunity I would have gone to the cinema to catch up with students who were prepared for this throughout their upbringing, but I had no money

At the Drama Department, my experience was similar. What stood out for me was the amount of group work, but this required a lot of cultural reference points which I did not have. One of these was language, which linked elements such as songs, proverbs, etc. to which I could not relate. In one of our group works, the nursery rhyme *Ring a Ring o' Roses* was used. At least half the participants sang along as though they knew it. I, on the other hand, longed for *Black Mampatile*¹¹ and the likes. I could have suggested the ones I preferred, but because the problem was me and not them, I had to assimilate quick-quick.

1.12.3 Black Label on the radio

As part of the extramural facilities, UCT had a radio station, for which I auditioned, and I was successful. On my show, I did not speak the English of UCT, and my music selection and the rest of my content did not reflect the culture that was valued at the institution. However, weeks after starting my show, a station manager was hired and he brought some 'professional' standards. The Indian station manager was not happy with my show, because of my language and he threatened to fire me, unless I spoke 'proper' English. In one of our review meetings, he said to me "you sound like you are sitting around a crate of Black Label¹² with your friends in the kasi¹³". This warning and threat meant a lot as I appreciated the fact that working at the radio station could also help me with my studies in media, as well as forging a career in the media and arts industry. It is beyond the scope of this section to detail the radio experience. Suffice it to say that I was not fired because my show turned out to be one of the most listened-to shows on the station in 2009 and onward. But it was interesting that most of my listeners who called in did not speak the English of UCT. They spoke in Tsotsitaal, isiXhosa, and other local languages, and some of them were not even UCT students. The show contributed to opening up UCT to the black community. It was through my radio show and the listeners that I interacted with that I learnt about communities and places where I had never been, which are around UCT, such as Langa, Gugulethu, and Khayelitsha. My show later grew so much that some of my guests included the likes DJ Sbu¹⁴, the late Pro Kid¹⁵, Black Motion,¹⁶ and others

¹¹ This is one of the childhood games we played in rural areas and townships. It is not a song in the strong musical sense, but a call and response during 'hide and seek'.

¹² Black Label is South Africa's cheapest beer that is widely found in townships and rural areas.

¹³ Kasi means township.

¹⁴ An award-winning media personality, musician and businessman celebrated amongst the black community.

¹⁵ An award-winning vernacular rapper.

¹⁶ An award winning house music duo that blends electronic (DJ) music, with traditional drums.

who are appreciated in the black communities across Mzansi¹⁷. The struggle I faced at the station mirrored the one I faced in my courses.

While I found ways to assert myself on the campus radio, this proved to be difficult in my studies. For the studies, I had internalised the ‘fact’ that I was the problem at UCT, thus, I needed to assimilate, or fail.

1.12.4 To be or not to be inspired?

In the third and final year of my Drama major, our main project was a research essay on a director or playwright who inspired us as students. I found this task to be exciting. However, we were given a list of directors and playwrights to choose from, and the list was exclusionary for me. The list contained names such as Grotowski, Stanislavski, Shakespeare, and Brett Bailey, all of whom were dealt with during the degree. I could not relate to the list. Although I did not come from a theatre background in the manner that the curriculum would typically conceptualize ‘theatre’, I still came from a background that is rich in performance and storytelling. I raised my concern with the teaching staff, particularly the fact that the list did not have black practitioners to whom I could hopefully relate. I could not claim to be inspired by any of the white males on the list. I was told that not much was written about black practitioners – an argument which I do not have space to discuss here. Suffice it to say, while thinking on my feet, I asked the staff member, “what about Mbongeni Ngema¹⁸ for example”? I was told that if I could find work that is written about him, I could use him for my research. The university library only contained his biography (Jones, 1994), and there was no significant information about Ngema’s techniques as an artist, but more about his life circumstances. However, I still used Ngema for my final Drama research project and received a good mark.

I am happy that I made this choice at the Drama Department, but it was not given to me. I had to fight and create it. Another way to put this is that, when the choices of theatre practitioners to be used in the assignment were drawn up, students such as myself were not accounted for, and their lifeworlds were excluded. There was no recognition, thus no parity of participation for us. While I celebrate having been able to make the choice I made, I became seriously concerned for students who might not always be able to challenge the academic system the

¹⁷ A colloquial name for ‘South Africa’ from isNguni languages such as isiZulu and siSwati. SA is officially also called in all the other official languages, so the official name of the country in these languages is ‘Mzansi Afrika’.

¹⁸ Mbongeni Ngema is a writer and director who created some of the most widely known South African productions in theatre, music, and film. He co-created the internationally renowned anti-apartheid musical *Sarafina* (1987) and the 1992 film version.

way I did. In fact, in other departments I still could not challenge this system. In a fair context, students should not have to always challenge the system. I came back to study towards my Honours in Drama – I had gained some confidence in that department.

1.12.5 My 'formal' entry to the decolonial mission

My experience as a UCT student later informed the topic of my Master's mini-research, in which I "problematise the concept of inclusivity and decoloniality" (Mona, 2019: 317) at UCT, with a focus on the Humanities faculty. While studying for my Master's, I worked as a Teaching Assistant at the Humanities Education Development Unit (HUMEDU), where I had the opportunity to join the Decolonizing Pedagogies in the Humanities research team. I was also a member of the committee that established the first undergraduate major in African Studies at UCT. These curriculum-related activities in which I was involved highlighted several issues of inclusion and exclusion. One of these issues is that inclusion in a colonial educational context does not happen passively. I learnt that conscious effort is needed to design curricula that will include marginalised groups. Since then, it has been my quest to explore different ways in which curriculum practices can redress exclusions that result from coloniality. This quest is underpinned, *inter alia*, by the question: who is the imagined student for the university that is in Africa?

1.12.6 My involvement in MIC100

In 2019, I started in my position as a Lecturer at the UMP, and I was tasked to co-teach in MIC100. Against the personal background that I unpacked above, this opportunity felt more like a calling than a job. I was excited to apply what I thought I had learnt as necessary to provide an education that affirms the African child. The first few months quickly demonstrated practically what decolonial theory means by coloniality. The university is new. No colonial history. No apartheid history. It is located in Mpumalanga, *la kwasala khona inkaba yami*. Over 90% of the students are black South Africans. However, all of these factors did not entail an absence of coloniality. So, to do what I thought should be normal, entailed being an anomaly – like walking into class, saying 'sanibonani', *bese ngiyagelezisa* (which is to teach). *yho*, the shock on student's faces! I had to learn that I am in a battle here. A battle to gain their trust so that they consider me as a legitimate lecturer, yet I also wanted to demonstrate that bodies who look and sound Mzansi Afrikan can also produce and disseminate knowledge. So there was pushback against my non-conformity. But as the semester unfolds, and interpersonal relationships are established, more students called me 'bhuti', 'mnaka' and 'malume', and African languages became more of a norm in class. This experience taught me that the colonial

script is real, even in establishments that do not have a colonial history. Operating outside the script is tiring, often embarrassing and presents risk of credibility. But there is a peace outside the script, and it is this peace that helped me navigate these entanglements.

1.13 Conclusion

The above combination of introduction and background outlines what this dissertation is about, details the structure that it will take. In terms of the background, I contextualised South Africa's higher education system in relation to the quest for social justice. The background was linked to the problem statement and the rationale of the study. In a manner that is not conventional for a dissertation, I detailed some of my lived experiences, which I believe have implications for the research I was able to undertake as well as the production of this dissertation. I do this partly as a protest against the exclusions that people like me have faced in academia. This exclusion is so pervasive that one can even exclude oneself in one's own work. At this point, my reader is very likely aware of my language use, which reflects the dynamism which I brought with me to this study, including the framework of inganekwane, which is siNguni for storytelling. My reader will find aspects of this framework throughout this dissertation. While this dissertation works towards the fulfilment of my PhD qualification, I offer it as a contribution to a broader conversation and struggle for justice in the educational sector, particularly for Africans.

Chapter 2: Ndzi fambe njani? (Methodology)

2.1 Introduction

In xiTsonga, after someone has taken a journey, there is a greeting that checks in about the journey, where the question ‘ufambe njani’, meaning ‘how did you go?’, is asked. The respondent (the person who took the journey) then responds by narrating their journey. ‘Ndzi’ means ‘I’, thus, ‘ndzi fambe njani’ is a narrative of the journey that I took towards fulfilling this PhD project. This is what is ordinarily known as the **methodology**. In this methodology chapter, I unpack the details of the steps I took towards this PhD research project. The methodology should be read within the context of my personal locus of enunciation, which I outlined in the introductory chapter. Here I explain the type of study, and the types of methods that were used. I also explain the choices I made regarding the data and my analysis thereof.

While the study is framed through decolonial theory, it was neither intended to critique nor advocate for any methodology. Hence, methodological, resources from different approaches are borrowed and adapted for the study. My use of the borrowed resources was not uncritical in terms of the biases of knowledge production, some of which I point out in the literature review. However, the focus of this research is more on pedagogy than knowledge production or research methods.

2.2 Research design

The research took the form of an “extended case method” (Burawoy, 1998), which is described as follows:

The extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the “micro” to the “macro,” and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on preexisting theory (ibid.: 5).

I combined Burawoy’s method with Patton’s qualitative method of “program evaluation” (2015) to a limited extent. Program evaluation is defined as:

... the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming (Patton, 2015: 62).

I use Patton aware that this study does not directly seek to fulfill some of the aims that characterise Patton’s definition, such as programme improvement. However, Patton is nonetheless helpful, particularly by offering an analytical framework. For instance, Patton provides for the handling of “qualitative data”, which are interviews, observations, and

fieldwork, as well as documents (Patton, 2015: 56). My data sets comprise those listed by Patton.

In terms of the ethnographic aspect of the study, I was also a participant observer, although with a different role from that of students who were the main ‘informants’.

The extended case method enabled me to explore what one might learn about MIC100 that could contribute to decoloniality and social justice in higher education, in other words, what one could generalise from the unique case (Burawoy, 1998) of MIC100. In terms of Buroway’s connection between present and past, the university in which MIC100 is located was established as a response to an unjust past. Thus, MIC100 provides an opportunity to imagine a more socially just and decolonial future in higher education.

2.3 Research sample

The main data, in the form of student course reviews, was collected for the years 2019 and 2020. The course had approximately 400 students enrolled in each of the two years from which the reviews were taken. The enrolment figures increased every year, with 780 students in 2022. Since MIC100 is a first-year course, the average student came straight from high school. A typical MIC100 student is a black African who comes from a working-class background, and is most likely a first-generation university student. Since MIC100 is a common course, students enrolled in it were studying towards different qualifications: Diploma in Hospitality, Diploma in Nature Conservation, Bachelor of Development Studies, and Bachelor of Arts, though only students who enrolled in Culture and Heritage Studies as part of their Bachelor of Arts courses took MIC100. For the above qualification streams, MIC100 was compulsory.

In 2019, 136 students submitted their reviews, while in 2020 the submissions increased to 236, resulting in a total of 372 submissions. Almost all the reviews were positive in terms of both my questions, and the main review question – which appears below. Given the large number of reviews, I conducted a preliminary selection guided by my overarching research question: could MIC100 be an example of a socially just and decolonized curriculum? I carried out the selection by undertaking a preliminary overview of the reviews, which reduced the quantum to those that engaged with the review task more thoroughly and vigorously. Thus, the number of reviews was narrowed down to 154 (72 from 2019 and 82 from 2020).

In addition to the reviews, I invited students who had enrolled in MIC100 during 2019 and those who were enrolled in 2020 to participate directly in the study through interviews and focus groups. However, this effort was blocked by COVID-19 when the campus was closed,

and students had to return to their homes. Only 25 students replied to the call while they were away from campus. Consent forms were sent to those who replied. However, only 12 returned consent forms. Since the uncertainties of COVID-19 took longer than we had anticipated, the 12 students who returned their consent forms were sent interview questionnaires to complete. Of the 12, only 10 returned their questionnaires.

2.4 Data collection methods

2.4.1 Student course reviews

The main data comprised the 2019 and 2020 student course reviews that students wrote about their experience of MIC100 at the end of each academic year. The review question provided to students was not formulated with this research in mind. It was formulated by the Course Coordinator who has used it since 2018 and during all the years under study (2019, 2020, and 2021) to obtain student feedback and improve future versions. For both years, the review question was: “Please write a short review (500-1000 words) on how the MIC100 course has contributed to your sense of identity, history, heritage and culture” (MIC100 Moodle¹⁹ Page). Thus, the study investigated how students responded to this question, with the research question framing the analysis as described below. The reviews used in this study are from the years 2019 and 2020, although I continued to collect data from other sources after 2020.

2.4.2 Interview questionnaires

In addition to these general reviews, another avenue to engage with students’ experiences of MIC100 was the use of interview questionnaires that students filled out and submitted by email. A sample of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 3. The interviews reflect Burawoy’s view that as researchers we can ground ourselves in the enquiry process “by rooting ourselves in theory that guides our dialogue with participants” (1998: 5). The interview questionnaires were informed by the theories of social justice and decoloniality, which have also influenced my broader enquiry. The circumstances surrounding the questionnaires are described above in the *Sampling* section. Students who filled out the questionnaires knew about this research project, since the questionnaires contained questions that were specific to the research question.

2.4.3 Interview with MIC100 lecturer

During 2021, when the interviews took place, MIC100 had four lecturers, including the Course Coordinator/Convener. However, only one lecturer was available for an interview, which was

¹⁹ The UMP’s online learning management system.

conducted on Microsoft Teams (MS Teams). The interview was recorded and transcribed using MS Teams.

2.4.4 Documentary data

According to Patton, “[a]nything written can be a source of data for qualitative analysis” (2015: 222). Thus, I had to decide on selecting documentary data that aligned with my quest to understand the circumstances surrounding the establishment of UMP as well as public discourses surrounding the university. Therefore, my selection of, and my approach to, the documentary data was guided by my quest for “meanings, patterns, and themes that provide insights into how those who wrote what is being analyzed, understood and interpreted the world” (ibid.). Documentary data in this study, thus, comprised two sets: policy documents concerning education, including documents such as the Teaching and Learning Policy; and documents that detail the founding of UMP. Most of the documentary data was available on the open web, except for UMP’s Teaching and Learning Policy.

2.4.5 The MIC100 curriculum materials

The MIC100 explicit curriculum, i.e. “what students are provided with such as module frameworks, prescribed readings, assessments guidelines, etc.” (Le Grange, 2016: 7), was another key set of documentary data that was collected. I separate the explicit curriculum from the documentary data which I described above, for analytical distinctiveness. The curriculum material was the key source for accessing the course’s official academic voice, particularly the Course Convenor’s. Through this material I could engage with the processes of translating some of UMP’s vision into the curriculum, especially since I only managed to conduct an interview with one lecturer, as I explain below.

2.4.6 Participant-observations

According to Patton, part of the role of observation is described as follows:

The first-order purpose of observational data is to describe in depth and detail the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in those activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspectives of those observed (Patton, 2015: 499).

Against the above description, observational data is expected to be sufficiently detailed to paint a rich picture of the situation that has been observed. That is why the dissertation includes some stories which contribute to the role of observation in research. My own participation in MIC100 and in the life of UMP worked as a source of data. Thus, some of the information used in the dissertation comprises notes from my observations in my role as an MIC100 Lecturer alongside

other teaching staff. My observational data also includes my knowledge of the geographical context in which UMP is located – I was born in Mpumalanga, and it is one of the provinces in which I grew up. According to Patton, data obtained through participatory observation “permit a programme evaluator to understand a programme or treatment to an extent not entirely possible using only the insights obtained through interviews” (2015: 75). Although the main student review data is from the years 2019 and 2020, direct observation in relation to the research project started in 2020 (the year in which I submitted the proposal for this study), and ended in June 2022.

2.5 Open-ended/flexible approach to data collection & analysis

While Patton (2015) has guided my observations and dealings with other forms of data, I do not apply the concept of ‘evaluation’ in the rigid sense of holding the case study against a set of predetermined standards. I use Patton’s method in this manner for several reasons: It enables me to explore the case study in relation to the desired outcomes of MIC100, adhere to my conceptual framing of the research, and remain committed to theories of social justice, decoloniality, and my understanding of the challenges that characterise higher education. This position is also supported by Burawoy’s (1998) approach of the extended case method, which I use alongside Patton. Burawoy explains that the extended case method is characterised by an “ever-changing sieve” when collecting data, particularly in the “dialogue between participant and observer” (1998: 11). I also adapted Burawoy’s concept of the “ever-changing sieve” and extended it to the rest of the data sets, such as student course reviews and documentary data. Burawoy’s extended case method provides for open-endedness and acknowledges that a researcher brings their own positionality/lenses into the study, but these do not automatically invalidate the research outcome. He states:

This is not to deny that we come to the field with presuppositions, questions, and frameworks but that they are more like prisms than templates and they are emergent rather than fixed (1998: 11)

My approach, which is informed by Patton and Burawoy, concurs with decoloniality, particularly the concept of locus of enunciation which acknowledges that a researcher’s positionalities may influence the research. Hence, I regard Burawoy’s extended case approach as reflexive since it is “[p]remised upon our own participation in the world we study” (1998: 5).

2.6 Challenges

2.6.1 Covid-19

The main challenge that the research faced was the limitations imposed by COVID-19. It has been approximately three years since we emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, and it is worth recalling some of the challenges we faced at that time, particularly their impact on this research. Fear of infection and threat to life was at its peak, and emergency preventative measures started with what was supposed to be a 21-day lockdown in Mzansi Afrika. The lockdown entailed bans on travelling and gatherings, including for educational purposes. With the rise of infections and deaths, lockdown was extended, and nothing could be planned with certainty. We lost loved ones, colleagues, etc., yet we could not attend funerals as they were ‘social gatherings’. Our healthcare system was impacted. Patients who had issues other than Covid-19 were not safe at hospitals, and surgeries and other non-emergency appointments had to be postponed.

Logistically, HE is an extremely complex sector, and we had to make many adjustments that affected teaching, research and all related activities. Sacrifices had to be made, including in teaching and research. At the very least, students, administrative and academic employees who were literally in different spaces due to remote learning and teaching experienced exhaustion and stress. Many were fatigued, while others lost their lives or that of a loved one. Thus, research-related requests and follow-ups were extremely awkward, and I found it ethically sounder and more sensitive to stop at a given point and work with what was available. Persisting with interview requests also made me feel guilty. Thus, I decided to send only one follow-up reminder to avoid adding to burdens that colleagues might already be facing.

When teaching and learning resumed, physical meetings remained risky, and regulations demanded that we wear face masks and maintain a social-distance of at least 1 meter. South Africa’s National State of Disaster was only lifted in April 2022, almost a year after I had collected data and began analysis.

These were the circumstances under which I conducted this research. As far as the research is concerned, COVID-19 regulations entailed that I could not physically access students for the live interviews and focus groups which I had initially planned as part of data collection in 2021. Given the general demographics of UMP students, who mostly came from working-class backgrounds and/or were based in rural areas, absence from campus meant that students had limited connectivity. As pointed out in the section on the research environment above, I also suspect that in part students’ digital literacies hindered them from engaging in the research

online, even when they had returned to campus and had access to computers and the internet. When students were allowed to return to campus, meetings remained awkward due to threats to health and attempts to adhere to new regulations. To avoid exposing anyone to health risks, I opted to use the data that was available without organising physical meetings with the students. The research did not pose any risk to anyone during live class engagements as the classes were officially arranged by the university in line with the applicable regulations.

However, given the large number of student course reviews available to me, I had enough data to proceed with the study and generate a meaningful analysis of students' experience of MIC100. The responses in the few interview questionnaires tended to concur with opinions expressed in the main reviews. Therefore, the interviews were instrumental in confirming what had already emerged from the reviews.

2.6.2 Teaching staff & logistics for interviews

Another challenge was securing interviews with the teaching staff. Out of respect for their privacy, I am not at liberty to detail the reasons why they were unavailable. Hence, I only provide an overview of the teaching staff complement and availability before and at the time of research. In 2019, the teaching staff comprised the Course Coordinator/Convenor to whom I refer as Dr Y, myself, and a Fulbright Fellow from the USA. The fellow worked as a Teaching Assistant and her term ended at the end of the 2019 academic year, at which point I had not started with this research. Towards the end of 2019, a Lecturer was hired, but he also left the university in 2021. In the middle of 2020, another Lecturer was employed and she arrived in the thick of Covid-19 restrictions. This is the one lecturer with whom I could secure an online interview, and I refer to her as Dr Wethu. The Course Coordinator was away for almost half of 2020, and I took up the role in an acting capacity. In 2021, the Coordinator's transition out of the university had been initiated; thus, as she gradually handed over responsibility to me, I reverted to the role of Acting Coordinator until April 2022.

While I managed to conduct an interview with Dr Wethu, the timing of her arrival meant that she could not have had a 'normal' observation about either MIC100 or UMP, particularly since Covid-19 had created a 'new normal' for teaching and learning. Thus, I used data from her interview minimally. However, the MIC100 curriculum documents remained significant in presenting the official academic voice. The class observations were also helpful in making sense of what the curriculum documents contained.

2.6.3 Reflexive & ethical challenges

As part of the conditions for ethics clearance, UMP required that the name of the institution not be used in the title of the research. This condition was consistent with the fact that as a staff member, I should not contribute to activities that might bring disrepute to my employer. While it was prudent that the university ensured that its concerns were addressed, as a researcher, this caused some friction between maintaining my sincerity of inquiry and analysis, and dealing with the possible expectation to ‘sanitise’ some or all of what I might discover. Fortunately, the main data, namely the students’ course reviews, did not implicate or undermine UMP’s institutional reputation. However, in some of my analysis, such as the thematic analysis which forms part of the dissertation, I provide a critique that could potentially be viewed as unfavorable towards UMP. Nonetheless, I chose to prioritise the sincerity of my inquiry while striving to report in a manner that was not disrespectful to the university.

2.7 Ethics clearance

I followed two avenues to obtain ethics clearance. The first was the University of Cape Town’s School of Education, in which I am registered for the PhD. The second application was to UMP’s research ethics committee. Both institutions approved my application. As noted above, UMP forbade me from using its name in the title of the research project.

2.8 Context of data collection

This description of the research environment is based on the period of January 2019 to June 2022 when I was in Mbombela and worked at the university. Chapter 4 (Masungulo ya UMP) provides a more detailed description of UMP. Here my description is confined to the environment that had implications for my data collection, and should be read in conjunction with the Covid-19 circumstances described above.

UMP is a contact university that offers only full-time enrolment options. Over 90% of UMP students are black South Africans, most of whom are National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)²⁰ beneficiaries (UMP Annual report, 2022). The demographics of the student population suggest that most are first-generation entrants. As described in the Language Justice chapter, most UMP students are fluent in African languages, English is not their home language, and interactions outside the classroom are seldom in English.

²⁰ NSFAS funds economically deserving students whose combined household income is below R350 000 per annum; for persons living with disabilities the maximum is R600 000. NSFAS is available to all South African citizens studying in public higher education institutions, conditional on expected academic performance.

Based on my observations while giving curriculum advice to undergraduate students during registration, UMP was not the institution they would have preferred to attend. Most had also applied to attend more established and better-known institutions. Students who enrolled in MIC100 often had no clear idea what the course was about or how it linked to their studies. This is likely because students do not *choose* MIC100 – it is a compulsory common course. The student course reviews reflect that students often did not embrace the course initially, but their attitudes changed in the middle of the course to a more positive feeling.

Because the university was still under construction and campus residences could not accommodate all of the students who need housing, most lived off-campus. They used public transport, particularly minibus taxis, for their campus commutes.

The first-year cohorts are characterised by varying levels of digital literacies. Some students would not have had access to a computer until they arrived at university. Hence, MIC100 also includes basic computer training in the first few weeks. However, most of the MIC100 course material, announcements, assessments – including the course reviews – were administered online. Halfway into the academic year, all MIC100 students would be familiar with basic computer use. All course submissions are completed online, and students would type out their course reviews and upload them onto Moodle.

2.9 Access to data

Data was collected at UMP, which is described in detail in Chapter Four – The Founding of UMP. When I conducted the study, I was a Lecturer at the institution, and I co-lectured in the course that I was investigating. I worked at UMP from January 2019 until May 2022. Thus, my insider status has been key to both my ability to collect data, and my understanding of the institutional context for analysing the data. Conducting this research on a site where I was a staff member afforded me some level of “reflective praxis” (Waghid, 2002), which comprises “knowledge produced in the context of application” (ibid.: 470). At the time of writing, I no longer work at UMP, but the reflexive aspect remains applicable, as I still work as a Lecturer at another university.

2.10 Coding & analysis of data

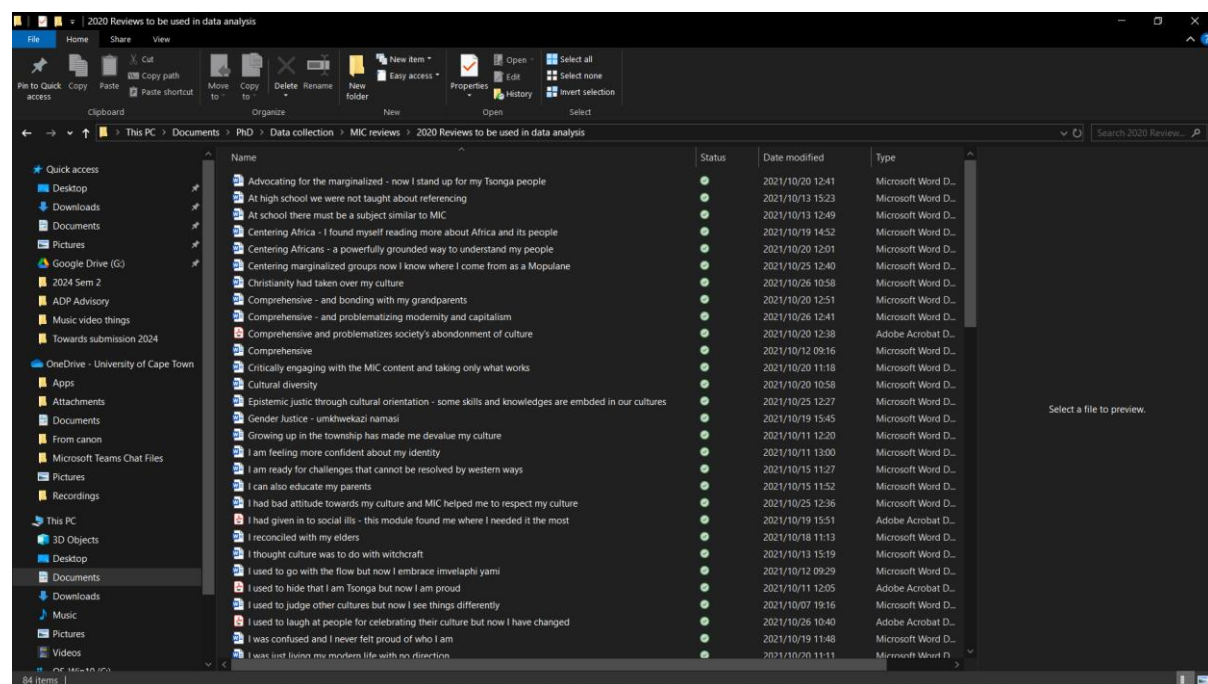
At the start of data analysis, around June 2021, UCT used NVivo version 12 data analysis software. Since then it has upgraded NVivo at least twice and Version 14.23.3 is currently the latest. The earlier versions of my data have been uploaded into the new software, hence the new appearance as seen in the figures with screenshots.

Coding and analysis of the data incorporated approaches from both Patton and Burawoy. From Burawoy, I borrowed the framework of “reflexive science”, which is “[p]remised upon our own participation in the world we study” (Burawoy, 1998: 5). This framework, therefore, enabled me to deal with my own involvement in the very course that formed the case study.

I conducted a preliminary overview of the student course reviews guided by Patton’s outcomes evaluation method, which “refers generally to determining the results and impacts of an intervention” (2015: 278). Next, I shortlisted the more thorough reviews of the students’ experiences of MIC100. After a preliminary content analysis, I loaded the shortlisted reviews onto the data analysis software, NVivo 12.

I labelled the shortlisted reviews so that their file names indicated key points from the content. For example, Figure A below shows some of the shortlisted and renamed review files, where the first file is named ‘Advocating for the marginalised–now I stand up for my Tsonga people’. The file at the bottom of Figure A is ‘I was just living up my modern life with no direction’. Thus, I incorporated quotations from the contents of the reviews in coming up with the titles. This strategy enabled me to remember the main reasons for selecting each of the reviews that I later imported to NVivo. The labeling process was already a form of analysis, in that the labels were an outcome of what I inferred from the text.

Figure A: example of the labeling process that emerged from the preliminary content analysis



After the above preliminary content analysis, a total of 154 reviews were imported to NVivo. This total comprises 72 from 2019 and 82 from 2020. In the analysis process, I mostly used NVivo to organise the data in terms of key themes that I could identify from the content, and these formed my Codes in NVivo. In 2021, the combination of the software and my computer system could not handle the amount of data, and the program kept crashing. To safeguard the data and my progress, I unbundled the two batches into two sets of review data for 2019 and 2020, and the program stopped crashing. Having restarted the coding process with the 2019 batch, I carried over the 2019 codes to arrange the 2020 batch. I made this decision after finding striking similarities between the two sets of data, because the data was showing a consistency of sentiments from students in both years. Thus, although I have two sets of NVivo files for the student course reviews, my approach to both is the same. Figure B was named ‘2019 and 2020 student course reviews’ because of the initial bundling, as seen below.

Figure B. The pop-up window in the centre shows the initial bundle label

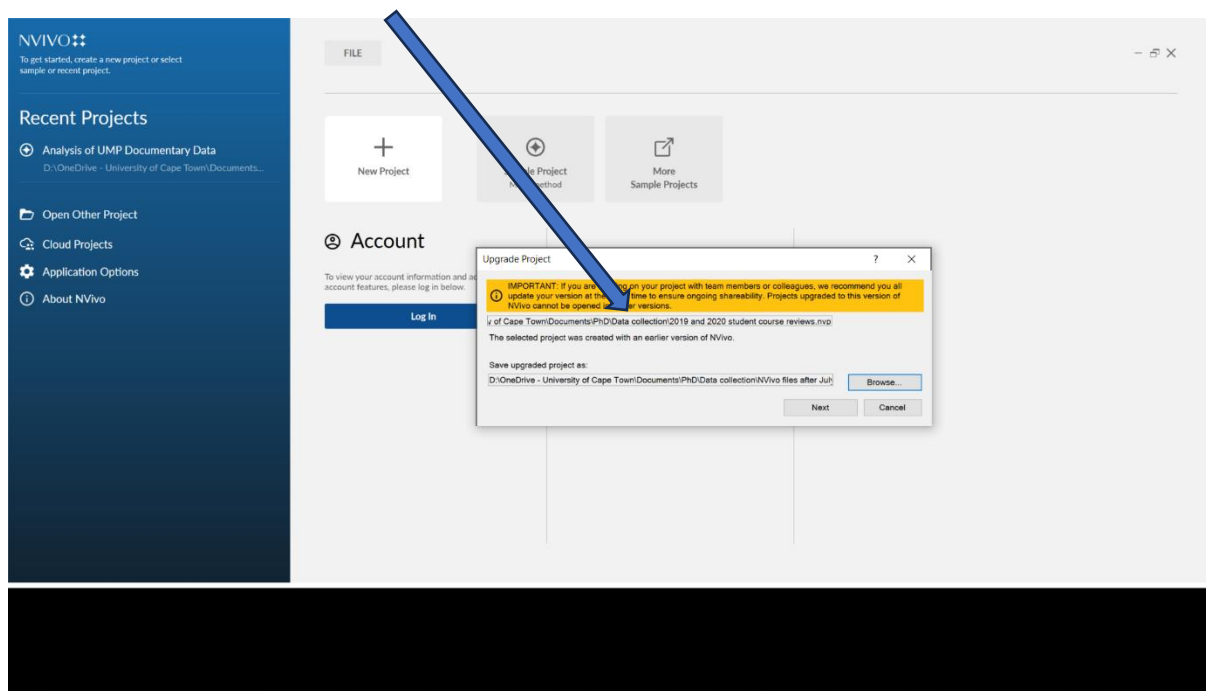
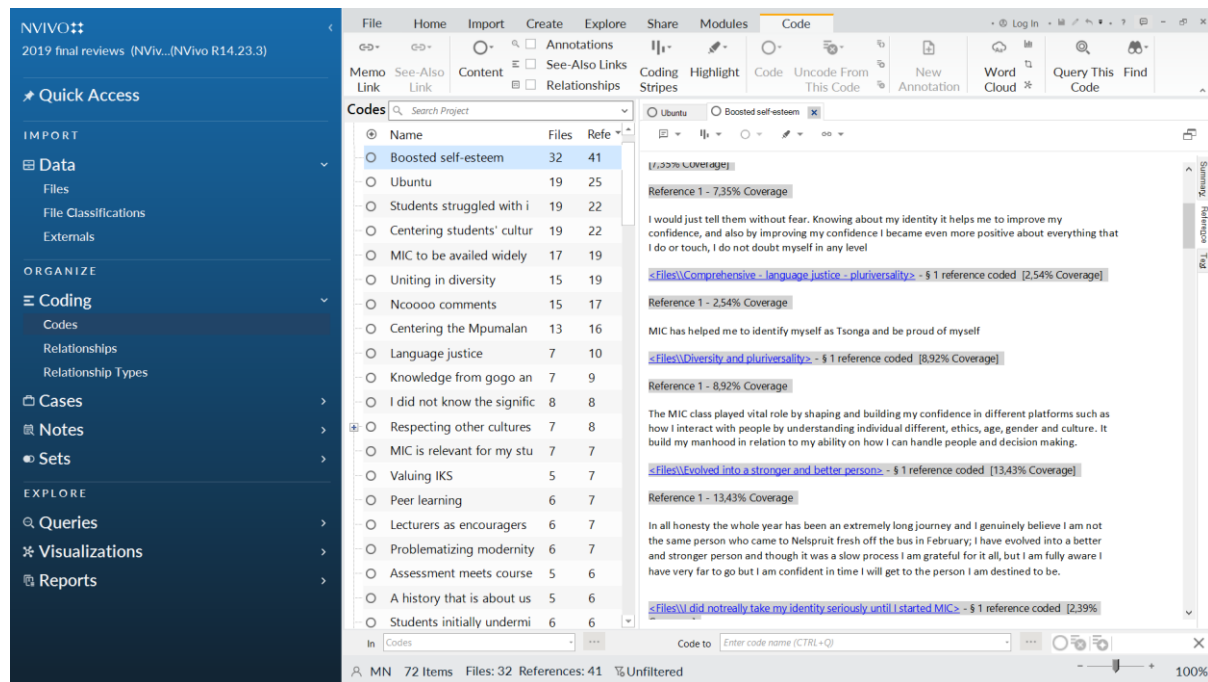


Figure C, on the other hand, is labeled ‘2019 final reviews’ to indicate that those are reviews that were selected from the preliminary content analysis that had since been unbundled. Thus, I started with the 2019 batch, reading each review and using the key themes to create and label the NVivo codes.

Figure C: Final reviews



In the reading pane on the right side of Figure C, one can see the text from different files, and the labels (as hyperlinks) of the files which I had labelled based on key sentiments/themes. Thus, each code was a collection of extracts from different files. This means that one student's file could be a member of multiple codes. For example, a student might speak on how MIC100 boosted their confidence, and that specific text would be linked to the code of 'Boosted self-esteem', while the same student's text where they speak about multilingualism would be linked to the language justice code. One student's file could also be registered more than once in one code, especially when the student's text revisits a theme on which they had been previously coded. This kind of arrangement entailed that I could always contextualise the students' quotations that I used in the dissertation, because I could click on the file link that accompanies the coded text, as seen in the reading pane in Figure C, to access and read the entire review.

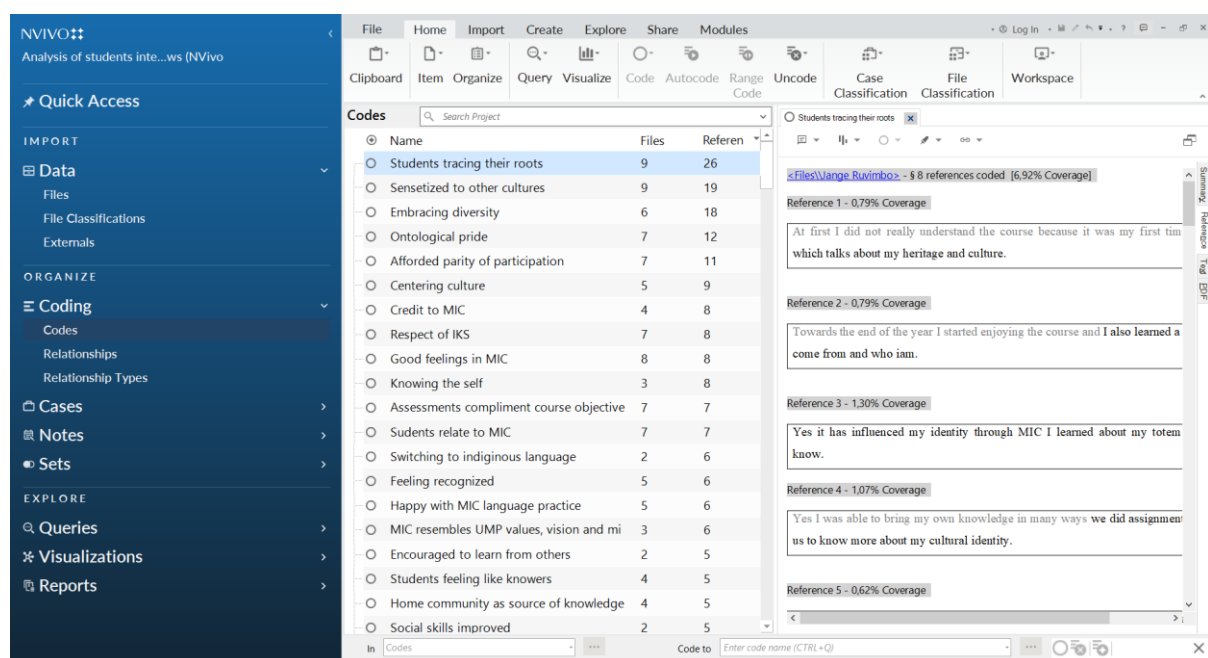
Having used NVivo to arrange and analyze the data, a significant part of my analysis also took part outside NVivo, for I would have to make sense of the student review content against different resources such as the literature that guided the study, and the UMP documentary data. Thus, NVivo provided the more technical aspects such as creating codes and linking the various files and their text to the codes that emerged.

Chief among the codes were *boosted self-esteem*; *ubuntu*; *united in diversity*; *language justice*. There was an overlap between the codes. For example, the code of diversity contained text that

connected to the code of ubuntu. This overlap shows up in the various chapters that discuss the findings.

I handled the student interview responses in the same way as the reviews on NVivo. I did not need to conduct a preliminary content analysis as there were fewer interviews. As seen in Figure D below, I used different wording to label the codes for the interviews, although the sentiments captured related closely to those captured in the reviews. Similar to the reviews, NVivo's major contribution to the interviews was the coding and arranging of files to map my analysis.

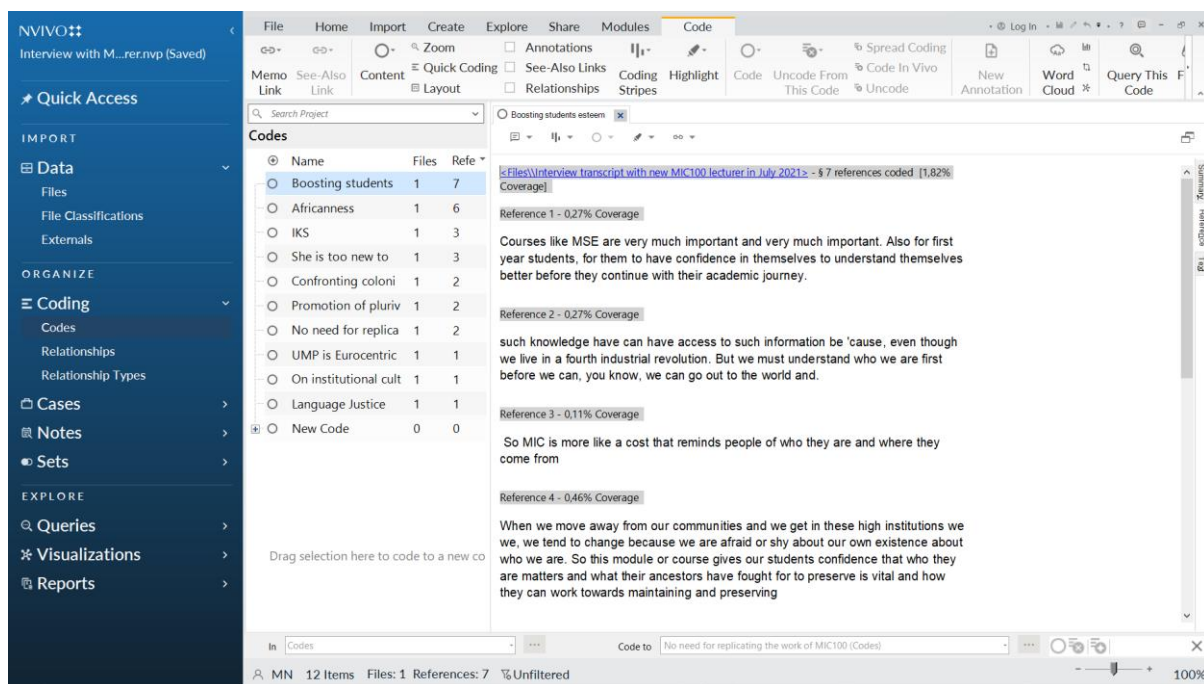
Figure D: Student interview responses coded in NVivo



My analysis of the 154 reviews and the 10 interview responses started with reading the student data against the research question and the literature review that informed the study. However, some of the review contents raised issues that necessitated another round of literature review to make sense of the phenomena that had emerged from the reviews. For example, the theme of *ubuntu* necessitated that I search for literature against which to make sense of what students were communicating since this concept was neither part of my initial literature review nor the theories that initially informed the study. This process raised a sub-question in the study about the purpose of the contemporary university, and that sub-question subsequently informed one of the chapters of this dissertation. This process of interaction between data, literature and research question culminated in the key chapters that discuss the findings of the study.

For analysis of the interview with Dr Wethu, I used the transcript and video recording generated by MS Teams. Although I loaded the transcript on NVivo, I had to cross-check the transcript against the video recording because the transcript contained many language errors – a challenge that we often face when these types of software transcribe English used by non-standard speakers. Similar to the course reviews, I used NVivo for the interview primarily to organise the contents into codes, as per Figure E below:

Figure E: Coding of interview with MIC100 lecturer



In analysing Dr Wethu’s interview, I was cognisant of her limited observation of both MIC100 and UMP at large – she mentions this limitation several times during the interview. I analyzed her interview against the student reviews and the MIC100 course documents. This approach enabled me to explore the relationship between what the planned curriculum intended, and the students’ experiences documented in the reviews.

My coding of the student course reviews entailed first establishing child codes. These initial codes were based on key sentiments emerging from the reviews. For example, a child code was created to group sentiments that reflected on the centering of students’ culture(s), as depicted in Figure G.

Figure G: example of child codes in initial coding of student course reviews on NVivo

2.10.1 A note about students' biographical data

While it is normal for this kind of data to contain biographical information such as gender and 'race', I deliberately did not capture this information. Neither the student course reviews nor the interview questioners required students to declare biographical data. I think this is important because that absence enabled my analysis to deal primarily with what students had to say without foregrounding and also possibly imposing categories of race and gender on them. However, where a student's biographical information was necessary for the analysis, I had access to richer sources than a straightforward declaration of race and gender. These sources were the students' first MC100 assignment, namely 'Self-Description'. In this assignment students tell us who they perceive themselves to be. It is noteworthy that these assignments reflected sophisticated configurations of identity that included spirituality, and relationships with the environment – a phenomenon that is seen in student's family totems, for example. While students still used the typical descriptions of gender and race as factors of their identities, neither the course nor the research framed these categories for students. Appendix 5 is an example of the Self-Description assignment from one of the students in 2020. An example of how I incorporated the biographical data from the Self-Description assignment can be seen in Chapter Nine (Translanguaging in a Typical MIC100 Classroom). In that example, the student alludes to issues of beauty, and my natural assumption is that she is female. At this point of assumption, I would access her self-description to read what she says about her gender, hence I proceed to label her as 'she/her'. In terms of race, it is worth noting that the institution's statistics confirm UMP students as mostly black, hence almost 100% of MIC100 in my samples were black. While biographical data was available and I could verify it when needed, the kind of coding that I conducted for this study seldom required such data. Most of the experiences that students detailed in their reviews cut across gender so there was little reason to specify it. Where gender mattered I specified it, as will be seen in the reporting. It is also worth noting that in Southern African languages, human pronouns are not gender exclusive, so our language practices do not have 'she, he, her, him, or they/them' to index gender. The pronouns 'yena' and 'u' are inclusive of all genders. Thus, requiring students to declare gender for purposes of pronouns in English could complicate my aim to respect their loci of enunciation as speakers of African languages.

2.10.2 Thematic analysis

Another set of data that I used in the research is the documentary type. This set includes documents such national policy documents on education in general and higher education in particular, and documentation about the establishment of UMP such as its Teaching and

Learning Policy. I have used this set of data to explain the context surrounding the establishment of the university, and I also coded the UMP documentary data into NVivo to conduct a thematic analysis.

I used the thematic analysis to explore how the university imagines itself by analysing the way the institution speaks about itself in relation to the various contexts in which it exists and operates. I supported my rationale for the thematic analysis through the work of Maguire and Delahunt (2017), who explain that:

The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e. patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it (3353)

My decisions about patterns that are important were made against the research question and the problem statement. Delahunt's framing of thematic analysis guided my reading of UMP's documentary data and enabled me to look beyond the texts' semantic levels. While the semantic level of thematic analysis focuses on what is explicit in a text, I focused on the latent, which:

... looks beyond what has been said and '...starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data' (Braun & Clarke 2006 cited in Delahunt 2017, 3353).

Indeed, my thematic analysis attempted to uncover possible underlying assumptions and conceptualisations that seemed to drive UMP's official discourse. As the thematic analysis chapter will show, some of the colonial ideologies that overshadow higher education have also shaped UMP's discourse – chief among these are modernity and development.

2.10.3 Documents analyzed

1. "Our Pioneering Journey": published on UMP's website; summarises UMP's establishment and key happenings.
2. "Proposal for a Common Course at the University of Mpumalanga": published on UMP's intranet; this nine-page document is the proposal that was submitted by the DVC: Academic, to MANCO (Management Committee) and Academic Boards for the establishment of MIC100; gives insight into the institution's thinking that led to the establishment of MIC100.
3. "Policy Framework for Teaching and Learning": published on UMP's intranet; this 43-page document is a collection of policies on teaching and learning; it consists of the following

policy frameworks: *Teaching and Learning; Assessment of Student Learning; External Moderation of Undergraduate Assessment; Evaluation of Teaching and Evaluation of Modules; Work Integrated Learning; Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Accumulation and Transfer; and Program and Curriculum Development and Transfer*; this document is instrumental in making sense of how UMP thinks about its mandate to provide education; an understanding of this document impacts the contextualisation of MIC100 that is needed to answer the research question.

4. “UMP Faculty Brochure”: published on UMP public website; this 40-page brochure lists the university’s offerings to prospective students; it is significant because here the institution enunciates itself to prospective students through the brochure.
5. “Welcome Message from Vice Chancellor”: published on UMP’s website; this is the text of the Vice Chancellor’s welcome message that appeared online at the time of research.
6. “UMP 2019 Annual Report”: published on UMP intranet; this 278-page document details UMP’s performance for the year ending December 2019, while also reflecting on the previous years; there are annual reports for other years, but I only conducted a close analysis of the 2019 report since my generic analysis revealed that all the reports are similar in themes.
7. “UMP 2022”: UMP intranet: This 21-page document details UMP’s seven-year strategic plan; this document is significant because it outlines the university’s trajectory as envisaged by the inaugural management.

I analyzed the seven key documents of the University of Mpumalanga on NVivo 12

I organised the content of the above documents into codes that represented key themes, the top ten of which are:

1. Development discourse
2. Local relevance
3. Diversity
4. Epistemic flexibility
5. Social justice
6. Ideals of a democratic South Africa
7. Levels of Curriculum
8. Taking advantage of UMP’s newness
9. Modernity

10. Decolonization

For purposes of this study, I argue that development comes first in order of ideological significance, as Chapter 5 (UMP's discursive trajectory: a thematic analysis) will show. This is why I focused on the development discourse as opposed to the other codes and themes. However, my analysis and discussion still draw from the other codes.

The thematic analysis also discusses some of UMP's envisaged graduate attributes. The discussion of graduate attributes focuses only on those attributes that connect strongly with the scope of the study as guided by the research question.

I also analyzed UMP's discursive themes against students' reviews of MIC100 to understand whether students felt MIC100 reinforced the possible problematic themes of development and modernity. Thus, some student quotations appear in the thematic analysis to support my discussion. It is noteworthy that a thematic analysis "is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective. This makes it a very flexible method" (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017: 3352). This flexibility enabled me to integrate the theoretical framework that informs this study into the analysis.

Through the thematic analysis, the research sought to understand how UMP speaks about itself, and whether the manner in which the institution represents itself reproduces or addresses inequalities. In other words, against the social justice theory that informs this research, the analysis is relevant in exploring whether UMP's discourse works towards parity of participation (Fraser and Honneth, 2003). Parity of participation here generally means whether the institution is being inclusive of stakeholders, particularly black students, who have been previously excluded and misrecognised in higher education due to coloniality. Moreover, the thematic analysis is significant in making sense of how UMP is faring in the pursuit of an 'African' identity, and subsequently in making sense of how the institution fares concerning the problem of coloniality.

2.10.4 Ongoing data analysis

While I have detailed the key processes that were involved in my data analysis, it is important to note that these processes have not been neat and linear. The processes involved significant overlaps between different data sets and the literature. Moreover, there have not been precise timeframes or stages in which I could neatly contain each step of the data analysis. Even at the time of writing, I continue to revisit the data, as my writing process is also an analytical process. It is analytical, partly because I have to make intentional decisions about what to include or

exclude, and thus what aspect of which story I should tell. I reflect on this process at the very end of the dissertation.

2.10.5 Reporting

Having outlined above the types of data that I collected and how I analyzed them, in the dissertation I tell the story of what I discovered from the data. The reporting will be broken down into different chapters that are carved out of the key themes that emerged from my analysis, namely Chapter Five: UMP Institutional Thematic Analysis; Chapter Seven: Ubuntu; Chapter Eight: Coloniality Through Linguistic Hierarchy; Chapter Nine: Translanguaging in MIC100; Chapter Ten: Feeling Ayoba!. These chapters will be preceded by the Literature Review which follows next. I will end the dissertation with Recommendations and Conclusion, and then offer a brief reflection on the process of writing this dissertation. My storytelling heritage will also influence my reporting, particularly in instances where I reflect on the observational data. Guided by Patton's theory on qualitative research, my discussion in the dissertation will be characterised by "direct quotations, detailed observations, and document excerpts" (2015: 915). The rationale behind this approach is that these resources, according to Patton, form the basis of my reporting and provide credibility to the analysis and interpretations that I present in this research project (ibid.).

I should point out that I have made a deliberate choice to not 'correct' student's language. Thus, some of the quotations from the student's responses will contain "variations" (Mona and Hurst Harosh, forthcoming) from rules of standardised language practice, particularly standardised English. I do this with respect and cognisance of the fact that the loci of enunciation from which students speak (Grosfoguel, 2011) are not monolingual. Yet I have been able to access meaning from the students' languaging processes that are informed by their plurilingual backgrounds (Canagarajah, 2009).

2.11 Conclusion

This research project, which is in the form of a case study, took the extended case approach (Burawoy, 1998) to explore students' experiences of MIC100. In addition to the student course reviews, course materials and class observations made up the data sets used to answer the research question: whether the course could stand as an example of a socially just curriculum. Documentary data in terms of government policy documents as well as UMP's founding documents were also analyzed. The general policy documents were studied to make sense of

the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the post-apartheid university. On the other hand, the UMP founding documents were analyzed to explore how the institution speaks about itself concerning the 'African' identity that it seeks to pursue, and to identify which discourses it draws on to do so. Thus, a thematic analysis (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017) was conducted using the latter set of data. Therefore, the overall data analysis incorporated Burawoy's (1998) extended case method, Patton's outcomes evaluation method (2015), and the thematic analysis of Maguire et al. (2017). Moreover, my position as a researcher, in terms of my lived experiences as well as my insider status in the research context, informed my approach to participant-observation, as well as my analysis of the data. The key themes that emerged from the data analysis form the basis of the chapters that follow.

Chapter 3: Indlela kulabaphambili

3.1 Introduction

The siNguni proverb ‘indlela ibutwa kulabaphambili’ means the route is known by those who have taken the journey. Hence, this literature review and conceptual framework chapter reflects my consultation with those who have taken the journey by dealing with and thinking about the issues this study raises. I consulted those who have journeyed along the paths of decolonial scholarship, social justice scholarship, and curriculum scholarship to bring out the main conceptual framework that I have used in this research. Since the problem that this study addresses arises out of the colonial origins and culture of South Africa’s HE system, I will draw on decolonial scholarship to frame the study. I will review scholarship on social justice in order to relate it to education in general and HE in particular. I will use curriculum scholarship to frame the case study as a curriculum issue. The literature review will also cover subareas such as ubuntu, and theories of language. After dealing with the founding of decolonial theory, which follows next, thematically the literature review will explore that theory from several different perspectives. These include: race and knowledge production; indigenous knowledge systems; the social sciences; social justice and the curriculum. It then turns to language matters: theories of language; language in education, and language policy in the post-colony and postcolonial SA.

3.2 The founding of decoloniality/decolonial theory

South Africa is one of many countries colonized by European states – first by the Dutch and then by the British. One of the effects of that colonization is a socially unjust HE environment. Grosfoguel explains the process of colonization as follows:

European Judeo-Christian patriarchy and European notions of sexuality, epistemology and spirituality were globalized and exported to the rest of the world through the colonial expansion as the hegemonic criteria to racialize, classify and pathologize the rest of the world’s population in a hierarchy of superior and inferior races (2011: 12).

Other scholars concur with Grosfoguel’s account of the origins of that hierarchy. According to Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), who explains this configuration from an economic perspective, the superior (Europeans) became the centre of the economic world system, while the inferior (rest of the world) provided Europe with labour and resources, and continue to do so. By looking beyond the economic system, Grosfoguel points out that colonization was a comprehensive process that impacted all spheres of the colonized’s life – including epistemology, culture, language, and education.

Colonization, therefore, had an enduring impact that outlasts colonial administration. Coloniality is the name for that continuous consequence of colonialism that remains active to this day. One can explain this consequence as “the lingering nature of the multiple and entangled power relations of superiority and inferiority established under colonialism” (Christie and McKinney, 2017: 163). Christie and McKinney’s explanation is complemented by De Lissovoy, who explains coloniality as follows:

The notion of coloniality evokes the range and depth of European conquest, which extends beyond the terrain of colonialism proper (as a political and geographic process) to shape modernity globally – up to and including the present moment (2019: 419).

Collectively these scholars point out that coloniality necessitated the emergence of a project that counters the impact of European conquest on contemporary people’s lives. Thus, the concept of decoloniality was formulated to address the problem of coloniality. Decoloniality originated in the “third world” (Mignolo, 2011: 274) and was “developed by scholars whose work is informed through a geopolitical location of marginality” (Monzó and McLaren, 2014: 516)²¹. Decoloniality is not the only attempt to explain the global setup in which the West dominates the rest of the world. As mentioned above, Immanuel Wallerstein used the world systems theory (1974) to explain that capitalism enabled Europe to become the centre of the world. For Wallerstein (1974), Europe used the capitalist system to exploit the rest of the world to extract labour and natural resources to make profits. However, world systems theory takes a neo-Marxist political-economy approach to explain Europe’s domination of the world. Decolonial scholars, on the other hand, have expanded and extended the theory far beyond economics to consider the political economy of knowledge that lies behind how the world systems operate, and to argue that “the model of power that is globally hegemonic today presupposes an element of coloniality” (Quijano, 2000: 533).

What Quijano points out, which has significance for the present problem, is that colonization left many of its systems intact. Higher education is one system that continues to operate in ways that perpetuate aspects of colonization, although there are increasing efforts to decolonize HE. In the South African context, the work of Morreira et al. “brings decolonial theory into concrete engagement with the structural, cultural, institutional, relational, and personal logics of

²¹ The term “Third World” did not originally mean “third class”. It signalled a conscious non-alignment during the Cold War. However, many of these countries are former colonies that continue to suffer the effects of “long colonialism”. Simultaneously, decolonial scholars such as Mignolo argue that “in its diversity of local histories and different times and Western imperial country... first interfered with those local histories” (2011: 274). This suggests that ‘third class’ was an outcome of imperialism.

curricula and pedagogic practice” (2021: 1). More broadly, the work of Bhambra et al. offers “a resource for students and academics looking to challenge and undo forms of coloniality in their classrooms, curricula and campuses” (2018: 1). Importantly, Bhambra et al. link their work to the call for decolonization that was led by #RMF in Mzansi and spread to other parts of the world, including the United Kingdom. I am convinced by the works of these and other scholars that I will cite in the review, that a significant portion of the challenges that education institutions in Mzansi face can be traced to colonization and coloniality.

In comparison with Wallerstein’s approach, I find that coloniality provides a more convincing explanation for the hegemonic power relations that extend beyond economic extraction and dominance. For instance, coloniality points out that racism is at the centre of European world domination. Quijano argues that economic domination is only one of the explanations for Europe’s assumed superiority (2000: 542). Europe’s ‘superiority’, according to Quijano, was founded on racism (2000: 568). In ‘The Problem of Race’ section, I will show how the idea of race works to frame superiority and inferiority. Here, what I wish to highlight from Quijano’s work is that race is at the centre of what he calls “the colonial axis” (ibid.: 568) of power. How this colonial axis works is that Europeans represent the highest order of being human, while the rest of the world is placed under Europe’s domination. One way through which this axis manifests, at least in universities, is that Eurocentric knowledge is privileged, while non-Eurocentric knowledges are marginalised (Mignolo, 2009). Thus, South African universities have been facing “the violent demand that Black students and academics assimilate into settler cultures and the old liberal/new neo-liberal values that still define” (Morreira, Luckett et al., 2021: 5) these institutions. Decolonial theory, therefore, frames the problem of knowledge production as one of coloniality, in which race is the organising principle.

While scholars like Quijano provide a global rationale for the “decolonial option” (Mignolo, 2009), others have taken up this option and applied it differently according to local conditions. For example, in Southern Africa, Professor Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni provides a rationale for the decolonial option as follows:

The decoloniality agenda is therefore very important not only because it enables Africans to unmask Euro-American deceit but because African people continue to manifest the disease of mental colonization which made them assist in the reproduction of a racially hierarchized world system (2013: 48)

My analysis of the Euro-American deceit that Ndlovu-Gatsheni points out is that the deceit is presented through promises of modernity, the darker side of which is nonetheless coloniality

(Mignolo, 2011). This problem of modernity, which in South Africa “was imposed through settler colonialism” (Reddy, 2015: 4) entails that Africans should generally aspire to progress along a path that the West has determined. As a result, Africans are likely to always fall short of these Western standards of modernisation, given that the Western orientation of modernity has been configured to advance the pretence of European superiority.

The problem of mental colonization which Ndlovu-Gatsheni highlights in his rationale is evident in various, if not all spheres of life in South Africa, as the dissertation will show. In the case of higher education, researchers such as Kessi and Cornel (2015) and Erasmus and De Wet (2003) point to some of the mental effects of colonialism on black students, including feelings of inadequacy and non-belonging. The decolonial option thus responds to “[t]he colonial model of academic organization of the university” (Le Grange, 2016: 5), which is yet to be “redressed in post-apartheid [South Africa] in any serious way” (ibid.). It is within this context that decolonial theory will provide the overarching framework for this study.

3.3 The problem of race

Colonialism manifested itself in many forms, and continues to do so. A concept that has been central to colonialism and coloniality is that of race. In this section, I will briefly discuss this concept and its implications for this research.

Though racial oppression predates by centuries, the publication of Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* (1859), that publication provided Europeans with what they presented as a “scientific backing for the belief in the primacy of the European race” (Boahen, 2000: 22). This belief and process has been termed social Darwinism. Boahen explains below how social Darwinism progressed to the extent that it impacted on Africa:

The later Darwinians, therefore, were elated to be able to justify the conquest of what they called ‘subject races’ or ‘backward races’ by the ‘master race’ as the inevitable process of natural selection by which the stronger dominates the weaker in the struggle for existence. They preached, therefore, that might was right. The partition of Africa [formalised at the Berlin Conference 1884-85] was consequently seen by them as part of this inevitable, natural process (Boahen, 2000: 22).

Boahen’s explanation points out that this ‘scientific’ application of race led to a belief in the superiority of Europeans over other ‘races’, which led to Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is based on “the idea of the history of human civilisation as a trajectory that departed from a state of nature and culminated in Europe” (Quijano, 2000: 542). Thus, Boahen and Quijano’s

explanation suggest that in terms of ‘race’ in the social Darwinist sense, the more European a person is, the more developed or evolved they are as a human.

Race was then applied in the accumulation of capital to determine social and economic relations in terms of cheap labourers (non-Europeans) and capitalists (Europeans). For instance, in Anglo-America, race was used to determine labour relations, where whites were allocated more earnings and better positions, while non-whites endured the opposite. This use of race to control labour was then extended to the rest of the European colonies (Quijano, 2000). Following the American War of Independence (1775-1783), the nascent USA was no longer a British colony but practiced slavery until the end of the Civil War in 1865. South Africa, for example, remains characterised by a racial division of labour. This racial division of labour is termed “racial capitalism” (Levenson and Paret, 2023). Racial capitalism in the South African context entails that capitalism provides the main rationale for the racism that characterises Mzansi, which was formalised through apartheid (ibid.). Levenson and Paret thus explain that capital accumulation in South Africa required the division of labour to be organised along racial lines. Black people were forced to provide cheap labour in the service of white mining, industry and agriculture. In other words, racial capitalism created a value system in which black people were valued to the extent that they could aid white capital accumulation. Even in instances where white people were part of the working class, racial capitalism reserved higher skill positions and higher remuneration for white workers. This is consistent with Neville Alexander’s explanation that “the belief in white superiority and white supremacy became for the white South African workers a vital principle” (1985: 35). Thus, racism and capitalism were the key ingredients in how the colonial and apartheid powers organised the society that is today called South Africa. One of the most impacted areas of this legacy is education, which has been configured to reproduce racialised inequalities.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to detail the full history and processes of colonialism in Southern Africa, the racial capitalist character of South Africa is worth reading against the form of colonialism that has characterised the Southern African context, namely settler colonialism. This “product of colonialism” (Reddy, 2015: 4) in what is known today as South Africa “inherited the largest population of European settlers in Africa” (ibid.). Similar to “the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, settlers avoided integration with the diverse majority of local inhabitants from their arrival in 1652” (ibid.). Therefore, the interactions between the settler minority and the settled majority have largely revolved around economic production. This configuration of society found expression in the distribution of education,

which has been tied to the racist distribution of employment – which manifests as racial capitalism (Alexander, 1985; Levenson and Paret, 2023).

This racial division of labour has also framed social interactions to the extent that it is normal for some black people in South Africa who grew up during apartheid to refer to a white male as ‘baas’, which means ‘boss’, even outside of economic activities. This explains the intertwined relationship between class and race, where the poor and working class are likely to be black, while the rich are likely to be whites who have more access to or ownership of the means of economic production. It is worth noting that South Africa also has the phenomenon of poor whites, an exception that is beyond the scope of this study. The pervasiveness of the idea that ‘race’ is aligned with economic advantage is evident when a well-off black person is referred to by other black people as ‘legowa’, ‘ngamla’, or ‘mlungu’, all of which economically mean ‘white person’.

In South Africa, racial capitalism resulted in an uneven allocation of resources and opportunities, which peaked during apartheid. The allocation of resources through racism included dispossession of land. In 1913 white people were allocated 87% of Mzansi’s land, while black people were denied land ownership and had to scramble to survive with the remaining amount of land (1913 Natives Land Act), or work in white-owned mines, farms and manufacturing. It is worth noting that black people constituted about 90% of Manzi’s population, yet white settlers who were a minority considered themselves to be more deserving. Thus, land dispossession has characterised South Africa’s racial experiences and has been key to sustaining inequalities in terms of economic class. Badat and Sayet explain this link between class and race as follows:

The simple reality is that the colonial and apartheid legacies have meant that there is a strong coincidence between class and race, with black South Africans hailing from predominantly working-class and rural poor backgrounds and white South Africans having their social origins largely in the capitalist and middle classes (Badat and Sayet, 2014: 140).

The above explanation of race and class helps when one considers the kinds of schooling that black students are likely to have had before attending university. Thus, students who come from rural areas are likely to have attended under-resourced schools.

Racism, for black people, also entails that they are likely to struggle with self-confidence. Under these conditions, assimilation to whiteness may seem like a viable solution, as explained in the quotation below:

One effect of all this was to induce in the African a feeling of inferiority, a tendency to lose confidence in himself and his future – in short a state of mind which at times encouraged an uncritical imitation of European powers (Boahen, 2000: 495)

Boahen's argument implicates universities, in so far as they perpetuate Eurocentrism. This necessitates measures that will meaningfully accommodate black students at universities. For example, in Kessi and Cornell's (2015) research at UCT, it was found that "practices of material and symbolic exclusion" (ibid.) made it difficult for black students to thrive. The findings also reveal that black students "expressed that 'feeling black' led them to internalise the negative imagery of incompetency attributed to them and, therefore, to question their own abilities" (ibid.: 4). These findings reveal that experiences of racial exclusion manifest in both the material and symbolic domains. The material manifestation of racial discrimination is what Fraser's theory of social justice would categorise as an issue of distribution, while the symbolic is an issue of recognition. Thus, one of the symptoms of symbolic exclusion is "status inequality" (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 16), which can be addressed through recognition, whereas material disparity manifests mostly through economic class.

Class and race are intertwined such that one's class position can earn its bearer recognition. This is why in an environment such as UCT that is dominated by whiteness, black students from more 'affluent' backgrounds can thrive better than those students who come from less 'affluent' settings.

Racism, in terms of knowledge production, entails that those who belong to the supposedly inferior race are deemed to possess inferior knowledge and "inferior intelligence" (Mignolo, 2009: 178). This, I argue, is at the centre of what decoloniality seeks to address in knowledge production, and subsequently in curriculum reform. Therefore, a curriculum that seeks to restore social justice, based on the above literature, will also seek to recognise the knowledge and intelligence of black students, as seen in the example of DOH1009. This is one of the courses "with a focus on providing access to first generation black students, and to improving retention and success rates" within the Humanities Education Development Unit at UCT (Morreira, 2019: 162-163). In DOH1009, measures were put in place for the curriculum to engage with the cultural capital of black students in a university that is overshadowed by coloniality.

One further implication of this brief section on race is that I will not be treating race as natural, but as an idea that is socially constructed, negotiable, and manipulable, although with real social effects. Thus, the effects of race as a social construct are realised through processes of

racialisation – apartheid being the most extreme example of such processes. Moreover, in terms of framing this research, the literature shows that the vast majority of black students come to university with burdens of inferiority. Thus, there is a need for universities to put measures in place to deal with the ontological challenge of race that black students face. Here the ontological challenge refers to the challenges that black students face in embracing their identities due to non-recognition in the university. This point is also raised by Luckett, who argues that there are unfortunate consequences for students in instances where “the curriculum fails to offer ontological affirmation and respect to students from previously colonized groups” (2019: 55). For Luckett, the effect of not addressing the ontological challenges is that students’ “learning potential will be blocked by affective and motivational factors and they will fail to make their own meaning and internalise the knowledge, regardless of its ‘power’” (ibid.). Luckett’s argument is also reflected in the case of MIC100, as will be discussed in Chapter 6 on the MIC100 Curriculum.

3.4 Bantu Education

Consistent with the problem of racism, which I discussed above, the advent of South Africa’s formal/colonial education sought to reproduce racial inequalities, particularly based on divisions of labour. While this is evident in the establishment of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, it is worth noting that the act was a formalisation of pre-existing racist segregationist inferior education for Africans. Nadine Moore provides an historical account of Bantu Education relevant to this study by locating Bantu Education within a broader context of racism, colonialism, and slavery in the past and the configuration of contemporary labour along racial lines.

The 1953 Bantu Education Act ensured that black people were provided substandard education that sought to only prepare them for specific types of labour. The legacies of the Bantu Education Act still linger today (Badat and Sayet, 2014; Moore, 2016). The Act “ensured that graduating black learners would have skills that would aid the economy, notably in terms of their cheap, exploitable labour” (Moore: 1-2). This vision was also confirmed by the then Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoerd, who held the view that Africans would have no place “above the level of certain forms of labour” (cited in Moore, 2016: 2). It is worth noting that while Bantu Education entailed the formalisation of the type of education that the state desired for black people, before 1953 black people already generally received inferior

education. This inferior education was consistent with the class inequalities that maintained blacks as a source of cheap labour (Moore, 2016).

Thus, racism in education was entrenched when the very first colonial school “was opened on 17 April 1658 in the Cape” (ibid.: 19). This school merely prepared slaves to be more efficient in the service of their white masters. Thus, Moore explains:

This school would teach slaves sufficient linguistic skills, in order to promote greater understanding of their masters’ orders – thus improving the quality of labour that these slaves would provide to the Cape. In addition, these slaves would also be indoctrinated by their masters’ religion, which would teach them the values of servitude, discipline and obedience (19-20).

The so-called education for Africans was, for settlers, to merely convert Africans into the resources necessary for colonialism and capitalism. Hence, in 1676, eighteen years after the first school in the Cape, the first segregated school was established, following the church’s “recommendation that was made to separate European children from slaves and Khoikhoi pupils” (Moore, 2016: 20). This separation reveals the ill motives behind what was being offered as ‘education’ to Africans. In other words, Africans were being assimilated just enough to become more preferable types of slaves. Moreover, from a ‘race’ perspective, my analysis is that this racist separation of schooling confirms that African children were not considered human enough to share schooling facilities with settler children. This is reflected in the fact that African learners faced obstacles in schooling, due to the slave masters’ concerns about losing their child labour. In other words, black children could not fully pursue education against the demands for their labour. Thus, the subsequent establishment “of schools in the Cape in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made relatively little headway” (ibid.). It is worth noting that schools reserved for colonialists’ children were exempted from these challenges.

This brief account of education long before the Bantu Education Act reveals that colonialists already saw black people as inferior, and ensured that black people’s education should only be provided to enable them to provide cheap, efficient labour for the colony.

Although South Africa has since transitioned into a democratic dispensation, the legacies of colonial and Bantu Education are still evident in Mzansi’s education sector, as explained below:

On one hand, there was the new government’s commitment to deal with racial discrimination as the most obvious and visible form of inequality in education. This approach gave rise to a conception of social justice as racial redress, captured in a policy of affirmative action, or positive discrimination. On the other hand, this strategy had to be

pursued in a manner that maintained the social order and education system; that is to say, change was not to rupture radically prevailing educational norms, structures, and policies and practices (Badat and Sayet, 2014: 129)

Consistent with Badat and Sayed's argument, South Africa has seen a rise in the preference for private educational institutions "over public ones in recent years for various reasons, among others, large pupil-teacher ratios, poor school infrastructure and inadequate learning aids" (Census 2011: 48). Therefore, the poor in terms of class, who are majority black in terms of 'race', remain the most disadvantaged. In the higher education sector, the racial legacy of access also manifests through economic class:

Students from the capitalist and middle classes are concentrated principally at the historically white universities; those of working class and rural poor origins are at historically black universities (Badat. 2015: 4).

This is not to say that there have not been shifts since the advent of democracy. NSFAS addresses some of the financial barriers that would ordinarily prevent access. However, the apartheid legacies continue to linger:

Despite initiatives to reshape the apartheid institutional landscape, the historical geographical patterns of advantage and disadvantage continue, and affect the ability of historically black universities to provide high quality education, and ensure equal opportunity and outcomes. If opportunity and outcomes were previously strongly affected by 'race', they are now also conditioned by social class and geography (ibid.).

My reading of Moore, Badat, and Sayet is that racism is deeply entrenched in every sphere of formal education in South Africa. Moreover, over time, racial struggles in education have mutated into economic class struggles, thus the capitalism that characterised the colonial state's thinking about Bantu Education has found its way into the higher education sector. Therefore, while Bantu Education has gone, we must recognise that the policy and its underlying philosophy continue to influence contemporary South Africa. This historical background has implications for a question that I raise later in the dissertation in the chapter on ubuntu: what is the purpose of the contemporary South African university? Considering that the role of formal education provided to Africans was historically to mould them into more preferable and efficient labour resources, and Sayed's argument that the above history continues to manifest in South Africa's contemporary education, the question of the role of formal education needs to be revisited. My visitation focuses on higher education.

3.5 Decoloniality & knowledge production

In this section, I focus on knowledge production in order to illustrate how scholars in various parts of the world have taken up the decolonial project, especially in Africa. In terms of knowledge production, Cassano captures the privilege that Eurocentric knowledge enjoys and illustrates the inferior position to which knowledges of the colonized have been relegated:

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is illuminated by an old African myth involving two different masks. The European mask has a big mouth and small ears. The African mask, on the other hand, has a small mouth and big ears. The European mask speaks but fails to hear. The African mask cannot speak but is forced to hear. Decolonizing means transforming the two masks, giving each the same size mouth and the same size ears (Cassano, 2010: 213).

As is evident in my review of decolonial scholarship, knowledge production in the former colonies has suffered from coloniality. For the purposes of this study, I will focus on the epistemic dimension of decoloniality. Epistemology, which “is the philosophy or theory of knowing” (McDougal III, 2014: 236), is instrumental in framing the knowledge dimension of coloniality. Intertwined with the epistemic dimension of knowledge production, are the concepts of culture and identity. The literature below will show how these concepts are implicated in knowledge production, for example through the geo-politics and body-politics of knowledge, as argued by decolonial scholars (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2009).

In line with Cassano’s (2010) analogy of the mask, Grosfoguel views colonialism in knowledge production as:

... an epistemic hierarchy that privileges Western knowledge and cosmology over non-Western knowledge and cosmologies, and [is] institutionalized in the global university system (2011: 10)

This epistemic hierarchy entails that the current epistemological foundations of universities in Africa remain colonial in a ‘postcolonial’ era. Hountondji points out that in terms of knowledge production, colonialism placed Africans in a “theoretical vacuum” (1995: 2). Thus, decoloniality is only possible when the epistemologies of the colonized are centred or properly recognised (Sium et al., 2012: ii). In the South African context, HEIs have not centred the epistemologies of Africans in any substantial way (Le Grange, 2016; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Where universities have decolonial projects, such projects are often relegated to a few special courses, without necessarily disrupting the entire epistemological foundations of the institutions (see Morreira, 2017 for example).

The link between knowledge and identity is reflected in Walter Mignolo's argument that the knower must not be separated from the knowledge that is produced. Thus, "in order to call into question the modern/colonial foundation of the control of knowledge, it is necessary to focus on the knower rather than on the known" (Mignolo, 2009: 162). This link is particularly important in the social sciences, where MIC100 is located. From a decolonial point of view, I am persuaded to take up the position of epistemic pluriversality (Mignolo, 2011), given that pluriversality advocates for the coexistence of different knowers. Moreover, decoloniality does not reject all knowledge produced within the colonial matrix of power, but seeks to open up the knowledge platforms to other knowers. This research will uncover how MIC100 deals with the knower-knowledge relation.

The epistemic dimension of decoloniality, linked to culture and identity, has been taken up by several scholars in Africa, including in South Africa (Bhambra, 2018; Morreira, 2017; Luckett, 2019; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Odora Hoppers, 2002). For Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the identities of the universities in Africa are themselves in crisis:

The first thing to address is that of the identity of an African university. This crisis of identity is linked to other crises such as 'crisis of legitimacy,' 'crisis of relevance,' 'crisis of appropriate epistemology,' 'crisis of historical representation' and 'crisis of student identity' (2013: 50).

The identity crisis of a university in Africa complicates the idea that students' identities should be accommodated by university curricula. In other words, a university in Africa with an identity not grounded in Africa, will likely struggle to affirm the cultures and identities of Africans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni: 2013). For present purposes, this entails that one should assess MIC100 against UMP's emerging African identity. Moreover, UMP stands as an interesting case since the university has committed itself to being an 'African' university.

The question of epistemology, therefore, necessitates an interrogation of UMP's stance on its dealings with knowledge. The historical context in which UMP was established favoured the epistemic practices of a minority group, because:

... as a consequence of apartheid, knowledge production in South Africa has been predominantly the preserve of white men. The democratization of knowledge requires special measures to induct previously excluded social groups, such as blacks and women, in the production and dissemination of knowledge (Badat and Sayed, 2014: 144).

MIC100 seeks to address some of Badat and Sayed's concerns in that the course aims to encourage "self-awareness and ignite a respect for our rich African history, heritage, culture and knowledge systems" (MIC100, 2019: 3). While the extent to which these aims are achieved will be uncovered later in the dissertation, it is noteworthy that production of knowledge "is subject to, or a consequence of cultural standpoints that are steeped in our identities and histories" (Phillips et al., 2005: 3). Hence, epistemic decoloniality requires recognition of the identities of the colonized.

3.6 Ubuntu and Mphahlele's African humanism

In this section I review the concept of ubuntu alongside Es'kia Mphahlele's concept of African humanism, which has been central in MIC100. At the time of writing, for MIC100, ubuntu was both a subject of study, and a praxis which contributed to the overall pursuit of ubuntu in the course. This literature on ubuntu was selected not necessarily out of my own advocacy for the concept, but out of attempts to make sense of the concept as it merged as a key theme from the data.

In simple terms, ubuntu is the fact of *being* human through an active fulfilment of certain ethical processes. The ethical processes entail that a properly functioning person should actively operate within a network with other people. Thus, ubuntu can be defined as "a way of life premised on complex intersections between the individual I, and the collective we" (Makalela, 2018: 838). Thus, Mphahlele's philosophy of African humanism can be placed under the broader umbrella of ubuntu.

Below I provide a summary of Mphahlele's pillars of African humanism, which I draw from Richard Samin's interview with Es'kia Mphahlele (Samin and Mphahlele, 1997). I also draw on some of Mphahlele's additional work (2002), which elaborates on the main 'pillars' of his notion of African humanism, and which is also used in MIC100. The four main pillars of African humanism are:

1. Belief in the "Supreme Being" (2002) which in dominant religious terms is known as God.
2. Belief in "ancestral presence" (ibid.), according to which ancestors are the mediators between God and humans; for Mphahlele, ancestors form part of the identities of the living (1997; 2002).
3. Emphasis on and belief in social relationships; here, Mphahlele explains that "human beings matter to the extent that the sense of community is always present" (1997:183);

his communal presence has been evident in MIC100 and is discussed in the Ubuntu chapter.

4. Respect of elderly people: this pillar entails that elderly people “are respected by everybody because they are about to be ancestors, and the belief that all the older people are wiser than the younger people is still a very strong belief among us” (1997: 183-184); this too finds expression in the MIC100 curriculum, particularly through the assignments that require students to seek knowledge from the elderly.

Overall, Mphahlele’s features of African humanism concur with Sibanda’s (2014) explanation of ubuntu, and what should characterise a person with ubuntu. For instance, the expectation that a person with ubuntu “must be able to respect the community and the whole ecological system” (Sibanda, 2014: 27) complements Mphahlele’s (1997) pillar of social relationships as well as the “interconnectedness of human, animal plant, inanimate environments and the cosmos” (Mphahlele, 2002: 137). Just as Mphahlele’s African humanism is characterised by the belief in “the Supreme Being” (2002: 137) and ancestral spirits, Sibanda also maintains that a person with ubuntu “must respect the spirits and God” (2014: 27).

My comparison of Mphahlele with Sibanda is that what madala²² refers to as ‘African humanism’, is in fact what is generally termed ubuntu. Although madala’s ubuntu is presented with an ‘African’ orientation, Sibanda notes “that the attributes of hunhu/ubuntu are not as exclusive to African hunhuness/ubuntuness as most African researchers seem to claim” (2014: 28). Sibanda’s argument is supported by Luschei, who explains *convivencia* as the Colombian equivalent of ubuntu:

While the contexts that engendered *convivencia* and ubuntu are thousands of miles apart, the unifying idea is that we must see ourselves as part of a larger good and treat others accordingly (2016: 98).

Oviawe, too, confirms the presence of ubuntu’s principles in other parts of the world. For example, in China “... indigenous belief systems such as Confucianism offer a similar perspective” (Oviawe, 2016: 3). Ubuntu is applicable globally. However, Mphahlele’s version of ubuntu as African humanism still centres Africanness in the quest of *being umuntu*²³. Hence, his conception of African humanism is characterised by a pillar such as the belief in ancestral spirits. The centring of Africanness is important in the pursuit of decoloniality in Africa so

²² An affectionate phrase for an old man, in this case Mphahlele.

²³ Human.

that Africans may pursue humanness while we reconnect with parts of ourselves that coloniality has forced us to disown or suppress.

The relevance of ubuntu to this research is that the concept offers opportunities to rethink educational processes in ways that are consistent with more human ways of *being*. For instance, in making the case for African humanism in education, Mphahlele explains that “if our education system is based on this philosophy, it will truly express our independence of mind, a decolonised mind” (2014: 193). In Zimbabwe, Sibanda also advocates for the general inclusion of ubuntu in education:

Care must however always be taken to keep the African identity through formal enculturation processes of hunhu/ubuntu. I propose the inclusion of the concept of hunhu/ubuntu in the national [in Zimbabwe] curricula right from pre-school to university and deliberate citizenship education as some of the possible means of transmitting the values of hunhu/ubuntu (2014: 29).

While Sibanda advocates for ubuntu in the Zimbabwean context, the global relevance of ubuntu in education is evident in Mphahlele’s case that covers ‘Africa’ more broadly, and in the cases of Luschei (2016) and Oviawe (2016). Both Luschei and Oviawe advocate for ubuntu’s equivalents in different contexts, namely Colombia and China. In the case of China, the concept of Confucianism offers “a view of education that is closely intertwined with a moral imperative, which serves as the foundation for an education imbued with morality” (Oviawe, 2016: 3). In Colombia, *convivencia* is used to “re-centre education as a moral enterprise” (Luschei, 2016: 95). Given that coloniality tampers with our humanness, a decolonized education which seeks to recognise marginalised people will, I argue, restore ubuntu. This concept of ubuntu will be most applicable in the data analysis, particularly where ubuntu appears as a key theme. The Ubuntu chapter will discuss some of the ways in which ubuntu is restored and applied in the MIC100 curriculum.

3.7 Indigenous Knowledge Systems towards decoloniality

Given colonialism’s lasting epistemic impact on the colonized, some scholars call for the use of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to address the knowledge crisis of coloniality. Pointing out that colonialism had a negative impact on the knowledge systems of the colonized, Hountondji examines the possibilities of salvaging what remains of these knowledges. Hence, the question, “which domains of knowledge, have remained untouched, and can they be not only safeguarded, but developed, improved, updated and actively reappropriated?” (1995: 6).

IKS provides a framework which I will use to assess MIC100, which has a section on IKS in its curriculum.

Another proponent of IKS, Odora Hoppers (2002), points out that coloniality necessitates an IKS approach to knowledge production. For Odora Hoppers, IKS is helpful in addressing the exclusion of non-Western ways in formal knowledge production. Below is Odora Hoppers' definition of IKS:

By way of a definition, the word indigenous refers to the root, something natural or innate (to). It is an integral part of culture. Indigenous knowledge systems refer to the combination of knowledge systems encompassing technology, social, economic and philosophical learning, or educational, legal and governance systems (2002: 8).

Odora Hoppers' definition of IKS differs slightly from Hountondji's view. Hountondji "prefers the word 'endogenous' to dwell on the origin of a cultural product or value that comes from, or at least is perceived by people as coming from inside their own society" (1995: 6-7). While these differences in terminology between the two are minor, both agree that the people who were colonized did not necessarily lose all of their knowledge systems. Hence, the need to incorporate previously excluded knowledges in formal knowledge production and formal education systems can still be addressed. I will draw on Hoppers' conceptualisation of IKS for this study, because she writes about IKS years after Hountondji's idea of "endogenous" knowledge, and MIC100 has IKS as part of its explicit curriculum.

The fact that one may observe life from many different perspectives (Cassano, 2010) necessitates that different identity groups be recognised as valid knowers of their lived realities. This is opposed to colonial epistemic practices, where valid knowers are an elite, if not elitist, minority. The extent to which IKS can be used in a project for decoloniality in HEIs has limitations though, due to the manner in which modernity frames knowledge production in universities. Some aspects of IKS are sacred and secret, while the Western university configuration requires knowledge to be public and open to critique. Thus, IKS can be both an instrument of decoloniality and of social justice, to the extent that those for whom the knowledge is indigenous and sacred can be respected and consulted. Hence, IKS is necessary, but it cannot in itself achieve epistemic decolonization. While IKS "enables us to reestablish science as the story of all animals, and not only the lion" (Odora Hoppers, 2002: 10), it must be only a part of the "ecologies of knowledge" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). The idea of ecologies of knowledge presents more room for a diversity of epistemologies, regardless of indigeneity status.

In the South African context, the question of indigeneity is complicated by the fact that the very idea of ‘indigenous’ groups that are arranged along tribes/ethnicities is tainted by coloniality. The chapter on language justice will show how official ‘indigenous’ languages that the SA Constitution recognises were codified by Europeans. Another example concerning ‘indigenous’ institutions of knowledge is that of tingoma²⁴. Engomeni (a traditional initiation school) is a place where young people go to receive sacred knowledge as part of their rite of passage to womanhood or manhood. However, if you look at regions such as Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga, the idea of indigenous knowledge is highly troubled. The ingoma that people of Mkhuhlu and surrounding areas attend as part of ‘their culture’ is framed through seSotho²⁵ epistemology. MaTsonga and maSwati children attend tingoma and return reciting ideas of identity, manhood and womanhood through the dialects of seSotho that are prominent in Bushbuckridge. By way of language, the seSotho in Bushbuckridge comprises versions such as sePulane and kheLobedu, which are not recognised as official languages. In this example, if the goal is indigeneity, then the knowledge that children of emaSwati and vaTsonga gain from tingoma would not be valid as ‘theirs’. However, if the goal is to access knowledge that is useful in those communities, but which formal school curricula do not provide, then tingoma can be centres of knowledge by the standards that those communities determine. The latter approach also accounts for the fact that these communities are not homogenous. From a decolonial perspective, whether the knowledge from engomeni is indigenous to emaSwati, baSotho, or vaTsonga, does not change the fact that all these groups exist on the periphery of knowledge production and at the bottom of the “colonial matrix of power” (Mignolo, 2009). From a decolonial standpoint, therefore, I employ the IKS framework not as the main instrument towards epistemic decoloniality, but as an analytical instrument for MIC100, which professes IKS as part of its curriculum content.

3.8 Decoloniality in the social sciences

The issues that this thesis responds to, and which can be summarised as issues of social justice in the curriculum, exist due to the coloniality of knowledge at a global level (Connell, 2007). This section, though, will focus particularly on the humanities and social sciences. Scholars have pointed out the global hegemony of Western knowledge that dominates the social sciences. Thus, projects that work to achieve social justice in social science curricula operate

²⁴ Tingoma, in this context, is plural for ingoma, which means initiation school for the rite of passage which boys and girls undergo to become men and women.

²⁵ SeSotho here is not in the official sense, but includes groups such as maPulane, baPedi, etc – these are listed and discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

against the backdrop of the disciplinary factors that perpetuate these curriculum injustices. For example, Raewyn Connell states that “[m]ost theoretical texts in the social sciences are written in the global North, and most proceed on the assumption that this does not matter” (2007: 50). Grosfoguel concurs with Connell, pointing out that the “canon of thought” in the humanities and social sciences, is “produced by the few Western men of five countries” (Grosfoguel, 2013: 75).

Coloniality in the social sciences is sustained by Eurocentrism, in which Europe assumes and is assumed to have superiority over the rest of the world, including superiority of knowledge. Quijano explains this Eurocentrism as “the hegemonic perspective of knowledge” (2000: 542). Due to this hegemony, social scientists in non-European countries often look to Europe for validation. In other words, “[s]ocial scientists working in the periphery have a strong orientation to the world centres of their disciplines in the metropole” (Connell, 2007: 217-218). As a result, social science in Africa reflects and teaches Eurocentrism through the curriculum it produces, and the research processes it follows. For example, publication of major social science research occurs in the “metropole” (Connell, 2007). However, Jansen (2023), whom I cite below, notes that this phenomenon has begun to shift.

The problem of orientation towards Europe also entails that being in Africa does not necessarily mean one will engage in a social science that reflects the African reality. Thus, the social sciences in Africa suffer from a ‘dislocated’ locus of enunciation. The locus of enunciation refers to “the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks” (Grosfoguel, 2011: 5). Historically, the social sciences were modelled on the assumption that the knowledge produced should be independent of the body and the location from which it is produced. Opposing this, decolonial scholars such as Mignolo argue that it matters who speaks, and where they speak from. He stresses that:

... the enunciator can only enunciate ‘here’, that is, wherever she is located at the moment of enunciation. Thus, ‘there’, ‘behind’, ‘next to’, ‘left and right’ etc., are meaningful only in reference to the enunciator’s ‘here’ (Mignolo, 2009: 613).

Decolonial scholars argue that the colonial and Eurocentric nature of social science entails that social scientists in former colonies scarcely enunciate ‘here’ [body and geo-location], but rather strive to assimilate to ‘there’ [Europe]. This assimilation is reflected in earlier patterns of research practice, where “no African scholar [could]... claim to be doing top-level research without traveling back and forth from South to North, resulting in a type of institutional nomadism” (Hountondji, 1995: 4). Encouragingly, 28 years after Hountondji’s observation,

Jansen points out that “there is a growing and significant contribution to social and scientific knowledge from the South that speaks to new forms of cooperation that defy binary thinking” (2023: 146). While Jansen justly celebrates these positive shifts, my analysis shows that Mignolo’s argument remains relevant, particularly for researchers and institutions who may still follow the old colonial patterns of research. Thus, ignoring the geo- and body-location in social science leads to Eurocentric knowledge being passed on to the rest of the world as “universal” or necessary for everyone (Mignolo, 2009: 177).

One implication of Mignolo’s argument is that the Western social sciences offer to non-Europeans theories and knowledges that were not constructed with their lived realities in mind. In Mzansi, this argument was raised by the #RMF movement when they called for decolonized knowledge and curriculum. One of the key demands from #RMF was for curricula that reflect the realities of Africans. At a plenary meeting one of the #RMF leaders voiced his frustration: he was tired of attending lectures where a rich white professor who had never lived in a township²⁶ was teaching about poverty and township life. This is not to say academics cannot teach on issues they have never experienced. Rather, the decolonial argument on the assumed superiority of Eurocentrism is that theorising and research that takes place in the South has to undergo a reasoning process that is benchmarked in the North – a process that perpetuates the pretence of European ‘universality’ which Mignolo (2009) cautions against.

For Westernised universities, an epistemic privilege is given to Europe, and the rest suffer epistemic inferiority (Grosfoguel, 2013). For Grosfoguel, “[e]pistemic privilege and epistemic inferiority are two sides of the same coin” (2013: 74). Grosfoguel refers to this coin as “epistemic racism/sexism” (75). Epistemic racism/sexism confirms Mignolo’s “colonial matrix of power” (2009). At the centre of this matrix is racism, which hierarchises knowledge according to the bodies that possess the knowledge (Mignolo, 2009: 178).

What the above entails for this research is that MIC100, as a social science course, has to be assessed for how it meets its goals of social justice in a settler society and an HE environment that has a historical disciplinary bias towards Eurocentrism.

3.9 A review of social justice

Thus far the above literature presents the decolonial project as one of social justice. This view is supported by the understanding that “colonial education was and remains incompatible with

²⁶ Townships are areas that were historically designed for black people in South Africa. These areas are generally characterised by, inter alia, lack of infrastructure, poverty and crime.

the pursuit of real social responsiveness and genuine collective interests” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 136). Hence, a decolonial curriculum must be imagined as a contribution towards social justice. As mentioned earlier, for purposes of this research, “the most general meaning of justice is parity of participation” (Fraser and Honneth, 2003: 16) which can be divided into three dimensions: economic redistribution; cultural/symbolic recognition; and the political, which “furnishes the stage on which struggles over distribution and recognition are played out” (ibid.: 17). The cultural/symbolic dimension, which will be unpacked below, will frame the question of social justice for MIC100. Having already shown that colonialism has led to disparity of participation in knowledge-making, particularly in HE, social justice theory is necessary for determining whether and how MIC100 leads to “parity of participation” (Fraser and Honneth, 2003).

Nancy Fraser’s framing of social justice, particularly in terms of the recognition dimension, however, faces criticism in a settler colonial context. For example, Coulthard argues:

Fraser’s status model rests on the problematic background assumption that the settler state constitutes a legitimate framework within which Indigenous peoples might be more justly included, or from which they could be further excluded (Coulthard, 2014: 36).

While this critique is made in the context of Canada, it has relevance for Mzansi which is also a settler construction. Conception of formal education in Mzansi remains overshadowed by settler-colonial dominance. However, the focus of the study is more to do with addressing the immediate need of parity of participation in the institutions that are already established, and within the very nation that is today called South Africa. In other words, it is beyond this study to dwell on the debates on the making of the nation, and the question of sovereignty of ‘indigenous’ people. Suffice it to acknowledge that the making of this nation has been a process of inclusion and exclusion which makes the questions of representation and parity of participation pressing for groups that continue to suffer exclusion.

Fraser and Honneth’s approach to dealing with injustice is relevant for Mzansi’s HEIs, where injustice is institutionalised, because “[o]vercoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised obstacles that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners” (2003:16). The implication of this approach for MIC100 is that it raises the question of how the course dismantles institutionalised obstacles. In the ‘Decoloniality in the Social Science’ section I have shown that a new university can also be caught up in the

coloniality of the disciplines that it offers. This implies that institutionalised obstacles must be identified, which I will do later in the dissertation. For example, Chapter 9 identifies an institutional obstacle in the form of language, and discusses ways in which MIC100 deals with this obstacle. Badat and Sayed concur with Fraser and Honneth that achieving social justice requires “changing institutional cultures and practices” (Badat and Sayed, 2014: 145). However, a new university that lacks a strongly established institutional culture needs to ask itself what kind of institutional culture it is building, and whether that culture leads to parity of participation. For the purposes of this study, parity of participation is mostly at a horizontal level for students, i.e. the opportunity for all students to participate equally. This entails creating a platform where students from a diversity of economic, cultural, and language groups can benefit equally from the university. The question of parity of participation is particularly pertinent for South Africa, which has 12 official languages with supposedly equal status, though in practice English dominates because it is a global language with a colonial history, and is widely accepted as the official medium of instruction in South African HE. Therefore, “social justice requires attention to ... issues of students learning in a language different from their mother tongue” (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 150). Sections 3.10-3.12 below as well as Chapters 8 and 9 will focus in more detail on the language issues and challenges that Wilson-Strydom raises. However, it is still important to make the case that a new university possibly lacking a strong institutional culture compared to older SA HEIs must immediately work to achieve socially just institutional cultures, because all SA universities exist within a socio-historical context of disparity of participation that is colonial in nature (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 144).

Fraser and Honneth’s (2003) three interlinked dimensions of social justice are helpful in framing South Africa’s HE sector as one of struggle for social justice. This study is particularly interested in the cultural dimension. This is where the challenges of recognition arise, because the cultural dimension is concerned with how particular social value systems impact on participation (*ibid.*). In other words, for purposes of this research, the recognition of black students will be the most salient of Fraser and Honneth’s three dimensions of social justice, as this is what MIC100 suggests as part of its objectives. Thus, the research will explore how, and the extent to which, MIC100 recognises its students.

My framing of social justice is based primarily on the works of Fraser and Honneth, because other scholars, including those who write primarily for the South African context, concur with their theory. For example, the South African scholar, Wilson-Strydom writes that social justice:

... is about understanding and interrogating how different individuals or groups are faring in comparison with others in a specific context (such as a university) or more broadly in society. This often involves the consideration of distributional issues, both in terms of distribution of advantages and disadvantages (2015: 145).

Wilson-Strydom's framing of social justice is relevant for the case of MIC100, particularly to interrogate how students are progressing in the context of a new university established within a colonial educational framework.

In terms of the link between decoloniality and social justice in HE, it is worth noting that "commitment to social justice highlights the need for decolonization" (Mckay et al., 2018: 70). Hence, my insistence that the quest for a socially just university in Africa necessitates decolonial processes. Although Wilson-Strydom does not explicitly use a decolonial discourse, he recognises that current injustices are continuations of historical patterns. Thus, he argues that:

... [a]ny consideration of higher education in South Africa must take cognizance of the complex historical legacy, and the fact that the country is emerging from a deeply discriminatory, repressive and socially unjust past (Wilson-Strydom, 2015: 144)

This "socially unjust past" (ibid.) is unjust because of colonialism and coloniality, and it is important to name that which we must address in order to achieve justice. In other words, while the theory of social justice enables us to identify disparity of participation in HE, decoloniality enables us to locate the root of this disparity, namely colonialism and the continuation of colonial patterns of inequality – coloniality.

South African universities have been impacted by colonialism, which organised society in a racialised hierarchy that is also present in its HEIs. In the case of South Africa, black students are the "disrespected identities" that Fraser (1997) mentions. MIC100's approach to social justice will be assessed using Fraser's Spectrum, which ranges from simply revaluing black identities, to taking radical approaches in "ways that would change everybody's sense of self" (ibid.). Fraser's 'spectrum' enables me to consider what social justice looks like for MIC100. I will also adapt Grosfoguel's concept of locus of enunciation mentioned above. In my adaptation, I include the cultural position in addition to the geo- and body-positions that Grosfoguel's definition contains so that whenever I borrow this concept, it is not limited to a physical geography and a physical body, though these considerations remain important and relevant and will appear in the rest of the dissertation.

South Africa's history requires its educational institutions to play active roles in the quest for social justice, as argued by scholars cited above. Newly established institutions are not exempt from the struggle for social justice. In fact, the establishment of new institutions is part of the response to the question of social justice (Badat and Sayed, 2014: 145). The state has responded to the redistribution dimension of justice (Fraser and Honneth, 2003) by providing opportunities to study, by building new universities, and by providing support through NSFAS so that South African students should not be excluded from higher education on economic grounds. While interventions such as establishing new universities and NSFAS address the redistributive dimension, this research is interested in the recognition dimension (ibid.), in particular how the recipients of study opportunities are treated.

3.10 Social justice through a decolonial curriculum

Based on the literature thus far reviewed, I believe that the curriculum question for SA HEIs is one of decolonizing knowledge, recognising marginalised knowers, and ultimately ensuring social justice. Decolonizing the curriculum, reclaiming knowledge production, and working for social justice are not mutually exclusive theoretical concepts. Decolonial theory, for instance, would argue that one of the ways through which a curriculum is colonial is its epistemic bias towards Europe. Such epistemic bias also means that knowledges of certain social groups (the colonized) are excluded from the curriculum. I have pointed out in the section on 'Decoloniality in the Social Sciences' how colonial epistemic practices impact how the disciplines are reproduced in African universities, and subsequently this influences the kinds of curricula that these universities produce. Therefore, I treat these concepts with consideration for their intertwined relationship – although this specific section focuses particularly on the question of the curriculum.

Curriculum scholars have pointed out that the concept of curriculum has many negotiable meanings because there are many positions from which it can be viewed. Catherine Cornbleth (1988) considers curriculum to be “an ongoing social activity” (89). This view is important for considering curriculum as a process in which people interact, and it enables us to assess the parity of this interaction. For Slonimsky and Shalem, “a curriculum is a contextualised course of study aimed at enabling students to learn or master particular knowledge and practices” (2006: 38). Their idea of “enabling” is important for interrogating the degree to which a curriculum helps students to access its content. A South African curriculum scholar, Le Grange, points out three types of curricula, which I will apply analytically in the case study, namely:

... the explicit, hidden and null curriculum. The explicit curriculum is what students are provided with such as module frameworks, prescribed readings, assessments guidelines, etc. The hidden curriculum is what students learn about the dominant culture of a university and what values it reproduces. The null curriculum is what universities leave out – what is not taught and learned in a university (2016: 7).

I will use Le Grange's categorisations to frame the aspects of curriculum on which I will focus, paying particular attention to the explicit and the hidden curriculum.

Hurst and Mona (2017) have conducted similar research in South Africa, which viewed the curriculum as a social justice issue, particularly concerning language. That work looked at translanguaging, which is described as a process where “language practices involve complex communicative strategies including for example crossing, code-meshing, polyglot dialogue, plurilingualism etc.” (Hurst and Mona, 2017: 132), as one aspect of the decolonization project, and concluded that translanguaging is a socially just pedagogy. A paper by Morreira concludes that decolonizing HE requires “epistemic disobedience” (2017) in order to open up and interrogate both the explicit and hidden curricula. Similarly, in Australia scholars have treated epistemology as a key factor in decolonization by embedding indigenous knowledges in the curriculum (Phillips et al., 2005). The above-cited works point to the fact that the default setting in formerly colonized parts of the world is that “[t]he curriculum is firmly anchored in the trope of ‘powerful knowledge’ in the Western episteme” (Christie and McKinney, 2017: 167), but that this view is also being challenged.

Based on the works of scholars of decolonial theory, social justice, and curriculum, some of whom I have cited above, I believe that the curriculum is a key area of decolonial work in order to achieve social justice in a university. Given that UMP students, and subsequently MIC100 students, come from previously excluded groups, the curriculum has “to offer [them] ontological affirmation and respect” (Luckett, 2019: 55). The focus on curriculum as a way to achieve social justice is also implicit in the writing of curriculum scholar Patrick Slattery, who argues that “just as the curriculum is affected by social conditions and values, so can the curriculum also help to reshape or preserve those conditions and values” (1995: 36). Therefore, I also argue that curricula in South Africa must be cognisant of colonial social conditions and values, insofar as they have disadvantaged black students.

Slonimsky and Shalem concur with the idea that a curriculum must factor in the social and historical conditions in which students are situated:

... deliberations on curriculum responsiveness require a relational approach that takes into account both the nature of practices to be mastered, and the needs of socio-historically contextualised students in relation to these, before the issues of pedagogy and mediation can be addressed (2006: 38).

Slonimsky and Shalem echo Bernstein's (2000) framework of curriculum as discourse, broken down into two parts: the instructional, and the regulative. For Bernstein, Slonimsky and Shalem's sociohistorical contextualisation would be categorised as the regulative discourse, while parts of the pedagogy and mediation would be categorised in the instructional discourse. In other words:

“We shall call the discourse which creates specialized skills and their relationship to each other *instructional discourse*, and the moral discourse which creates order, relations and identity *regulative discourse*” (Bernstein, 2000: 32).

Viewed against Le Grange's categorisation of curriculum, the instructional discourse would encompass the explicit curriculum, while the regulative discourse would encompass the hidden curriculum. Although the hidden curriculum/regulative discourse deals with issues that are not directly captured in the explicit curriculum/instructional discourse, the hidden/regulative has significant implications for the kind of decolonial work needed in HE. This point is also argued by Luckett et al. (2019) in research that looked at the impact of the regulative discourse on black student's experiences of the university. Luckett et al. (2019) borrow and adapt Bernstein's framework to make sense of a South African context. Thus, I will also borrow this adapted framework to make sense of the MIC100 curriculum.

Using the works of the scholars above, this research project will frame MIC100 as a project of social justice through the decolonization of the curriculum. The discussion of findings will also show ways in which work at the level of the hidden curriculum/regulative discourse has been critical in the pursuit of social justice in the case study.

3.11 Theories of language in the post-colony

In this section, I discuss three broad views that have significance in exploring the language question at UMP, particularly in the case of MIC100. These broad views are:

1. English as a global language that presents better opportunities than indigenous languages.
2. Language as a carrier of a people's culture and an instrument for navigating between self and the other.

3. Translanguaging as a way of recognising and employing all available linguistic resources from any language in a multilingual context to facilitate epistemic access and parity of participation.

The first view is represented by scholars such as Chinua Achebe (1997) and Neville Alexander (2013). In their view English is a gift that has simplified communication across ethnic and national boundaries. Aware of the colonial policies that imposed European languages on Africans, Achebe nevertheless argues that if colonialism “failed to give them [Africans] a song, it at least gave them a tongue, for sighing” (1997, 344). Thus, English for Achebe can and should be used as a resource, although one that emerges from an historical context unfavourable to Africans. This stance from Achebe is solidified by his insistence that “I have been given this language and I intend to use it” (ibid.: 348), while encouraging and respecting those who think otherwise about the use of English. Achebe echoes scholars such as Baahen, who call it “a mixed blessing” (2000: 797) in that colonialism led to “the provision of a lingua franca for each colony or set of colonies” (2000: 797). The imposition of colonial languages by Europe is considered a “blessing” in that:

In all the colonies, the mother tongue of the colonial power, either in its pure or pidgin form, became the official and business language and in many cases the main means of communication between the numerous linguistic groups that constitute the population of each colony (ibid.).

What Baahen describes became true to the South African context, because even after the number of official spoken languages increased from two (English and Afrikaans) to eleven, English dominates.

Alexander, on the other hand, supports the use of African languages while presenting English as a more feasible language for international engagement. Thus, he proposes that “[a]t the very least, people ought to know their home language and English” (2013: 52). While advocating for the use of African languages, he insists on English as one of the languages that should be used in any combination of languages in South Africa’s language policy. Thus:

... the ideal situation would be one in which every person in South Africa would be able to speak fluently his/her home language, English, and one or more of the other regionally important languages (ibid.).

In this case English becomes the ‘must have’ of South African languages. Thus, in any given configuration of languages, English retains a higher value and status.

The second view, which is promoted by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1981), recognises the dual character of language in that a language "is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" (13). Thus, using Ngũgĩ's framing, recognition of African languages in the educational process also entails recognition of African cultures. This dual recognition, I argue, leads to a third recognition: that of students who come from marginalised cultures. This could have a positive impact on their self-esteem. It is worth noting, though, that the process I describe here is not straightforward and is complicated by the internalisation of anglonormativity on the part of the university and by the students themselves. Anglonormativity refers to the demand that students "should be proficient in English, and are viewed as deviant or deficient if they are not" (McKinney, 2016: xvi). Thus, anglonormativity is one of the features of coloniality in the psyches of both descendants of the colonizers and the formerly colonized, although the latter bear the learning disadvantages. For Ngũgĩ, the marginalisation of African languages works alongside the marginalisation of African cultures. Accordingly, the more African languages are used, the more potential there is for recognition of speakers of these languages and their cultures.

Turning to the third view of the language question, the literature on translanguageing offers this practice as an alternative answer to the question of which language(s) should be used in teaching and learning. Translanguageing practice:

... takes the theoretical approach that multilingualism is the norm in South Africa, not monolingualism, and works with a pedagogic approach that problematises the notion of discrete homogenous languages and "standard language" in the South African context (Hurst and Mona, 2017: 128).

In terms of the complications pointed out above in the first and second view, translanguageing envisages a teaching and learning situation in which English, is just one of the available languages that can be used for the benefits that they present in any given context. Translanguageing is less concerned with whether English should be used, and more focused on which linguistic resources are best suited for a given context. The benefits of translanguageing in relation to the first two of the three views are twofold. It allows those who wish to use English to do so; secondly African languages receive recognition, and their speakers may choose how they wish to use these languages, including a combination with English. In other words, translanguageing provides more room for speakers to exercise their agency. By capitalising on a combination of multiple linguistic resources, translanguageing requires English to coexist with other languages, instead of replacing African languages. In this way

translanguaging complements the decolonial concept of pluriversality. Just as in knowledge production, decoloniality advocates for ecologies of knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), translanguaging advocates for ecologies of linguistic resources.

The three broad views of language presented above will be used to discuss UMP's language practices at an institutional level, and at the course level in MIC100.

3.12 Language policies in colonial & postcolonial Mzansi

The South African Constitution recognises the following eleven spoken languages as having official status: sePedi, seSotho, seTswana, siSwati, tshiVenda, xiTsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act no. 108 of 1996: 4). Sign Language was approved by Parliament in 2022 and became the 12th official language in 2023. The Constitution also calls for measures to redress the marginalisation of indigenous languages:

Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages (ibid.).

In response to this call, several steps have been taken, and I discuss some of them below.

3.12. 1 PanSALB

The Pan South African Language Board Act (PanSALB Act) of 1995 established and mandated the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB):

...to develop and promote equitable use of all the official languages of the Republic, and to create an environment that is conducive for the use of any other language (other than official languages) used in South Africa for various purposes (PanSALB Language Policy, nd: 2)

It is worth noting that the eleven official spoken languages were determined in the country's Interim Constitution before the formation of PanSALB. The board continues to function within this understanding of what is considered an official language as listed in the Constitution, which came into effect in 1997, with South African Sign Language having been added in 2023, following approval by Parliament. While upholding the eleven spoken languages as official, PanSALB recognises other language communities in South Africa that do not enjoy official status. The amended PanSALB Act of 1999 lists some of these non-official languages. It is noteworthy that besides 'Khoi', 'San'²⁷, and South African Sign Language, the only other non-

²⁷ I acknowledge that some of the naming of these languages is problematic and somewhat offensive, since speakers of these languages would not ordinarily have identified themselves as 'San' for example. It is beyond

official languages listed under “including” in the amended act are: “German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu and Urdu” (PanSALB Act, 1999: 9). Arabic, Hebrew, and Sanskrit are listed along with “other languages used for religious purposes in South Africa” (ibid.). In the language justice chapters, my analysis of the ‘other’ languages, particularly sePulane, reflects a neglect of those African languages in South Africa that have not been codified, such as sePulana, siHlubi, sePai and others that remain spoken in different rural parts of the country. The development objective of PanSALB concentrates on the official languages, and only considers the unofficial ones with the goal of creating “an environment that is conducive” for their use (PanSALB Language Policy, nd: 2). I see this as a contradictory approach. On the one hand PanSALB seeks to achieve language justice, while on the other it maintains the status quo by not problematising the question of official status, particularly for the ‘other’ uncoded languages. It is beyond the scope of this study to delve into the debates about what constitutes a language. Suffice it to highlight that in Mzansi codification through the Latin/Roman alphabet has been used as a prerequisite (likely the main one) for the classification of our official languages as official. Hence, all the spoken South African languages, although with broad differences, share a common non-African alphabet.²⁸ Thus, official status relies heavily on the written dimension of the languages and conformity to the Latin Alphabet, while in practice the use of indigenous languages in Mzansi is generally oral.

3.12.2 Language in education

In the education sector, the steps taken to promote multilingualism include the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996, which recognises the right “of every student to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable” (1996: 6). From the NEPA of 1996 emerged the Language in Education Policy (LEP) of 1997, alongside the Norms and Standards Regarding Language Policy (NSRLP) of 1997, which emerged from the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996. The LEP (1997) rejects former apartheid language policies as obstacles to access and success in the educational sector. Thus, the LEP:

...is meant to facilitate communication across the barriers of colour, language and region, while at the same time creating an environment in which respect for languages other than one’s own would be encouraged (LEP, 1997: 1)

the scope of this study to delve into the debates on the terminology of ‘Khoi’ and ‘San’. Suffice it to acknowledge that the vocabulary remains contested.

²⁸ It is worth noting that there are writing systems that are more indigenous and more in harmony with African languages, such as Isibheqe Sohlamvu: <https://isibheqe.org.za>

However, almost three decades after the proclamation of this policy, language barriers remain high in education, particularly in HE where English is the dominant language. The gap between what the early post-1994 policies call for and what happens in actual practice is articulated below:

Though the Constitution recognises 11 official languages, in practice these do not have equal status, while in schooling, the only languages of instruction that are supported after Grade 4 are English and Afrikaans (Christie and McKinney, 2017: 167).

The problem of limiting languages of instruction to English and Afrikaans means that African languages remain on the periphery of formal knowledge production and academic engagement.

3.12.3 Higher education language policy

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has proposed policies on how universities should approach the language question. In 2002, the then Ministry of Education, which included higher education, adopted a Language Policy for Higher Education. In the introduction to this policy, the ministry stated that:

The role of language and access to language skills is critical to ensure the right of individuals to realise their full potential to participate in and contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political life of South African society (Ministry of Education, 2002: 4)

This statement acknowledges the importance of HE language policies. It also admits that these languages have hindered HE students:

Language has been and continues to be a barrier to access and success in higher education, both in the sense that African and other languages have not been developed as academic/scientific languages and in so far as the majority of students entering higher education are not fully proficient in English and Afrikaans. (ibid.: 4-5).

However, the last part of the above paragraph, about the majority of students reflects an element of deficit thinking. This deficit thinking focuses on the lack of English and Afrikaans proficiency on the part of students as the problem. It is also on this second part that many South African universities have focused in addressing the language problem. This conceptualisation of the problem can be summarised as follows:

The dominant thinking in higher education [in South Africa] attempts to understand student difficulty by framing students and their families of origin as lacking some of the academic and cultural resources necessary to succeed in what is presumed to be a fair and open society. This constitutes a deficit thinking model: it focuses on inadequacies of students and aims to “fix” this problem (Smit, 2012: 369)

This is evident in the establishment of various interventions and support projects, such as writing centres and foundation courses to help students become proficient in academic English. The exclusion of indigenous languages from academia is a critical part of the problem that has not been addressed in any serious way. This also applies to the establishment of UMP. It is the newest university in the country, yet it still operates with English as the dominant language of instruction and official communication. This dominance of English even within a new ‘postcolonial’ university is evidence that South Africa’s HE remains entrenched in coloniality. In other words, the present South African university still follows the script of the colonial project which sought, inter alia, to use education to advance European imperialism while pretending to present an image and goal of civilisation pursued through formal education. To black people, English, and Afrikaans in some instances, is both a language of submission to capitalism and one of assimilation to Eurocentrism. The goal of submission to a form of racial capitalism was expressed by authorities during the apartheid era. For instance, in 1975, the then Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, Punt Janson, expressed the sentiment as follows:

A Black man may be trained to work on a farm or in a factory. He may work for an employer who is either English speaking or Afrikaans speaking and the man who has to give him instructions may be either English speaking or Afrikaans speaking. Why should we now start quarrelling about the medium of instruction among the Black people as well?... No, I have not consulted them and I am not going to consult them. I have consulted the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (cited in *The Daily Maverick*, 2018).

The Deputy Minister’s statement can be analyzed against the capitalist project in at least four connected ways:

1. These imposed languages enable the colonized to receive instruction from the colonizer, to meet the demands of the colonizer.
2. The colonized may hold a position of relative power to instruct the other colonized on behalf of the colonizer, but such instruction must be in the languages of the colonizer.
3. It is not in the interest of the colonizer to care for the language needs of the colonized.
4. Points 1) and 2) provide the rationale for an education system designed to fulfill white capitalist needs.

While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss the ‘Africanness’ of the Afrikaans language, it is worth noting that formal Afrikaans differs from the manner in which it is used by black people, particularly the ‘coloured’ community.

The colonial script that drove the dominance of English and Afrikaans in education can be summarised as follows:

... with only limited exceptions, before independence, higher education was not made available to the native populations. Rather, typically they were technically trained to serve the colonial system (Oviawe, 2016: 2).

While there is greater awareness of the language problem, with some changes where English is now more dominant than Afrikaans, indigenous languages remain marginalised or excluded.

The last paragraph of the introduction of the 2002 Language Policy for Higher Education, though, moves towards a more inclusive framing of how the language problem must be addressed:

The challenge facing higher education is to ensure the simultaneous development of a multilingual environment in which all our languages are developed as academic/scientific languages, while at the same time ensuring that the existing languages of instruction do not serve as a barrier to access and success (ibid.: 5).

It is noteworthy that at that time, English and Afrikaans combined accounted for 48% of ‘home languages’ represented by the student population. The remaining 52% was divided across all the indigenous South African languages as well as ‘unknown’ languages (Ministry of Education, 2002: 7). Disaggregating the 54%, we find that 32% of university and technikon students spoke Afrikaans as a home language, 16% spoke English, while the remaining students whose home language was neither Afrikaans nor English were actually divided into smaller percentages that made up the 52%. Thus, the majority of students did not come from English- or Afrikaans-speaking backgrounds, and were subjected to learning in languages other than their own. The fragments of percentages that made up the 52% might seem to complicate the question of language justice, since it would be impractical to require every South African university to function in all South African languages. However, the model of context specificity answers this problem. For example, at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) which is based in a region where isiZulu is the most spoken language, shifts in language policy have focused on strengthening the use of isiZulu by pursuing “the development and use of isiZulu as an additional medium of instruction” (UKZN, 2014: 2). UKZN’s strategy suggests that focus on regional language is a practical step towards language justice based on the institution’s location.

Despite the 2002 Language Policy for Higher Education document, SA indigenous languages remain marginalised, notwithstanding efforts in various parts of the system to address this

problem. In 2015, two decades into democracy, the Minister of DHET, Dr Blade Nzimande noted that “South Africa’s higher education system continues to be characterised by a pervasive marginalisation of indigenous African languages” (DHET, 2015: 3). Nzimande made this statement in his preamble to the “Report on the Use of African Languages as Mediums of Instruction in Higher Education” (2015). The report was an outcome of the Ministerial Advisory Panel on the Development of African Languages in Higher Education (MAPALHE), established in 2012 (DHET, 2020: 5).

According to Nzimande’s preamble (DHET, 2015), language injustice is one of several challenges that marginalised students face, and has contributed to high dropout rates. Such an admission means that linguistic injustice is not only about not recognising students’ linguistic capital, but also about hindering their chances of academic success, thus further perpetuating social and economic inequality.

The 2015 report problematises anglonormativity as marginalisation of speakers of indigenous languages by pointing out that “... the use of English as a common language of teaching and learning continues to create a differential educational experience and treatment of students who speak indigenous African languages”. These students are “denied meaningful participation and success in higher education, and their sociocultural backgrounds and experiences playing an insignificant role in the learning process (DHET, 2015: 11-12).

Viewed against social justice literature, the report points out that disparity of participation and success is perpetuated when higher education institutions insist on the dominance of English when English is the home language of a minority. Moreover, linguicide is also attempted, since black students experience their “sociocultural backgrounds and experiences playing an insignificant role in the learning process” (ibid.). From the point of view of Prah, the dominance of English not only hinders communication for speakers of indigenous languages, but also excludes their “histories, cultures, and indigenous knowledge” (Prah, 1999: 39). Given that the exclusion of African Languages (AL) in higher education harms the core business of universities, which is teaching and learning, the report confirms:

The disregard for ALs in HE manifests itself particularly in the throughput of students speaking languages other than English (LOTE) in HE, which is low compared to the numbers of students who gain access to HE (DHET, 2015: 11).

In response to some of the challenges of language reflected in the 2015 report, the DHET came up with the New Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions

(NLPPFHEIs) in 2020, which is a review of the 2002 “Language Policy for Higher Education” (DHET, 2020: 5). The new policy also admits that progress has been unsatisfactory:

From this report and others before it, it is apparent that there has been little progress made in exploring and exploiting the potential of African languages in facilitating access and success in higher education institutions (ibid.)

This new policy framework seeks partly to address the challenge of underusage of indigenous languages in HEIs. Thus,

The policy framework aims to promote and strengthen the use of all official languages across all functional domains of public higher education including scholarship; teaching and learning; as well as wider communication in line with Section 29(2) of the South African Constitution (ibid.).

Although the 2020 policy framework was promulgated after MIC100 had been established, it is interesting for this study that data from MIC100 provides some examples of how and why multilingualism should be encouraged. Such examples will be surfaced in Chapter 9.

3.13 Conclusion

This literature review and conceptual framework looked at decolonial theory as the overarching theory for this research. Having reviewed social justice literature, this chapter argues that social justice in Mzansi’s HE context requires decoloniality because colonialism is the root of most of the social injustices in South Africa’s HE system. Moreover, all the other emerging concepts such as IKS, race, and ubuntu will be looked at within the context of pursuing social justice, informed by decolonial theory. In other words, the key concepts will be implemented within a decolonial understanding of social justice.

Moreover, the chapter reviewed policy documents on language policy in HE. Since language policy is one of the main ways in which HE remains colonial, a decolonial language policy and practice is necessary. Thus, the literature on language in the postcolony, alongside the policy documents will be applied in making sense of language practices in MIC100.

Curriculum scholarship locates the curriculum as the key platform, for purposes of this case study. In other words, this scholarship identifies the curriculum as an area where coloniality and social injustice take place in HE. Thus, the curriculum conceptual resources arising from the literature will be instrumental in locating different problems and interventions in the appropriate dimensions of curriculum.

Therefore, the above key theories and conceptual framework arising from the literature review frame my understanding of the problem, and my analysis of MIC100 as a possible intervention towards a decolonial and socially just curriculum.

Chapter 4: Masungulo²⁹ ya UMP

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the historical context for the foundation of the University of Mpumalanga, including analysis of policy documents such as the Higher Education Act of 1997, the National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa (2001), and government's Development Framework for New Universities. I employed this data to surface the processes that led to the conceptualization and inception of the University of Mpumalanga. The chapter also analyzes internal UMP documents to understand how the institution's management built on the foundation established by the government for the new university.

4.2 The Higher Education Act of 1997

Almost four years after the advent of the democratic dispensation in Mzansi, the Higher Education Act of 1997 came into place. In its preamble, the act mentions the need to “[redress] past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access” (1997: 2), among several desirable goals. The act also establishes the Council on Higher Education (CHE), which has been pivotal, through its advisory role, in the decisions to establish new universities in South Africa. This act has therefore been central to the major decisions that the South African government has since taken to reshape the higher education environment.

4.3 National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa

In 2001, the National Plan on Higher Education in South Africa was established by the then Ministry of Education. The plan's purpose was to provide “an implementation framework and identify the strategic interventions and levers necessary for the transformation of the higher education system” (Ministry of Education, 2001). At the time (in 2001) the ministry did not believe:

... that the establishment of fully-fledged autonomous higher education institutions in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape would be in the best interests of the higher education system under current conditions (ibid.: 72).

Amongst reasons such as “efficiency and sustainability”, the Ministry was “convinced that the role of higher education as a national system must be jealously guarded against any claims that

²⁹ Masungulo directly means ‘beginning’ in xiTsonga, and can also be translated as ‘foundation’.

are based on and promote a narrow provincialism” (ibid.: 72). Within this understanding of the non-feasibility of establishing new universities in the two provinces, both provincial governments in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape suggested using the provinces’ existing college infrastructure in order to:

...serve as the focal point for the development of a coherent provision of higher education programmes linked to regional social, economic and labour market needs by a consortium of public higher education institutions in co-operation with the provincial governments (Ministry of Education, 2001: 73).

Thus, while Mpumalanga had provincial facilities such as the Agricultural College, the province also relied on Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), which is one of the universities based in the Gauteng Province that operated a satellite campus at Mbombela in Mpumalanga. The TUT satellite campus is still operational.

However, in 2009 the Ministry of Education was divided into two departments, namely Department of Basic Education (DBE), and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). In 2010 the DHET Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, contemplated the establishment of universities in the two provinces that had none – Mpumalanga and Northern Cape. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was tasked with advising the minister about this proposal. I summarise CHE’s advice below.

4.4 CHE’s advice on establishing new universities in Mpumalanga & the Northern Cape

In its advice to the minister, the CHE:

... accepts that there is a need to expand the higher education system to rectify the imbalances and inequities of the past and to address high-level skills and knowledge needs, which is a pre-requisite for social and economic development (CHE, 2011: 1).

In its rationale, CHE cites the rapid increase in the number of students who qualify for tertiary education. This increase had created a high demand for higher education, and “led to an unplanned growth in student enrolments” (CHE, 2011: ibid.). Higher education enrolment numbers from Mpumalanga substantiated the need for a new university in the province. According to CHE, the enrolment data “suggests that in the medium-to-long term the proposed university in Mpumalanga could have a stable enrolment of around 15 000 students (CHE, 2011: 3).

According to CHE, for at least their first ten years the new universities (CHE, 2011: 6) must focus on undergraduate programmes, while ensuring “that equity of access in the context of redressing past inequalities leads to equity of outcomes (ibid.: 3). CHE believed that throughput

and graduation rates would be enhanced by focusing on excellent teaching at undergraduate level (ibid.). Alongside focusing on undergraduate programmes, the CHE also recommended that “the research agenda of the university should primarily focus on issues of teaching and learning, including curriculum development” (CHE, 2011: 6-7). This recommendation presents UMP as a rare opportunity to imagine issues of teaching and learning in a post-apartheid context, particularly if teaching and learning would be the leading research theme in a university.

In terms of the identity of UMP, CHE recommended that there should be only two campuses, in order to build “a strong institutional identity and culture” (CHE, 2011: 5). The latter is the subject of Chapter 5 – UMP Institutional Thematic Analysis.

4.5 Development framework for new universities

Following the CHE’s advice, in 2012 the Department of Higher Education and Training came up with a framework for the development of the new universities, which I discuss below. Convinced of the need for establishing two universities in the provinces that had none, the DHET believed that this initiative was “an extension of current initiatives to expand the capacity of higher education institutions and to increase access considerably over the next 20-25 years” (2012: 4). This move should be viewed in light of an anticipated “increase in enrolment for higher education to 20% by 2016 and 23% by 2030 respectively (4-5).

The DHET’s document, “Development Framework for New Universities in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga” (2012):

... provides a framework within which the diverse elements and activities required for establishing the new universities may be conceptualized, planned, structured, prioritized, integrated and ordered (DHET, 2012: 2)

The document also cites the work of two task teams appointed in 2010. The task teams’ reports “were submitted to the Minister in September 2011, and subsequently to the Council on Higher Education for their advice” (DHET, 2012: 3). The task teams obtained input from “representatives of provincial and local government, members of industry and community interest groups” (ibid.: 2), which, according to the DHET, confirm “wide-ranging support for the establishment of the new universities in both the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga” (ibid.). The constituencies consulted comprised:

... various provincial and local government departments, representatives of major development initiatives in the provinces, academic institutions, industry players,

business and labour organisations and political parties, formations and forums (2012: 3).

The Development Framework envisages that the new universities will have significant symbolic roles as the only universities established after apartheid. Thus:

As South Africa's first new institutions of higher learning since 1994, the planned universities are envisaged as symbols of our new order, of democracy, inclusiveness, growth and opportunity. These institutions must become an enduring source of pride, both nationally and provincially (DHET, 2012: 3).

Significantly, in 2012 the government anticipated that the new universities would be sources of provincial pride, while in 2001 the then Ministry of Education cautioned against the promotion of "narrow provincialism" (2001: 72). Chapter 6 – MIC100 Curriculum – discusses elements of UMP's local context. At an institutional level, pursuing an identity that incorporates the university's immediate location has implications for locating the institution within the decolonial agenda. In establishing an African university, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "[t]he first thing to address is that of the identity of an African university" (2013: 50). This does not confine identity to geography, but it highlights that geography matters when it comes to the society with which the university should identify. CHE expands on the issue of institutional identity, thus:

The identity of the new university as the product of democracy is not determined by its physical infrastructure but by its vision, mission and values and, more importantly, by its responsiveness in academic terms to contributing to the knowledge and skills needs of South Africa (CHE, 2011: 6)

While the new universities are national assets, they are still expected to draw "on the individuality of each province to develop a unique academic focus" (DHET, 2012: 4), and to incorporate provincial specificity. The DHET's Development Framework envisages that these institutions will aspire to attract students nationally and from Africa (ibid.).

DHET imagines that the new universities will not be affected by the historical disparities that characterise South African HEIs. Thus, the Development Framework states that the new institutions "will be unencumbered by the history of advantage and disadvantage attached to institutions of higher learning established during the previous political dispensation" (DHET, 2012: 4). However, this view overlooks the fact that effects of colonialism and apartheid are not contained in a particular time and space. Since "coloniality survives colonialism" (Maldonado-Torres in Mignolo, 2010: 97), the end of a political and administrative era does not automatically negate patterns of injustice. In the case of UMP, this is evident in the

predominance of NSFAS-funded students, or the perpetuation of Anglonormativity which is part of a colonial framework of education that still disadvantages black students. Nevertheless, its foundation presents opportunities to limit or even block some of the colonial patterns in HE – particularly in the building of an institutional culture and identity.

The characteristics that the government envisages the new universities to embody include the ideals of democracy, social justice, Africanness, and economic advancement. They are summarised in the Development Framework (DHET, 2012: 4) as follows:

1. as *sites of learning and culture* which give expression to democracy and social justice and increase participation in political, social, cultural and economic life;
2. as *active participants* taking centre stage in addressing the challenges confronting society and playing their role in the context of a *Developmental State*;
3. as *African universities*, part of a broader network and community of African institutions of higher learning with a long tradition of scholarship, rooted in the African experience, contributing to African knowledge production and generating ideas and insights with global relevance;
4. as *21st century social institutions* that must develop innovative modalities of governance, funding, teaching and learning, research and civic engagement in order to respond to ever-changing social, cultural, political, environmental and economic demands;
5. as *relevant leaders of the knowledge economy*, actively engaging communities to produce knowledge for social development and delivering innovation-driven research for commercial and economic advancement.

Point 4 above is significant, because imagining universities as “social institutions” raises the question of the purpose of the contemporary university, which Chapter 7 (Ubuntu) examines. Importantly, by naming the social situatedness of an institution as a foundational goal, the rationale for social justice could be more easily expressed. Point 1 above adds further support for social justice since it envisages that the new institutions will “increase participation” in different spheres of life.

The envisaged traits of the new South African universities, based on the above 5-point summary, I argue, acknowledge that universities should not exist only for the elite and the advancement of capitalism. It is, therefore, significant – at least for purposes of this study, that social justice is explicitly listed among the anticipated traits of the new universities.

While it is expected that each university will forge its own identity, the DHET believes that several principles should guide the identity formation of these new institutions:

1. Expansion of national academic capacity.
2. Comprehensive universities designed for growth and flexibility.
3. Equity, access and success.
4. Quality and academic excellence.
5. Supporting infrastructure, facilities and services.
6. Place-relevant and engaged.
7. Sustainability.

Given the age of the two universities, it may be premature to adequately measure the extent to which an institution has adhered to the above seven principles. However, some indicators of potential can be identified for some of the principles. Thus, I discuss these briefly for UMP.

Principle 1 is almost practically inevitable by virtue of a university now existing in a province where there was none. One of the ways in which UMP does this is by affording admission to students who would ordinarily not meet entrance requirements for older universities. Having worked during orientation³⁰ to give curriculum advice to students, more than 90% of the students whom I asked if UMP was their first-choice university said it was not. To some students, UMP was not even their second-choice university. This implies that if the UMP option had been unavailable, such students would not be part of South Africa's academic project.

Another way in which UMP contributes to the country's academic capacity is through the Academic Talent Stewardship Programme, which identifies academically promising students and trains them to be lecturers.

In terms of Point 2, UMP seems to be working towards being a comprehensive university as can already be seen in the diversity of programmes offered, ranging from Agriculture, Law, Education, Hospitality, and Science. At the time of this research, the university was still in the process of expanding its infrastructure to increase its programme offerings.

For purposes of this study, Point 3 is perhaps the most important as it deals with equity, access, and success, which I argue should go together. I have observed that issues of equity in physical access have been affected by challenges of administration, particularly the coordination of

³⁰ This is the time of the year when students are introduced to the university and receive guidance from academic staff in order to choose their courses.

student funding between the university and NSFAS. The challenges of NSFAS seem to be worsening as of the time of writing this dissertation in 2023. These financial issues entail that students do not have security of accommodation, and they face difficulties with enrolment due to nonpayment. While the funding issues affect all HEIs, for UMP this matter is more critical since almost all UMP students rely on state funding. Thus, UMP's work towards equity and access faces a larger obstacle, which entails a threat to student success. Another layer of the concept of access, which I deal with in more detail in the MIC100 Curriculum chapter, is epistemic access. While MIC100 is an example of how UMP works towards epistemic access, the university in general does not have a clearly stipulated framework to achieve this. The lack of an institutional language policy, for example, entails that English continues to dominate and block access to African home-language speakers. Success, against these conditions, remains threatened.

The issue of place-relevance, pointed out in Point 6 is engaged with in the MIC100 Curriculum chapter. Suffice here to say that UMP has been intentional in factoring in the geographical context of the institution in its different spheres – such as curriculum, outreach programs, stakeholder relations, inter alia. UMP's approach to place-relevance is aligned with DHET's guidelines, which state:

The new universities should be integrated into their social, cultural, economic and built environments and contribute to social and economic development and renewal as fully fledged members of their communities. The policies, structures and priorities of the universities must reflect their commitment to engagement with the surrounding communities and their curricula should give expression to their proactive pursuit of opportunities for such engagement as a means to enrich the student experience (DHET, 2012: 7).

All the above provisions of the Development Framework require a contextualization of the location of each university. Thus, DHET's analysis of the Mpumalanga province provides some of the context that is to be factored into the establishment of the University of Mpumalanga, as follows:

The Mpumalanga Province covers 6.3% of the country and is home to 7.2% of the South African population. Its economy makes the fifth largest contribution to the national economy and the province is a substantial role-player in the national mining and utilities, manufacturing, transport and community services sectors. Efforts to create employment are based on infrastructure development, climate change and the green economy, agriculture and agro-processing, rural development, tourism, business services, and, in the public sector, a focus on health, education, combating crime,

expansion in public works, a youth development programme and community (DHET, 2012: 10)

It is worth noting that the DHET's contextualization focuses mainly on the economic aspect and does not provide a reflection on the social and cultural orientation of the province. This, I argue, presents a risk of conflict with the intention to establish a university that is impactful on all spheres of life. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 on ubuntu, universities, I argue, are supposed to work not only for the economic and capitalist advancement of those who have access to them.

4.6 The New Universities Project Management Team

DHET appointed the University of Witwatersrand to form the New Universities Project Management Team (NUPMT). The work of this team is summarised as follows:

While this project has included a significant focus on academic and institutional development, it has been essentially about the delivery of university infrastructure. Like all infrastructure projects it commenced with the development of a business case, has been delivered through a series of project phases, including planning, design, construction and commissioning, and has concluded with the close out of the related contractual arrangements, and where apposite, with their handover to the newly established institutions (NUPMT, 2017: 10).

It is against this background that Sol Plaatje University and the University of Mpumalanga were established. The work of the NUPMT overlapped with the official establishment dates of the universities. For example, UMP was officially established in 2013 while the NUPMT proceeded with the remaining phases of its work at UMP until late 2014, at which point the NUPMT transitioned to a role that supported "institutional development" (NUPMT, 2017: 284). In 2014, the first Vice Chancellor of UMP was appointed, and she started her term on 1 November. The operations that were formerly overseen by the NUPMT were taken over by UMP management in 2014.

4.7 UMP 2022: A seven-year strategic plan

Following the appointment of the first Vice Chancellor, UMP released its seven-year strategic plan, dubbed *UMP 2022* in June 2015. *UMP 2022* "is a substantive and direction setting document that constitutes a framework for the University's development during the next seven years" (1). *UMP 2022* is not exhaustive in terms of the envisaged trajectory of UMP, but it still provides the main framework for all the institution's additional plans:

The Strategic Plan is the overarching planning document for UMP within an integrated planning process and will be supported by separate plans for teaching and learning

(Academic Plan), research, community engagement, infrastructure including maintenance, and annual institutional performance plans (ibid.).

UMP 2022 is therefore a founding document that was drawn up within the institution, unlike other external policy documents such as DHET's Development Framework (2012). Amongst the many roles of the *UMP 2022*, is the provision of direction in both maintaining and amending already existing higher education activities, and establishing new activities. *UMP 2022* presents the university as "rooted in its home in Mpumalanga" (2015: 1). Such rootedness requires the institution to be "responsive to its immediate political, socio-economic, geographic and historic context, and its place in the world" (ibid.). This positioning of the university echoes some of the desirable traits for the new universities in the DHET's Development Framework (2012), particularly that of place-relevance, which the dissertation discusses later. Moreover, *UMP 2022* presents the institution as a comprehensive one that combines the traditional university and the university of technology. This entails configuring a PQM (Programme Qualification Mix) which is explained as one that:

... balances general and professionally oriented education normally associated with traditional universities, with vocationally and technologically oriented teaching and learning programmes normally associated with universities of technology (*UMP 2022*, 2015: 2).

This configuration of teaching and learning is complemented by "discipline based basic research as well as multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary applied research and technological innovation" (ibid.). Thus, both teaching and research at UMP should meet the diversity of needs to which the institution will have to respond, in different spheres of life and different geographical contexts. The direction of *UMP 2022* is taken from various government reports that emerged in the previous ten years, that highlighted several needs to which the institution should respond:

These include improving the extent and quality of health and other social services; providing improved education and training services and opportunities; strengthening rural development, environmental management, food provision and food security, and advancing land reform; advancing entrepreneurship, economic growth and investment, and accelerating job creation; and strengthening democracy and social equality, improving governance and public accountability, advancing personal and social security coupled to decreasing levels of criminal activity and corruption (*UMP 2022*, 2015: 2-3).

Several issues in the above paragraph could enable UMP to respond richly to the question of the purpose of the contemporary university. While the DHET's Development Framework

(2012) emphasises the economic sphere of life, the university's own analysis of the problems to which it should respond is more diverse. There the economic sphere is merely one of mentioned areas. Assessments of the extent to which the university responds to the problems identified must acknowledge the age of the institution. However, the case of MIC100 reveals several of the ways in which the university responds to some of the identified problems. It is these responses that will shape the role of UMP as a contemporary university.

4.8 UMP Annual Reports to the Minister of Higher Education & Training

Since 2016, UMP has released annual reports to the Minister of Higher Education and Training. While I will not discuss the annual reports exhaustively, portions of the first Annual Report, released in 2016 deserve attention especially because the report established how the university will implement the DHET's expectations and those set out in the *UMP 2022* strategic framework.

Key components of the 2016 UMP Annual Report are the measurements of the institution's performance against the four targets that were set by DHET, namely "Access, Success, Efficiency and Research output" (UMP Annual Report, 2016: 4). In my analysis of the 2016 Annual Report, UMP performed well, as illustrated below:

4.8.1 Access

Targets approved by DHET "were exceeded by 3-8%. These were the headcount enrolments... for both undergraduates and postgraduate studies" (ibid.: 4). Parts of the missed access targets include the first-time entrant undergraduates where 613 was achieved instead of 620, a shortfall of 1%. The other shortfall is the "enrolments for Business Management where the target was missed by 8% (147 students vs 135 enrolled in 2016)" (ibid.). Importantly, the university quantifies success in terms of enrolment numbers, but epistemic access is not a performance indicator. In effect, its own evaluation does not reflect on whether the students granted physical access can effectively access the curriculum. An evaluation process which relies mainly on numbers will likely not reflect on the quality of student's experiences. From a social justice perspective, the numbers may not fully explain whether students are thriving.

4.8.2 Success

The report states that "UMP met its success rate target of 14% and exceeded its target on undergraduate output in the life and physical sciences by 4%" (ibid.). This success rate is worth

considering because South Africa had the world's lowest graduation rate³¹, which was 15% in 2008 (Letseka and Maile, 2008). This is reflected in the CHE's cohort analysis which reveals that in 2016 only 31% of three-year degree students graduated within the correct time (CHE, 2023). While one might measure UMP's success by students who graduate and exit the system, the numbers do not reveal the quality of their educational experiences. It is therefore difficult to estimate the kinds of value systems that the graduates acquired. Consequently, there was a missed opportunity for assessing how UMP fares in bringing its values to life through teaching and learning.

4.8.3 Efficiency

This target looks at the numbers of "Instructional/Research professional staff including part time staff" (ibid.). The report states that "[it] was only the Instructional/Research professional staff including part time staff that was exceeded by 6% while the rest had variances ranging from 2-50%" (ibid.). However, linked to the points raised above about access and graduation success, using personnel numbers to measure efficiency does not address questions about the quality of their work. The numbers do not show whether the staff members met students' needs efficiently.

4.8.4 Research output

The target for research output "per Instructional/Research staff was 0.6³²" (UMP, 2016: 4), and the institution achieved 0.54. The report offers various explanations, including the fact that a large number of the staff were inherited from "former Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA) where research was not encouraged" (ibid.).

4.8.5 Possible overreliance on quantity

The UMP Institutional Thematic Analysis chapter will unpack the language of the institution in more detail. Here it is worth highlighting the reliance on quantity as a performance measure against the four main targets agreed between UMP and DHET. The annual reports do provide qualitative reflections on the institution's activities, but from a social justice perspective, the question of how people are faring in the institution should include some explanation of the experiences behind the numbers. For example, high pass rates do not reveal if students were respected and recognised in the process of pursuing their passes. Thus, the institution could

³¹ According to the South African Council on Higher Education, "...graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of graduates of a given academic year by the total headcount enrolments of that year. They are not the same as throughput rates" (CHE, 2012: iv).

³² The allocation of research output units range from 0.5 units for a conference proceeding, to 10 units for a book of 300 pages as explained by UCT's Publication count guidelines (nd): <https://uct.ac.za/research-support-hub/outputs/publication-count>

perform well in terms of number of passes, but fail to deal with issues of status inequality. For example, student ‘success’ might entail assimilation. The numbers do not explain how students experience the institution, which is a key factor when one explores how the institution responds to the social dimension of its business, namely teaching and learning as a sociocultural process. This overreliance on numbers is consistent with neoliberal public management discourse that is framed through business standards, particularly the pursuit of developmentalism.

4.9 MIC100 as a core part of UMP’s foundation

In order to realise the role of UMP as an African university, a Deputy Vice Chancellor for the Academic portfolio issued the “Proposal for a Core Common Course at UMP” (PCCCUMP). The proposal responds to the inauguration speech of the first Vice Chancellor in 2015 and aims to contribute towards the fulfilment of *UMP 2022*. Among the reasons for establishing MIC100 as the flagship course is that the course will enable students to “enhance their awareness of their place in Africa and its relation to the wider world, both past and the present” (PCCCUMP, nd: 1). The chapter on the MIC100 Curriculum discusses the curriculum issues of this common course in more detail. Suffices at this point to highlight that the course is envisaged as a means to “shift towards a more Afrocentric curriculum and scholarship that have emerged in Africa these past several decades” (ibid.). While such a move can be considered progressive, it raises a question about the rest of the courses offered by the institution. In other words, does MIC100 become *the* go-to course for decolonial approaches, and do the rest of the courses at the UMP not have to engage with the idea of an African university?

While the proposal recognises “the value and relevance of much Western or Eurocentric scholarship, especially in a globalising world” (ibid.: 2), it also envisages UMP as a “postcolonial university” (ibid.) that “intends to offer a unique opportunity for students to explore and integrate alternative epistemologies, perspectives and strategies into its ethos and curricula” (ibid.). Chapter 5 will discuss in more detail the question of upholding Eurocentric scholarship while aiming to decolonize. Suffice it here to point out that at the foundational stages of the university, a place for Eurocentricity seems to be reserved broadly, while the decolonial curriculum seems to be reserved for one particular course – MIC100.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the context of the University of Mpumalanga's foundation. The discussion examined the South African higher education context after 1994 to point out the disparities inherited from apartheid, and how government has responded to these disparities. The policy framework discussed above aimed to consolidate the decision-making processes that Mzansi's government went through before establishing the University of Mpumalanga. The discussion has also reflected on how the envisaged trajectory of the university, in terms of its activities, values and positioning, is influenced by the government's views on what a post-apartheid university should entail. Therefore, I discussed some of the key documents detailing the foundation and envisaged trajectory of UMP based on decisions taken within the institution that simultaneously mirrored the external (government) ideals about the institution. I ended the discussion with a brief examination of the proposal that initiated the establishment of MIC100 as a flagship course. I also highlighted a key question about the trajectory of UMP – whether it seeks an African identity while relegating decoloniality to MIC100 and preserving Eurocentrism.

Chapter 5: UMP's discursive trajectory: A thematic analysis

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present my thematic analysis of UMP's institutional discourse – in other words, how the university formally speaks about itself. The thematic analysis was conducted on UMP's founding documents to explore how the university's language works in relation to the university's envisaged trajectory. The analysis explores whether UMP's 'official' discursive practice reproduces or challenges some of the issues that characterise South Africa's HE sector outlined in the problem statement. There I argue that being new does not automatically free a university from coloniality – the darker side of modernity (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000). This means that though UMP is new, it remains implicated in the problem of coloniality which the institution can address or perpetuate. The thematic analysis was undertaken at the institutional level, and I analyzed documents generally representative of the whole institution.

A thematic analysis identifies “patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017: 3352). The present analysis is not exhaustive. It focuses mainly on texts that help to make sense of how UMP views itself in relation to the research question. In other words, with the research question exploring whether MIC100 exemplifies a socially just curriculum, the analysis explores how the rest of the institution imagines and represents itself and its context. Subsequently, the analysis draws parallels between UMP and the problem statement as explained above.

5.2 The idea of an 'African' university

In UMP's 'Pioneering Journey', which is published on the university website, the university “positions itself as an African University” (n.d). This articulation is key to framing the university's identity and the role that it is expected to play. In its strategic priorities, UMP states that “[t]he newness of the University in many ways provides space and opportunity for us to define ourselves as a distinct African University which does ‘different things differently’” (UMP 2022, 2015: 3). This self-positioning discourse also raises questions about what it means to be an African university. I identify two features: namely a problematisation of the absence of Africanness in African universities; a cue for the university's endeavours to reflect its desired identity.

The first feature of this theme raises a general question about the identities of universities that are in Africa: can a university exist in Africa and still not be African? Put differently, why would a university that exists in Africa have to state that it is African? In this analysis, I will not necessarily answer this question. Suffice it to point to those parts of the literature review

that deal with the issue of universities in Africa taking up the orientation of universities in the West.

The second feature is a cue for the university's endeavours to reflect its identity, and is tied to the first. While the first feature points out that Africanness for a university in Africa cannot be assumed, the second lays the foundation for consciously positioning itself as African. It follows that UMP's discourse permits all aspects of the university to be assessed for their Africanness. This positionality creates the expectation that the endeavours of the institution will reflect Africanness. The newness of the university, according to the UMP 2022, is central to the university's ability to Africanise, because that presents "an opportunity to learn from the past and shape a new African University for the future" (UMP 2022, 2015: 4). The following extract from UMP 2022 indicates what UMP means by an 'African' university:

Being an 'African university' does not merely refer to UMP's geographical location but more so to its character and identity being informed firstly by an African paradigm of indigenous knowledge, culture and life orientation and secondly also by a broadly western paradigm of knowledge, culture and life orientation (UMP 2022, 2015: 5)

In UMP's definition of an 'African' university, 'African' is the primary source of its identity, while 'western paradigm' is the second. However, my observation of the institution is that the primacy of 'Africa', whether in the "paradigm of knowledge, culture" (ibid.) or in "life orientation" (ibid.), is far from being realised. This does not mean that interventions such as MIC100 do not exhibit steps in the right direction, but it is worth noting that MIC100 is but one course in the institution. This implies that all courses, with limits on the courses in African languages, continue to follow the Western script (Soudien, 2010). For UMP, therefore, the question of what it really entails to adopt an African paradigm in the business of the university remains to be answered. For instance, given its student demographics, the absence of a language policy means that the institution continues to miss an opportunity to deal with a low-hanging fruit. In other words, the university aspires to an African identity, yet its formal language practices exclude the majority of the languages represented in the institution and spoken by African students.

On the other hand, the supposedly secondary "broadly western paradigm" (UMP 2022, 2015) seems to be first. This is notwithstanding the fact that the institutional culture, particularly in terms of informal interactions, mirrors the institution's geographical location. However, to the extent that at a policy level, particularly in framing curricular practices, there is no provision for 'Africanising' the core business of the institution, I argue that the realisation of an African

identity risks stagnation at a cosmetic level. In other words, even a flagship intervention such as MIC100 might end up as ‘window-dressing’ if the rest of the institution does not adopt and adapt some of the approaches that have emerged from MIC100. As a result, the institution could end up reproducing patterns of dominance, since a “western paradigm” (UMP 2022) is easier to fulfill, given the colonial framework within which universities operate.

Nevertheless, that UMP explicitly positions itself as an African university remains useful, because that makes it possible to establish a framework for the rest of the institution’s progression – as the case of MIC100 shows. The institutional discourse provides a rationale for core activities of the institution to also seek an ‘African’ orientation. Further, this discourse can be used to encourage decolonial efforts that work against Eurocentrism.

5.3 The question of development

In the narrative of ‘Our Pioneering Journey’, UMP talks about the “shaping of our developmental trajectory”. In its mission statement, the university also seeks to be “[a]n African University leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation” (UMP Vision and Mission). While it is not possible to determine conclusively what the university means by ‘development’ at textual value, this concept is consistent with the United Nation (UN)’s discourse of sustainable development goals, and reflects South Africa’s UN membership. However, as pointed out earlier, the concepts of development and developmentalism are regarded as problematic in the literature on coloniality and modernity (for example, Mignolo, 2012; Ferguson, 1994; Escobar, 1995). Considering the literature that problematises the concept of development, UMP’s use of the term might contradict the institution’s aim of pursuing the Africanness mentioned in the university’s Vision and Mission.

There is insufficient space here for a fully-fledged analysis of all the themes that emerged from the documentary data analysis. However, due to the frequent occurrence of the theme of development, it is necessary to provide a historical context for development discourse. Development, as a historical discourse, is far from innocent, and has been central in reinforcing coloniality and marginalising those framed as needing development (Ferguson, 1994; Escobar; 1995).

Escobar presents a history of ‘development’ as a discourse that sought to reorganise the world. Thus, he explains:

As Western experts and politicians started to see certain conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America as a problem – mostly what was perceived as poverty and backwardness

– a new domain of thought and experience, namely, development, came into being, resulting in a new strategy for dealing with the alleged problems. Initiated in the United States and Western Europe, this strategy became in a few years a powerful force in the Third World (1995: 6).

It is noteworthy that the period when development was initially advanced to ‘solve’ problems of the then called Third World countries, was also the time when many colonized countries were gaining independence. However, development became another way for the former colonizers to exercise power on the colonized nations (Escobar, 1995), and some of that power and its effects are still active today. Thus, ‘development’ according to scholars such as Escobar, may entail a perpetuation of coloniality. Following Escobar’s argument means that by adopting the development discourse, UMP may be presenting itself as already deficient and ‘backward’, particularly due to ‘development’s tendency to measure progress against standards from the Global North. Even where UMP is not “backward”, Escobar’s argument means that UMP may seek to ‘develop’ those who appear to fall short – most likely students and the wider community that UMP should serve.

There is a variation of development discourse that seeks to sanitise it, and make it more contemporary and relevant. For example:

Development needs to be reframed from narrowly tackling poverty and vulnerability, to navigating complex challenges in ways that reduce inequalities and build more sustainable, inclusive and secure futures for people and societies (Aghajanian and Allouche, 2016: 6)

UMP seems to also operate within the ‘sanitised’ version of development, as evident for example in its aim to create “opportunities for sustainable development through innovation” (UMP Vision and Mission). However, scholars such Escobar warn that development, as a discourse, carries serious limitations, because “it created a space in which only certain things could be said and even imagined” (Escobar, 1995: 39). This argument, in the context of a new university such as UMP, raises the question of what the university could not be allowing itself to imagine or say by working within the development discourse?

One of the dangers of development, according to Escobar, is the discourse’s insistence on modernisation, which seeks materialistic solutions to all human problems. In other words, “[o]nly through material advancement could social, cultural, and political progress be achieved” (Escobar, 1995: 39-40). According to Escobar, what UMP refers to as ‘innovation’ could be read as modernisation in the Eurocentric sense. The implication of modernisation

through development is the likely marginalisation of epistemes and ontologies that operate outside of the material world. This threatens UMP's pursuit of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), whose epistemic approaches may have to recognise spirituality, especially in terms of the "African paradigm" that UMP claims (2015). In terms of ontological marginalisation, Escobar warns that:

Development assumes a teleology to the extent that it proposes that the natives will sooner or later be reformed; at the same time, however, it reproduces endlessly the separation between reformers and those to be reformed by keeping alive the premise of the Third World as different and inferior, as having a limited humanity in relation to the accomplished European (Escobar, 1995: 53-54).

The ontological challenge of development also implicates UMP's use of this discourse when the institution speaks about personal improvement or progress for staff and students. For example, in its pursuit of broadening access and increasing success, the university will employ "[d]evelopment programmes for academic staff" (UMP Teaching and Learning Policy, 2016: 5), as part of its plan. Co-curricular activities are said to play "a crucial role in the holistic development of the students" (ibid.: 6). Against a consideration of the historical background of development as pointed out by Escobar, the university runs the risk of implying that it will modernise those who are 'inferior'. The development discourse argues that those considered to be inferior are people of the so-called Third World.

As noted above, I do not wish to ignore the possibility that UMP might be using the development discourse in some of the institution's own terms, and with the best of intentions. I am pointing out possible signs of the dangers associated with developmentalism. For instance, UMP may seek to 'develop' students in a manner that does not disrespect the students. However, the clues of modernity in the institutional discourse, alongside the frequency of the development discourse, necessitate caution. For example, while the university seeks to 'develop' students, and introduce them to IKS, the institution is cognisant that "for many students their future employment prospects depend on knowledge and engagement with western epistemologies and scientific endeavour" (UMP Proposal for a Common Course, nd: 7). In effect, while IKS are necessary, there are certain requirements for students to participate in "Euromodernity" (Dei, 2012). Euromodernity, though "comes at emotional, psychological, mental and material costs to us individually and collectively" (ibid.: 104-105).

UMP's position, I argue, assumes that scientific knowledge is the preserve of the West – as if there is a separation between science and IKS. Here UMP presents the theme of West-IKS as

if the promotion of ‘Africanness’ and IKS requires justification. Cognisance of the colonial structure that imposes Eurocentrism in academia, I argue, highlights that it is necessary for the institution to use its agency to shape its trajectory without defending Eurocentrism. Africanness, on the other hand, still needs advocacy.

By cross-checking the UMP’s discursive trajectory against the student course review data, I found that some of the MIC100 students are critical of the promises and costs of modernity. For example, the view that “most people in South Africa tend to forget about their roots and look in the modern standard of living” (Zinga, 2020) suggests a friction between modernity and recognition of “roots”. Another student paints a similar picture, in which the pursuit of modernity entails some detachment from what they ought to embrace:

I was just living my modern life with no direction of where my life was heading and when anybody would bring up the topic of culture, identity or heritage I would just act like I never heard a thing because I thought all this things (sic) never existed (Tiba).

Tiba’s reflection suggests that modernity entails nonrecognition of the “culture, identity and heritage” (ibid.) that she should have been pursuing. The fact that African students point out possible clashes between modernity and the pursuit of Africanness problematises UMP’s quest to be an ‘African’ university that advocates for modernity and development.

As an aspiring ‘African’ university, the question arises: what is UMP to do for Africans? The development discourse has shown that agents of development often try to make people fit into pre-determined categories of problems and solutions. Specifying of problems within the development discourse might “not seek so much to illuminate possible solutions as to give problems a visible reality amenable to particular treatments” (Escobar, 1995: 42).

Escobar’s critique of development, applied to UMP, raises the question of the extent to which the university understands the problems of the society in which it is located, and whether such understanding is on that society’s terms. Efforts can be seen in MIC100 to train students to comprehend society’s challenges from the point of view of their communities, and this approach is contrary to the value system of developmentalism. Since only some students are enrolled in MIC100, the remainder might not be exposed to alternatives to developmentalism – especially since it is an overarching theme in the university’s formal documentation. Students who do not enrol in MIC100 risk graduating with a main objective of pursuing modernity. This does not mean that all other courses at UMP are insensitive to IKS and to the needs of society. I make this argument because MIC100 has become the ‘go-to’ course for more in-depth

alternatives to modernity. If decoloniality (or ‘Africanness’ in the case of UMP) is to move from the rhetorical level and undertake a more active, practical role in shaping what the institution *does*, some of the values that frame MIC100 should be reflected in the wider institution. Otherwise, the institution could be training students to reproduce colonial inequalities as they are trained to ‘develop’ themselves and the world around them. This danger is reflected in Dussel’s critique of development and modernity below:

Modern (European) civilization understands itself as the most developed, the superior, civilization. (2) This sense of superiority obliges it, in the form of a categorical imperative, as it were, to “develop” (civilize, uplift, educate) the more primitive, barbarous, underdeveloped civilizations (1993: 75).

A consideration of the dangers of UMP pursuing modernisation as the main goal highlights a contradiction between the university’s desired positionality as an African University and its approach to fulfilling this quest. This contradiction is further problematised, as Dei notes, by the view that “schooling and education have become discursively configured to meet the needs of modernization from the context of Euromodernity” (2012: 103). For instance, in its Teaching and Learning Policy, UMP states that its “curricula and extra curricula activities will expose students to different ways of knowing and to the value of Indigenous Knowledge Systems” (UMP, 2016: 5). However, IKS requires an openness to the nonmaterial realm, which modernisation has marginalised for centuries, and continues to do so through developmentalism.

In the narrative of *Our Pioneering Journey*, the university states that it is:

... creating social spaces for crucial conversations with both internal and external stakeholders, thereby creating a modern, stimulating and inspiring environment that promotes and rewards academic excellence (UMP, n.d).

Here the university implicates itself in the question of modernity as a feature of the kind of environment that the university seeks to create. Similar to the concept of development, at a textual level, it is not possible to confirm what the university means by ‘modern’. However, decolonial scholarship has pointed out complications with this concept (for example, Dussel, 1993; Dei, 2012). Dussel explains that a modernised civilisation often assumes itself to be most developed and superior (1993: 75). Dei, on the other hand, has pointed out the drive of education towards fulfilment of “Euromodernity” (2012). From the point of view of decoloniality, there is a potential friction between the university’s envisaged identity and the concept of modernity that has been criticised for being Eurocentric. This friction is also

reflected by students, at least in MIC100, as pointed out in the student quotations above, and the one below:

Yes I admit that the modern world and the ever changing world around me has brainwashed me and I turned a blind eye into it convincing me that to fit in and to appeal as an advanced human being is to lose your old traditional way of life and adapt to the modern way, but as I was researching deep about my culture and tradition I realised that all the old traditions ways is what brought me up and made me the strong individual that I am today (Liso, 2020).

According to Liso, “old traditional ways” have sustained him and brought him up, and modernity does not necessarily lead to advancement. It is noteworthy that the student has begun to question a key element of the promise of formal education, which Dei (2012) has also problematised as shown above. On the other hand, students without access to a course such as MIC100 could be internalising some of the promises of formal education upheld in the UMP’s official discourse. A key difference is that MIC100 students are aware of both the promises and the price of modernity, as their reflections demonstrate.

My analysis of UMP’s adherence to ‘development’, coupled with the eagerness for ‘modernisation’, is that this combination puts the institution at the risk of reproducing the very inequalities it should be addressing – including epistemic inequalities. While these concepts can inspire forms of desired advancement, they can also inspire kinds of thinking that are entrenched in deficit mentality. This discourse will likely frame future policies, curricula, and UMP’s institutional culture.

5.4 Analysing some of UMP’s values

The UMP has adopted seven values: excellence; integrity; diversity; collaboration; adaptability; relevance; and inspiration (UMP 2022, 2015). Guided by the research question and the theories of social justice and decoloniality that inform my research, below I analyze some of the values. In other words, the analysis below is interested in whether, and how, the selected values enable the UMP to work towards social justice and decoloniality.

5.4.1 Ubuntu

Consistent with its intended positionality as an African university, UMP has used ‘ubuntu’ to frame its values. In other words, the philosophy of ubuntu “forms the broad and overarching framework for our values” (UMP 2022, 2015: 6). This institutional philosophy has also been a key theme in the MIC100 curriculum, as Chapter 6 will show.

The UMP seeks to base the “cultivation of mutually beneficial relationships with our internal and external stakeholders” (UMP Pioneering Journey, n.d.) on “mutual respect”. Embedding mutual respect in the university’s endeavours has implications for the kind of institutional culture that the university establishes, and this complements the institution’s position of Africanness. Respect is also embedded in one of the university’s values, which is “integrity” (UMP 2022, 2015:). Under the value of integrity, one of the institution’s goals is “treating one another with the utmost respect” (UMP 2022, 2015:). A key aspect of the university’s endeavours that stands to benefit from the ideal of respect is the curriculum. Scholarship on curriculum, social justice and decoloniality has pointed out the need to restore respect to Africans in the curriculum. By embedding respect as a foundational value of the university, curricula can be assessed to determine whether they reflect this theme. Le Grange (2016: 7) highlights the value of respect in the curriculum, for it is one of the four main aspects of a decolonized curriculum. In a decolonial curriculum, respect works alongside “relational accountability, [...] reciprocal appropriation, and rights and regulation” (Le Grange, 2016: 9). In the case of MIC100, the course surfaces some of the ways through which respect can be attained – for example, respect for diversity is linked to respect for everyone’s language.

Embedding respect in UMP’s foundation is consistent with the institution’s idea of being an African university, and shows that the institution pursues social justice (Fraser, 1997). However, respect, when viewed through the lens of ubuntu, has a conflicted relationship with UMP’s developmentalism. As demonstrated above, the development discourse does not automatically call for mutual respect because that discourse assumes that a supposedly superior party can dictate to the supposedly inferior party the nature of the problem and its solution (Escobar, 1995). Thus, developmentalism then may work against the social justice principle of recognition – of which respect is a critical component.

5.4.2 Diversity

One of the UMP’s values is diversity, which “is valued and celebrated in unlocking a range of interactions, and enhancing exposure to a wide variety of diverse cultures, backgrounds, views and opinions” (UMP 2022, 2015:). Diversity complements mutual respect, and challenges the Eurocentrism that overshadows universities in Africa. Valuing diversity, according to decolonial scholarship, requires pluriversality (Mignolo, 2018: 94, Christie and McKinney, 2017, et al). However, the value of diversity clashes with the language practice of the university, where English still dominates. Although the majority of the university community is unlikely to come from an English background, by prioritising English, the university limits diversity of

culture, which is expressed through language. Most, if not all, of the signage on the Mbombela campus is in English, and official university documents are written in English. Thus, the discourse of diversity points to the responsibility of the university to accommodate and respect differences.

The diversity theme at UMP is consistent with decoloniality's call for pluriversality – a concept that also arises in the analysis of students' experiences of MIC100 where the students felt that they could be themselves and could incorporate knowledges from their different homes and communities. In other words, in the case of MIC100, embracing diversity entails more than recognition of surface differences. Rather, it allows students' different backgrounds to find expression in the curriculum. Dr Wethu in her interview also highlighted diversity as a key feature of MIC100, particularly from a cultural perspective. Thus, the theme of diversity in the UMP's official discourse is important as it provides a basis for the rest of the institution's curricula to pursue parity of participation. However, without conscious efforts to embrace difference in the life of the institution, the value of diversity risks being used in neoliberal ways, in which measures of success are quantified, rather than looking at the quality of the experiences of the university's different communities.

Colonialism has a history of manipulating differences among the colonized and between the colonizers and the colonized. Ontologies and epistemologies that differ from Eurocentrism are 'othered'. By explicitly embracing diversity, UMP also takes a position against coloniality in that people can be who they are and still be part of one institution, without being pressured to assimilate. The theme of diversity also complements other themes such as ubuntu and respect. For instance, the Ubuntu chapter shows that ubuntu is predicated upon recognition and embrace of the 'other'. Social justice theory, on the other hand, advocates respect of marginalised "identities and the cultural products of maligned groups" (Fraser, 1997: 15). Thus, my analysis is that the explicit register of diversity in UMP's official discourse provides an opportunity to fulfill some of the requirements of social justice and decoloniality.

5.4.3 Collaboration

Collaboration, as one of UMP's values entails that the university "will actively seek out opportunities for collaboration with all its stakeholders" (UMP 2022, 2015:). This value is important in shaping UMP as an institution that should not exist in an ivory tower. The value of collaboration is taken further in MIC100, where students' assignments require students' families and community leaders to contribute to the production of academic knowledge. The reason that the university gives for collaboration is the development, of both socio-economic

and human potential. However, the implementation of collaboration in MIC100 recognises epistemically excluded groups as experts of their own lived realities. Hence, students interview people recognising that the participants are knowers, and not to develop them or enhance their potential. The collaboration discourse is potentially powerful because it provides a framework for recognising internal and external stakeholders as co-creators.

5.4.4 Adaptability

UMP's value of adaptability has implications for the institution's curricula, which will likely be impacted by the epistemological shifts that are taking place across the HE sector. MIC100 has shown that adaptability allows for the curriculum to accommodate students from different epistemic backgrounds. The fact that the university recognises "our ever-changing knowledge contexts" (UMP 2022, 2015:) means that curricula must be epistemically flexible, as decoloniality points out.

5.4.5 Relevance

In terms of relevance, the institution "endorses the need for its academic programmes, research activities, and engagement projects to respond to its context" (UMP 2022, 2015:). While 'context' is a broad concept, this value of relevance enables the students' demographic context to be factored into the institution's endeavours. In the MIC100 curriculum, relevance is sought by reflecting the geographical and social context of the province, while expanding to the rest of the country and the world. The chapter on the MIC100 Curriculum details how the theme of relevance is realised.

5.4.6 Inspiration

Viewed in the light of the students' experiences of MIC100, UMP's value of inspiration contributes to social justice. Almost all the students in the data confirm (explicitly and implicitly) that the MIC100 curriculum inspired them to trace their roots, and to want to do more about who they are and what they know. I view this value as socially just because it differs from the usual curriculum outcome which is assimilation. Inspiration empowers, while assimilation limits students' potential and social capital. By making inspiration an official value of the institution, UMP provides a framework for stakeholders to think carefully about the impact of their actions at the institution, at least in terms of encouraging others.

5.5 Possible implication of UMP's discourse for graduate attributes

In this section, I analyze some of UMP's graduate attributes against the broader thematic analysis I presented above. I do this to make sense of the kind of graduates that UMP is likely to produce within the framework of the identity it asserts (African) and what it claims to stand

for (its values). These graduate attributes also have implications for assessing MIC100 against a set of internally defined measures. UMP's graduate attributes are: Resourceful, Responsive and Responsible; Sound Discipline Knowledge; Innovative and Entrepreneurial; Confident and Effective Communicators; Ethically and Socially Aware Change Agents; and Adaptable (UMP 2022, 2015: 8). It is beyond the scope of this section to discuss all the attributes. Instead, I will focus on those with more significant implications for this research, particularly as they impact on the work of MIC100. These are: Resourceful, Responsive and Responsible; Confident and Effective Communicators; Ethically and Socially Aware Change Agents. The values I have omitted function more outside of MIC100. For example, the value of Innovative and Entrepreneurial is likely to find better expression in the commerce course. The value of Adaptable requires a particular study to consider student's ability to function in "new situations" (UMP 2022). This would require long-term research that traces UMP students after they have graduated. Sound Discipline Knowledge requires a focus on the specific disciplines in which students are enrolled, as the value is explained in UMP 2022. MIC100, on the other hand, hosts students from a variety of disciplines. How they fare in their home disciplines is outside this project's scope.

5.5.1 Resourceful, responsive & responsible

Viewed against the case of MIC100, the UMP has the potential to inspire these attributes in students. For example, some of its assignments require students to seek epistemic resources that are not likely to be found in the confines of the university. This approach to resourcefulness may also enable students to view the world outside the institution in more respectful ways, rather than in terms of a deficit. Responsiveness and Responsible work together, especially when viewed against the UMP's discourse of ubuntu, which also characterises the MIC100 curriculum. A student who embraces and practices ubuntu responds to the circumstance of a fellow human being, and is likely to also assume responsibility for the other's wellbeing. Thus, these graduate attributes enable UMP to address inequalities, instead of perpetuating them.

5.5.2 Confident & effective communicators

In terms of confidence, the case of MIC100 shows that enhanced students confidence goes beyond their ability to communicate in a particular language. It is noteworthy that the theme of confidence was among the most common in the student course reviews of MC100. Chapter 10 (Feeling Ayoba!) demonstrates some of the ways in which students' sense of self and confidence improved due to MIC100. In terms of effective communication, I argue that for as long as the institution does not have language policy and practice that is sensitive to the colonial

matrix that overshadows the curriculum, UMP's language will remain Anglo-normative. This argument should be viewed against the fact that the language justice achieved in MIC100 has been largely due to volunteerism – in other words, it was dependent on specific lecturers, rather than guided by official policy. This limitation is linked to the themes of modernity and development, in which competency in Eurocentric trajectories is most valued.

5.5.3 Ethically & socially aware change agents

My analysis is that this graduate attribute is connected to 5.5.1 above. To be an ethically and socially aware agent of change requires taking responsibility for and responding to challenges in ways that initiate change, as opposed to ways that perpetuate inequalities. Such a discourse reflects the philosophy of ubuntu that UMP has adopted in its official discourse, which also frames the MIC100 curriculum. In other words, ubuntu provides the framing for the 'ethical' in this graduate attribute.

5.6 Conclusion

The above thematic analysis sought to understand how UMP speaks about itself. It did so by analysing some of the institution's key documentary data. My analysis of UMP's official discourse shows the institution's potential to work towards social justice and decoloniality. However, the discourse of development and modernity, when considered from a decolonial perspective, suggests a contradiction that might lead the institution to reproduce social injustices. This concern is based on the decolonial critique of development and modernity, which questions why Eurocentrism should be the standard which everyone should follow to be developed or modernised.

Chapter 6: The MIC100 curriculum

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the two main layers of the MIC100 curriculum – the explicit and the hidden (Le Grange, 2016). The discussion will be both descriptive and analytical. The descriptive aspect of the chapter will not be comprehensive, but will summarise the appendices attached to this dissertation, namely MIC100 Course Outline (Appendix 4), and MIC100 Weekly Programme (Appendix 5). For ease of reference, the summary will only refer to the 2020 samples of the above resources. This is justifiable because the documents between 2019 and 2021 are sufficiently similar. These appendices make up the explicit curriculum. The latter is “what students are provided with” (Le Grange, 2016: 7) in more tangible ways. The chapter reflects on Bernstein’s concept of “regulative discourse” (2000), which Luckett et al. (2019) have recontextualized for the South African HE sector. Thus, regulative discourse will be used to frame MIC100 as a case in which the “hidden curriculum” (Le Grange, 2016) plays a critical role in the success of the course from a social justice perspective. “The hidden curriculum is what students learn about the dominant culture of a university and what values it reproduces” (ibid.). The students’ course reviews will form the basis of the description of the regulative discourse, in order to engage with how students experienced the hidden curriculum. I will outline the theory of regulative discourse after a brief discussion of MIC100’s explicit curriculum.

6.2 What is MIC100?

MIC100 is the University of Mpumalanga’s course code for the compulsory common course, “Mpumalanga in Context: African Identities, Heritage and History” (MIC100 Course Outline). MIC100 is referred to as a common course, which in other institutions could be the equivalent of a service course. The course is offered through the School of Social Sciences, particularly through the Culture and Heritage Studies department. As a common course, MIC100 is designed for students enrolled in various qualification streams. The university’s goal is to avail the course to all undergraduate students. As of 2022, the 780 students enrolled were in the following programmes: Bachelor of Development Studies (BDev), Bachelor of Arts (BA), Diploma in Nature Conservation (DipCon), and Diploma in Hospitality (DipHos). At the time of research, there was no provision for students from outside these qualification streams to enrol in MIC100. Key among the limitations was the minimal number of teaching staff. The course is offered over two semesters.

6.3 The explicit presentation

The cover page of the course outline shows an image of a tree, bushes, mountains and the sun on the horizon. The sun is representative of the word ‘mpumalanga’, which literally means the place where the sun rises, or the east. Mpumalanga is also the name of the province in which the university is located. The cover image is in line with the institution’s emphasis on nature and sustainability, as evident also in the imagery on the institution’s website’s landing page. This representation is therefore an extension of some of the institution’s values in terms of consideration for the natural environment.

The one-and-half-page introduction immediately positions the course within Es’Kia Mphahlele’s idea of African Humanism³³ as the course’s overarching educational philosophy. Thus:

... the course draws on Mphahlele’s central concept of ‘rediscovery’ of self, to initiate the process of coming to know ourselves, our identities, and our common humanity, as seen through the lens of African knowledge, philosophy and wisdom (MIC100 Course Outline, 2020: 2)

As discussed in the literature review, Mphahlele’s African Humanism provides the framework for both the study and praxis of ubuntu in MIC100. This framework functions on the principle of interdependence between humans, ancestors, the environment, and deity. Hence, the view that one’s wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of the other, as discussed in further detail in the next chapter on ubuntu.

While the first term focus on “exploring African identities, knowledge systems & cultural heritage” (MIC100 Course Outline, 2020: 9), the second and third terms focus on examining:

... what global scientific knowledge and more formal historical studies can tell us about our origins and the ‘great journey’ of our ancestors from their early beginnings until our present day (MIC100 Course Outline, 2020: 2).

The Mpumalanga province is used as the starting point due to its role in a geological understanding of the genesis of life. One of UNESCO’s World Heritage sites is the geotrail in the Makhonjwa Mountains, at Mjindi, 52 KM from UMP’s Mbombela Campus. Makhonjwa is described by UNESCO as follows:

Situated in north-eastern South Africa, the Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains comprises 40% of the Barberton Greenstone Belt, one of the world’s oldest geological structures.

³³ This philosophy is also reflected in the hidden curriculum, as discussed in the Ubuntu chapter.

The property represents the best-preserved succession of volcanic and sedimentary rock dating back 3.6 to 3.25 billion years and forms a diverse repository of information on surface conditions, meteorite impacts, volcanism, continent-building processes and the environment of early life (UNESCO, 2018).

Towards the third term, the course “explore[s] the evidence of human development, enterprise and culture...left by the ancestors in this region of Africa and beyond” (MIC100 Course Outline, 2020: 3). This is also the course segment that explores significant civilisations in Africa, and the making of what is today called South Africa.

The fourth and last term has only three teaching weeks, which focus on issues of natural resource exploitation in the Mpumalanga province. This segment also explores the Kruger National Park in terms “of nature conservation within the context of the various global environmental crises facing us” (ibid.). The remaining four weeks of the fourth term are dedicated to self-study and completion of portfolios and assignments.

A Weekly Programme for each semester accompanies the Course Outline. I will not describe the weekly programme in detail here. Suffice it to highlight that the Weekly Programme details the order of each week in terms of themes and topics, reading material, other learning resources, and assignment details. It is noteworthy, for purposes of this chapter’s focus, that the first assignment is a self-description that invites students to talk about their identities and lived experiences in relation to who they are. The Assignment One guidelines invite students to “Write a short presentation/narrative of who you are (approx. 800-1200 words) – see key points to consider in guidelines” (MIC Weekly Programme, 2020: 5).

6.4 Reimagining the regulative discourse through MIC100

According to Basil Bernstein (2000), one can break down the MIC100 curriculum into two discourses: the instructional, and the regulative. Bernstein proposes that we “call the rules of social order *regulative discourse* and we shall call the rules of discursive order *instructional discourse*” (2000: 13). Thus, what I have so far described from the MIC100 curriculum is the instructional discourse. We can equate the instructional discourse with Le Grange’s “explicit curriculum” (2016). This portion of the curriculum comprises “what students are provided with such as module frameworks, prescribed readings, assessments guidelines, etc.” (ibid.: 7).

Bernstein’s concept of “framing” is also useful and applicable to both the instructional and regulative discourses. Framing “refers to the controls on communication in local, interactional pedagogic relations” (2000: 12). Framing ranges from strong to weak; the stronger the framing, the stricter the rules of interaction. Hence, “framing is concerned with *how* meanings are to be

put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it” (ibid.). Framing can be both internal and external, because circumstances external to a local immediate interaction can affect how such an interaction unfolds. Bernstein demonstrates this by using the example of a patient who has not paid to see a doctor: such a patient is likely to assume a position of inferiority in the interaction with a doctor, and their consultation is likely to be hurried, possibly out of a shared belief that fee-paying patients are more deserving of the doctor’s attention. Bernstein’s analogy can be adapted to the pedagogic experience, where factors outside of the pedagogic process may have implications for how the process unfolds and how the participants experience it, for instance how the lecturer engages with students, and whether students feel they have a ‘place’ in a course or HEI.

In the relation between teacher and student, stronger framing entails that the teacher “has explicit control over selection, sequence, pacing, criteria and the social base” (Bernstein, 2000: 13). Weaker framing entails that the student “has more *apparent* control over the communication and its social base” (ibid.). The discussion below will show some instances where weaker framing allowed students more agency.

While framing can be both external and/or internal to an interaction, its principles apply to both the instructional and regulative discourses. However, I am convinced that the kind of intervention that this PhD seeks to make necessitates a stronger focus on the regulative discourse. My reasons will be clearer as the chapter discusses MIC100 at the level of the regulative discourse. It is worth recalling that the conditions that necessitated the kind of curriculum change that this study proposes are primarily regulative.

Research by Lockett et al. (2019) at UCT shows that academics tend to emphasise the instructional discourse, which is concerned with curriculum content, at the cost of the regulative discourse. The authors argue that for black students, it is the regulative discourse that hinders access to the instructional discourse. In other words, what takes place at the level of the hidden curriculum shapes the outcome of the explicit curriculum.

Lockett et al.’s view on the role of the regulative discourse concurs with Bourdieu’s concept of “instruments of appropriation” (1973), in which education often favours students who possess the right cultural capital to appropriate what they are being taught. Thus, Bourdieu argues:

The educational system reproduces all the more perfectly the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among classes (and sections of a class) in that the culture

which it transmits is closer to the dominant culture and that the mode of inculcation to which it has recourse is less removed from the mode of inculcation practised by the family (Bourdieu, 1973: 80).

For Bourdieu, the educational process is a process of cultural transmission, in which some cultures are affirmed, while others are marginalised. Thus, students from cultures that the educational system has marginalised will likely struggle through the system. The MIC100 curriculum, though, explicitly tries to mitigate some of the cultural displacement likely to be found in formal education. This process can be conceptualised as “emplacement”. The concept of emplacement entails “that students can situate themselves as embodied persons within concrete spaces and communities which carry particular social, economic and political histories” (Morreira et al., 2020: 137).

The principle of emplacement complements the decolonial concept of locus of enunciation (Grosfoguel 2011:5) discussed in Chapter 1. While the colonial curriculum practices disrespect black students’ loci of enunciation, emplacement entails deliberate efforts to recognise the different loci represented by students, in terms of their “social, economic and political histories” (Morreira et al., 2020: 137).

The MIC100 explicit curriculum shows deliberate efforts to effect emplacement by treating “students as embodied, knowledge-making persons situated within communities, rather than as abstracted individuals to whom academia imparts knowledge created by others” (Morreira, 2020: 137). This inclusive process is expressed by one of the MIC100 Students as follows:

In High School the topic of Apartheid was focussed on Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal and the Cape. But with this course South Africa’s history became my history as it was no longer far away but closer to home, in Mpumalanga (Mlandvo, 2020).

Mlandvo’s comment highlights a problem wherein students come to university having potentially been already alienated by the schooling system. I view this background factor as part of the regulatory factors that can influence the extent to which students can (dis)engage in the course. Another student commented that they also did not know about the significance of Mpumalanga, despite having grown there:

I stay in Mpumalanga province but it was my first time knowing Mpumalanga is the one of the important geological regions in the world; I did not have any knowledge about rocks and where are they from, because of MIC now I know (sic) (Nhlalo, 2019).

My analysis is that the kind of absence Nhlalo suffers from denies students the opportunity to access information that can boost their pride about where they come from. In other words, the

schooling system can socialise students to internalise curricula that exclude their life-worlds, and the university can either perpetuate this cycle or challenge it – the latter being true for MIC100.

At the level of the explicit curriculum, the issue of representivity requires deliberate choices to reflect the students who are imagined for the curriculum. These choices, as pointed out from Nhlalo's experience above, include intentional contextualisation of subject matter. For example, if it is geology, the geographical locations represented may work to include or exclude students. However, such choices about curriculum content remain informed by the conditions of the regulative environment. For example, choices about who gets to be represented by the explicit curriculum may reflect "ontological assumptions" (Luckett et al., 2019) that an institution holds about students. Thus, the kind of emplacement (Morreira et al: 2020) evident in the MIC100 explicit curriculum reflects UMP's ontological attitudes about the students at the regulative level.

Black students who are marginalised at the level of the regulative discourse are likely to suffer "demotivation, demoralization and loss of the 'will to learn'" (Luckett et al., 2019: 38-39). Conversely, students have found MIC100 important in boosting their will to learn:

Mic has been nothing but a motivational module of trying to build a person in a way that they do not forget of their original roots, instead they should continue leaving by them (Mpandze, 2020)

Significantly, Mpandze links her sense of motivation to the recognition of her 'roots' that the course encourages. In other words, the student is eager to continue learning because she feels that she can be who she wishes to be because the course sees her for who she is. This reflects Luckett et al.'s (2019) view that students can lose the 'will to learn' when they "are not enabled to develop a 'sense of self'" (38-39). The MIC100 curriculum, therefore, is informed by certain ontological and epistemic views in the regulative discourse. These inform what students receive at the level of the instructional discourse, or the explicit curriculum.

However, the explicit curriculum on its own might not be enough to reaffirm black students, since a large part of the work of recognition occurs in the hidden curriculum. Luckett et al. (2019) use Bernstein's concept of 'regulative discourse' to refer to curriculum practices that are not explicit but still have a bearing on student's participation and success. Thus, the scholars argue for a stronger focus on the regulative discourse in order to make a meaningful contribution to decolonizing university curricula.

6.5 The Regulative Discourse in MIC100

Against this rationale for foregrounding the regulative discourse, I now discuss the MIC100 curriculum, with a focus on the issues that operate at the level of the regulative discourse.

The majority of UMP students are first-generation university entrants funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). More than 90% of the MIC100 students are black Africans.

The Course Coordinator is a white female, who is also the main lecturer. Thus, she is the lecturer that students would interact with the most, inside and outside the classroom for administrative reasons. Most of the four lecturers conduct their teaching in English, while the majority of MIC100 students speak African languages as home languages. My lectures, too, were framed in English, although with significant translanguaging during delivery.

In the settler-colonial context such as South Africa, in terms of how the colonial matrix of power frames whiteness, the Course Coordinator inhabits a body that validates her social position as a plausible knower. This does not mean that her 'race' is natural, but it has been made socially 'real' such that it is now normal that she is identified as white. From the colonial matrix of power, her bodily locus of enunciation regulates an expectation that she must have something to teach. This regulative process has cultural implications that can hinder the participation of some students. I will describe some of these hindrances, and how the Coordinator dealt with them.

I observed that in the first few days of classes, in all the years under observation (2020, 2021; 2022), there were always a few students who struggled with what to call the Course Coordinator. My analysis is that this is due to a common socialisation among Africans, at least in Southern Africa, in which a title must precede the name of an elder or someone in a position of authority. These titles are often also relations, such as bhuti (brother), babe (sir/father), make (mam/mother). In basic education, 'mam' and 'sir' are often used to refer to a female and male teacher, respectively. However, the higher education space is regulated differently, so that a first-generation black student might not know immediately how to name their new 'teacher'. This observation is important, because in the first few days of lectures, students are likely to be confused, and it is highly likely they will need to ask the lecturer questions. I have observed that some students would reserve their questions and come to ask me, instead – even when the best person to answer their questions was the Course Coordinator. Such students face an extra obstacle in the regulative environment, even in cases where they need to ask how to access the

instructional discourse. To respond to this challenge, the Course Coordinator utilised several strategies to make herself more culturally accessible. She repeats the class on kuhlonipha (more on this shortly) twice over the first two weeks. In this class we would discuss ways of addressing one another. This process invites students to utilise their “instruments of appropriation” (Bourdieu, 1973) that would otherwise not be recognised in a colonial university setting.

The Course Coordinator is also a trained sangoma³⁴, and she opens up to the class about this. When discussing her sangoma background, she would often say “thokoza” while curtsying.³⁵ Revealing the sangoma identity has often been received with responses such as ‘thokoza gogo’, which directly means “joy be upon you, granny”³⁶. In short, the sangoma identity regulates the class interaction such that those students who relate to her at that level would call her “granny” without her having asked them to do so. My analysis is that, bungoma³⁷ has been used to counter the obstacles that would ordinarily be presented by a white body and the English language. This dilutes the colonial regulative discourse that would have been the norm in a typical South African university. However, not every student would relate to the main lecturer on the basis of bungoma. In other words, not every black student possesses the instruments of appropriating this type of interaction with the lecturer.

It is therefore significant that the Course Coordinator has ongoing mechanisms for recognising students and inviting their voices. These mechanisms include regular check-ins in every class, in which students are invited to comment on how they are faring within the course and generally with their studies. At these check-in moments, issues that emerge include student transportation, funding, accommodation, and academic writing. These issues are usually external to MIC100, yet they affect how students participate in the course. Solutions to some of the issues raised would often come from other students, thereby undermining the idea of the lecturer as absolute authority. This has significance for learning in that, for example, a student who might not have the ‘correct’ academic vocabulary to enunciate what is expected by the instructional discourse, might know the best taxi route to help fellow students get to class on time. In this way, students have multiple avenues to participate in MIC100. In other words,

³⁴ A traditional healer whose practice is based on connection with ancestral spirits.

³⁵ The word “thokoza” and the curtsying gesture are known to, inter alia, indicate appreciation of an interaction, especially where a traditional healer is involved.

³⁶ “Granny”, which is said as “gogo” carries multiple meanings, thus in the spiritual context it denotes that the person who is being addressed is accompanied by ancestors, and thus the person has an “elderly” social position, regardless of their age.

³⁷ Bungoma refers to the state of being a sangoma, and things that are to do with the practices of sangomas.

some of the issues that are external to MIC100 but affect students' participation in the course, are used as 'icebreakers' for participation.

Language practice, as pointed out in Chapters 8 and 9, is among the key regulators of teaching and learning in MIC100. Scholarship (Christie and McKinney, 2017; Brock-Utne, 2016) has shown that the default language practices at South African universities are exclusionary for black students. Thus, the use of translanguaging in the MIC100 classes regulated the educational process so that black students' languages were utilised as "instruments of appropriation" (Bourdieu, 1973), rather than as symbols of deficit. Instruments of appropriation refer to the cultural resources that are necessary for students to access what they are being taught (*ibid.*). In this case of translanguaging, students' linguistic resources gain currency as a means to access the curriculum – thus the language practice regulates epistemic access to the students' benefit. The deficit approach would insist that students should improve their English, instead of recognising student's linguistic resources from their African languages. In other words, the deficit approach views students "as lacking some of the academic and cultural resources necessary to succeed" (Smit, 2012: 369), as opposed to focusing on the structural issues that marginalise student's cultural resources, such as Anglonormativity, which is the demand that students "should be proficient in English, and are viewed as deviant or deficient if they are not" (McKinney, 2016: xvi).

The regulative discourse therefore reaffirms the student's loci of enunciation, as defined in Section 1.10 above (Grosfoguel, 2011: 5). For analytical purpose, I adapt Grosfoguel's definition to include culture, as explained in the literature review. Hence, MIC100 affirms the cultural locations of students. For example, in the topic of identity, African understandings of self and society are actively embraced. One way in which this is done is by recognising ancestors in the shaping of the identities of some of the students. While this topic is presented formally in the instructional discourse, it also reflects the "ontological assumptions" (Luckett et al., 2019) that the makers of the curriculum have about students. The main lecturer uses her locus of a sangoma to facilitate class discussions that include the role of ancestors in the present and the future. This practice in the regulative discourse undermines the "European Judeo-Christian" (Grosfoguel, 2011) bias that is embedded in the colonial matrix of power, which is often taken for granted in academic discourse.

This approach in MIC100 has the potential to address some of the questions that scholars raise in the context of the regulative discourse. For example:

... the question to be asked is to what extent do the regulative discourses of our institutions, curricula and classrooms create hospitable shared contexts where all students feel affirmed, recognised and a sense of belonging that permits them to contribute, participate and learn (Luckett, et al., 2019: 38).

The idea of “hospitable shared contexts” is one that MIC100 sustains through the philosophy of ubuntu that characterises the course. While the explicit curriculum advocates respect of African identities, cultures and cultural products, in practice, this kind of work seems to require grounding in the mundane interaction between students and teachers – hence the centrality of the regulative discourse. These interactions can reveal, affirm, or challenge what the institution values. In this case, MIC100 showed features of weak framing, consequently teacher-student relations were more horizontal.

Data from the students’ reviews also confirm that the regulative environment contributed to their feelings about the course. A 2020 student confirms that “[t]he lectures³⁸ play a crucial role, they are good and loving lectures of all time” (Randzo, 2020). The idea that the lecturer’s ‘crucial role’ is associated with affection (love), is significant, because Randzo’s judgement of the course operates at the regulative level. In other words, Randzo notes how the lecturers made her feel beyond the content of the course. She also acknowledges that her relational experience with the teaching staff was central to her experience of the course:

MIC course had an impact on my identity, the effective relationship I had with the lectures contributed massively to the character I have today. I learned many morals, many life principles that I am using today to overcome any situation (Student Course Reviews, 2020).

It is noteworthy that Randzo views her relationship with the lecturers, not just the explicit curriculum, as key to what she learned. In other words, a relational dimension between students and lecturers impacted learning. Thus, the lecturers had to be relatable in order to create a social environment that encouraged student learning. Randzo’s sentiment concurs with Luckett et al.’s (2019) view of the disadvantages for black students when the regulative discourse is ignored. In effect, the students’ course reviews confirm that black students “clearly see the regulative discourse (its norms and linguistic, cultural and ontological assumptions – which they experience as excluding and alienating)” (Luckett et al., 2019: 37). In the case of MIC100, students experience the regulative discourse as including and affirming.

³⁸ In South Africa, black students, particularly those from African language backgrounds, often refer to a lecturer as ‘lecture’. Thus, the student’s ‘lectures’ here refers to lecturers.

The theme of affection also emerged from the 2019 Student Course Reviews. For example: “Wish next year students may experience the same love and care we got from you guys” (Sifiso, 2019). The recognition of ‘care’ is significant, given the fact that these first-year students are mostly the first generation in their family at university, and are likely facing several challenges. Among many other factors, that the majority of the students are funded by NSFAS implies that they come from economically under-resourced backgrounds. I have observed that a student’s economic conditions can interfere with their learning, even when they have NSFAS funding. For example, some students would use their NSFAS allowance to support their families, which creates additional stress for such students. Thus, my analysis of the theme of ‘care’ is that care is one of several factors required to create an environment in which students can thrive, as reflected below:

... the phenomenal lecturers we have and the lectures they give, the amount of encouragement that they give us is unexplainable they make us realize that we are capable of a lot more than we think. At times attending lectures just gives you hope, to continue with the hope of conquering life, not just life at home but life at campus, the pressure from our school work and our surroundings as well, they give us hope for the future even in the darkest of days (Litsembe, 2019).

The concept of encouragement raised by Litsembe is significant in situations where unjust curriculum practices may discourage black students to the extent that their will to learn decreases (Luckett, et al: 2019). Luckett et al. suggest a strong connection between the failure or absence of effective interpersonal relationships between lecturers and students, and misrecognition and exclusion. They argue that “[w]here this situation pertains across an institution, it could be a significant contributing factor to poor academic performance by black students” (ibid.: 39). Again, it is worth noting that the interpersonal relationships in MIC100 made students “realize that we are capable of a lot more than we think” (Litsembe, 2019). Whereas in a typical colonial setting, black students can be left feeling “excluded and alienated; leading to demotivation, demoralization” (Luckett et al., 2019: 38-39), in the case of MIC100 “attending lectures just gives you hope, to continue with the hope of conquering life” (Litsembe, 2019). Clearly, the care that students receive from MIC100 enables them to thrive beyond the course itself. This phenomenon is significant because it reconfigures the role of education beyond modernist and capitalist views, and centres ideas of personhood concerned with wellbeing, as discussed in more detail in the Ubuntu chapter. This phenomenon is also worth viewing against the social and economic conditions of some of the students, described above, where their roles as breadwinners or providers interfere with their roles as students.

The idea of the curriculum as “a highly ideological hybrid discourse” (Luckett et al., 2019: 36) has therefore been evident in the students’ reflections in the course reviews. Even assessment of students was conducted with care, respect and sensitivity to the circumstances in which students produced material to be assessed. One phenomenon that is normal in Mzansi, but not necessarily accommodated in academia is ancestral calling. One student shares her experience on the matter in the context of MIC100:

The best part about the first assignment is Dr [Y]’s feedback, she didn’t judge me, actually she helped to see the good side of having a calling because. I was focusing on the bad side, she gave me hope that people won’t judge me I just have to accept myself first. I was worried that the calling will crush my dreams of becoming successful but Dr [Y] told me that there are people who are able to have a calling and still work and be normal so I decided to do a research about that so I found a lot of celebrities that answered to their ancestral calling but still successful like Latoya Makhene and Nandi Nyende (Bitiwe, 2019).

The manner in which Bitiwe’s calling was handled by the Course Coordinator is significant for imagining what a postcolonial university should provide for marginalised ontologies. In other words, the embodied student has a spiritual matter with which the institution, through Dr Y, could engage without alienating the student. It is noteworthy that the student’s experience emerged when she fulfilled the first assignment of the course, and when the student’s spirituality was positively acknowledged through her interaction with the explicit curriculum. This spiritual phenomenon that emerged from MIC100 strengthens the argument that MIC100 has a curriculum grounded in ubuntu. A recognition of the spiritual realm is among the key aspects of the philosophy of ubuntu, according to Sibanda. A person with ubuntu “must respect the spirits and God” (Sibanda, 2014: 27). It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss the sophisticated spiritual dynamics that affect humans. Suffice it to say, there are students whose ontologies are deeply connected to a spiritual reality that has implications for their tangible reality, including education. It is noteworthy that MIC100 students benefited from a regulative discourse that recognised their indigenous traditional spirituality due to an individual lecturer with a personal interest and background in this ontological dimension. That the spiritual aspect found expression in the instructional discourse as a topic in the course materials and in assignment options shows that such curricula interventions are possible when one takes the trouble to create opportunities for recognition.

It is, therefore, fitting that students reflected on care as key among their experience of MIC100, because the course spoke to their realities, not only spiritually but also economically. The care

factor was also evident in the fact that students did not have to pay for MIC100 field trips. No student's economic background limited their access to those parts of the curriculum that required travel – to a limited extent as explained in the summary that will follow below. In other words, the course factored in issues that could have easily been obstacles to parity of participation for students.

Another regulatory factor in MIC100 was the fact that students were recognised as knowers who could also share in the role of teaching:

I got the chance to sit down with other students from different programmes and I can't lie it was kind of fun to discuss our own traditions and how we were raised. Other modules just gave us a load of work but with MIC we were allowed not only to be taught but to also teach others, including lecturers and students about ourselves (Sifiso, 2019).

At the regulative level, Sifiso is recognised as a knower and a body who can disseminate knowledge. This ontological attitude finds expression in the instructional discourse through weakened framing that made it possible for Sifiso to co-teach. Sifiso links his experience of “fun” to the environment in which he could interact with others. This indexes Bernstein's idea of weak framing in which the teacher does not have sole control of the pedagogic process. Timetabling was among the factors that enabled MIC100 to promote peer teaching and learning. The physical class covered two consecutive periods, totaling almost two hours of ‘contact time’, on Friday morning and repeated in the afternoon.

This timetabling strategy meant that a lecturer had enough time to teach and give students a fair chance to contribute. Thus, the MIC100 case highlights timetabling as a key factor that affects what a course can or cannot achieve. This is not to say that treating students as knowers is limited to live classes, but there are certain aspects of expressing and disseminating knowledge that written forms cannot deliver. For example, translanguaging in class entailed that students could share their knowledges in the languages they were comfortable in, while written submissions tended to prioritise English. Typically, when contact time is limited, the teacher prioritises what s/he has to say to the class, with little or no time for what the class has to say about the subject. In Bernstein's terms, the timetabling innovation enabled weaker framing of the pedagogic process, so that students could share control of the process. While this played out in the instructional discourse, it was at the level of the regulative discourse that ideas about students as knowledge-makers could be embraced.

The recognition of students as knowers was not limited to students teaching each other; lecturers were among the learners:

The best part of this course is that Dr [Y] also sits down and learn with us, which is very rare, if she has a point while the other lectures are still teaching she raises her hand and wait to be asked (Natsi, 2019).

Dr Y is the Course Coordinator. As Natsi points out, it “is very rare” for lecturers to assume such noticeable positions of learning, yet the Coordinator would attend class even when it was not her turn to teach. When she assumes the role of a student, Dr Y would sit where the students sit and face the front where the lecturer is located. In addition, she does not exploit her privilege as a lecturer during class interactions, but she follows the same rules that students follow, to the extent that “she raises her hand and wait to be asked” (ibid.). One way or another, lecturers are also learners, and the extent to which a lecturer is learning in class is not necessarily measured by where they are sitting or whether they raise their hand to ask questions. However, what the student feedback points to is that the lecturer’s physical acts made it possible for students to recognise her as someone who “sits down and learn with us” (ibid.). This configuration regulates the interpersonal relationships between students and lecturers. It means that the sense of deficit that many students might feel is eliminated when their lecturers also present themselves as knowledge-seekers. Moreover, the fact that students are considered, and may consider themselves, amongst those who can fulfil the lecturer’s quest for knowledge further undermines the colonial academics’ practice of “wrong assumptions” (Luckett et al., 2019) about black students.

Natsi’s feedback on Dr Y as a learner demonstrates that acts that could easily be taken for granted, such as physical positioning of the body in the teaching and learning space, have implications for regulating the teaching and learning environment. In other words, Dr Y uses her embodiment to frame the pedagogic experience.

While it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss the implications of the built environment on the relational dynamics during class, it is worth highlighting that the way in which physical space is used mattered. The MIC100 lecture venue required a deliberate choice by the lecturer to cross the ‘boundary’ from the podium to the student seating area. While Dr Y’s choice had a positive outcome, this reminds us that the default set-up of the venue is implicated in regulating classroom relationships. In other words, the built environment can perpetuate power dynamics, when the ‘boundaries’ presented by teaching venues are not crossed.

6.6 Shifting ideological assumptions about students

The case of MIC100 highlights the regulative discourse as a critical area that requires serious consideration if a socially just curriculum is to be achieved. From a decolonial perspective, it is noteworthy that curriculum practices are underpinned by epistemic and ontological assumptions that have implications for how universities imagine and interact with their students. These assumptions, resulting from many years of coloniality in education, continue to marginalise black students who have not been the ideal imagined stakeholders of higher education institutions. The case of MIC100 has, therefore, highlighted some possible socially just and decolonial outcomes of a curriculum that is sensitive to and respects the students for whom it is designed. This was achieved by shifting ontological assumptions about students in the regulative discourse towards a more inclusive ontology. Such a process required a weaker framing to break down traditional forms of pedagogy that are usually informed by a strong sense of hierarchical relations. Thus, weaker framing created conducive conditions for more equal relations between teacher and learner, and learner agency was encouraged. MIC100 has reconfigured factors surrounding the instructional discourse to favour the students. Moreover, the course has demonstrated that factors external to instructional discourse have a bearing on how students participate and perform in the instructional discourse. These important factors outside the instructional discourse reside in what scholars call the regulative discourse or the hidden curriculum (Bernstein, 2000; Luckett, 2019; Le Grange, 2016). Below is a summary of some of the key regulatory factors that lie in the MIC100's regulatory discourse and were key to how students participated in the course.

6.6.1 Interpersonal relationships

As pointed out by Luckett et al. (2019), MIC100 confirms that indeed the question of interpersonal relationships is key to understanding how students feel and are treated in the course. The relationship between teaching staff and students has been central to students' sense of self and subsequently their propensity to learn. This finding concurs with the argument that the "will to learn" (Luckett et al., 2019) can be affected by the extent to which students can "develop a 'sense of self' in a learning environment" (ibid.: 38-39). At the heart of this phenomenon is the question of whether interpersonal relationships in universities embrace or alienate students. Where students feel embraced, their will to learn increases, as the MIC100 course reviews point out. The idea of being embraced can be viewed in different ways that often reflect affection. Hence, in MIC100 students use the language of 'love' and 'care' to describe their experience of relationships with the teaching staff.

6.6.2 Economic access

While the question of economic challenges faced by students is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth highlighting that this factor regulates whether and how students can access the instructional discourse. In the case of MIC100, which relies on field trips as part of its instructional discourse, the economic conditions of the students could have prevented them from participating. However, the student course reviews reveal that field trips are one of the factors that made the course successful for students. That students did not pay for these trips entailed that those who elected to attend could attend. There were still limitations though, especially for students who lived off campus and without adequate transport infrastructure. Such students would struggle to arrive at the pick-up points on time, and subsequently the trips needed to end early enough for the affected students to return home safely.

6.6.3 Culture and language

In colonial university settings, black students have experienced the institutions' linguistic and cultural assumptions as "excluding and alienating" (Luckett et al., 2019). Luckett et al.'s argument about exclusionary cultural and linguistic practices in colonial educational settings complements Bourdieu's view that curricula are most acceptable and accessible to those students whose culture is assumed to be the norm by those who design and present the curriculum. Thus:

... possession of cultural goods as symbolic goods (along with the symbolic satisfactions which accompany an appropriation of this kind) are possible only for those who hold the code making it possible to decipher them or, in other words, that the appropriation of symbolic goods presupposes the possession of the "instruments of appropriation" (Bourdieu, 1973 :73).

However, MIC100 undermined some of these colonial assumptions about black students by creating an environment in which non-Western cultural orientations were embraced and engaged with. Moreover, the language practices which assumed that English was a more acceptable academic language were undermined – although to a limited extent as described in Chapter 9 below. While the instructional discourse (the explicit curriculum such as the course outline) was almost wholly packaged in English, the regulatory discourse allowed students to use their non-English "instruments of appropriation" (Bourdieu, 1973) to participate in the course.

It is worth revisiting some of the principles that guided government's thinking about the establishment of new universities in post-apartheid South Africa. While Chapters 1 and 4 listed all the principles, here I highlight Principles 3 and 6, namely: Equity, Access and Success; and

Place-relevant and Engaged. In terms of Principle 3, MIC100 demonstrated some of the ways in which parity of participation could be possible. This parity of participation inevitably effected epistemic access to the curriculum, such that success was confirmed by the students' course reviews. In terms of Principle 6, the idea of place relevance was also engaged with, and was particularly accounted for in the explicit curriculum such that student's reviews showed that the curriculum recognised their geographical locations.

6.7 Conclusion

Le Grange's "hidden curriculum" and Bernstein's "regulative discourse" are the aspects of MIC100 that I mostly described above. They are not as tangible as the course material. Yet, as Luckett et al. explain, students still see the regulative discourse, and this is the case too in MIC100. The MC100 students have seen the curriculum that is hidden in the regulative discourse – the curriculum that reveals what and who the course values.

Chapter 7: Ubuntu

7.1 Introduction

This chapter emerged from the students' course review data which revealed that embedding ubuntu as a guiding concept of MIC100 has been central to successfully realising the course objectives, and to enhancing the students' feelings of self-recognition and acceptance. The theme of ubuntu warrants its own chapter, because it raises a significant question about the purpose of the contemporary university, at least in the social sciences. Among other objectives, the colonial university exists to enculturate students into elitism, which for African students entails assimilation and non-recognition of their authentic selves. Education set up and run under colonial governance on the continent created an "educated elite that was...by and large an alienated elite, an elite that adored European culture and civilization and looked down on African culture" (Boahen, 2000: 801). In line with the concept of coloniality, which implies continuity from colonialism, some of the ills of colonial education that Boahen describes remain part of the problems that characterise South African universities. Thus, the contemporary university, if it remains unquestioned, will continue to produce elitisms that undermine African epistemologies and ontologies.

Findings from MIC100 reflect an alternative role for the university, as far as students are concerned. The goal of this role is to enable students to be who they are while also respecting others for who they are. This role encourages students to pursue collective well-being between humans. This role is encapsulated in the concept of ubuntu, which has been both an important part of MIC100 and a leading theme in this study's findings.

The chapter will start by locating the HE sector within UNESCO's sustainable development goals (SDGs). The SDGs are important in providing a rationale for the incorporation of values such as ubuntu into the core business of HEIs. The chapter will then reflect on the literature on the concept of ubuntu, in order to, *inter alia*, define the concept and demonstrate international equivalences. The Literature Review has dealt with ubuntu in broader terms. Here it is examined to explain the data analysis. The chapter will then discuss the links between ubuntu and education; and explore the ways in which the concept emerged as a theme in MIC100. The students' reviews will thus form the larger part of the discussion, with extracts used to demonstrate my analysis of the theme. The chapter links ubuntu to the problem of coloniality and the question of the role or purpose of the contemporary South African university.

According to Oviawe, the default purpose of formal education institutions is the advancement of capitalism and colonialism (2016), which finds expression through modernity. MIC100, however, provides examples of how to counter this default position by shifting from the neoliberal and capitalist approach to education, to an education that promotes ubuntu. Ubuntu, in summary, refers to the state of being human through recognition and respect for other humans.

7.2 Locating HE in UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals

South Africa is a member of the United Nations (UN), and thus, subscribes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) framework, from which emerged the Global Education 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2022). UNESCO puts HEIs at the centre of efforts to create the shifts needed to respond to the question of human advancement:

Setting our world on a more sustainable course requires radical shifts in current development paradigms that are exacerbating inequalities and imperilling our common future. This transition is dependent on new knowledge, research and competencies that only higher education institutions are in a position to provide, rooted in their historic role of service to society (UNESCO, 2022: foreword).

By arguing that current development paradigms are “exacerbating inequalities” (ibid.), the document concurs with decolonial scholarship’s critique of Western modernity, an approach that criticises those notions of development that make Europe the centre of the world. UNESCO thus sees HEIs as necessary to the reconfiguration of modern and capitalist approaches to development. For UNESCO, a reflection on the hinderances that HEIs face is necessary:

... it is essential to look at what really stands in the way for these institutions to contribute significantly to the Sustainable Development Goals, and thus to a fairer, more humane, democratic, inclusive and peaceful future for all (ibid.).

As the literature review points out, some of the questions that UNESCO asks above are dealt with at different levels of HE, and several problems have already been identified, at least in South Africa. For example, the non-recognition of Africans and their knowledges has obliged Africans to assimilate in the tertiary education space. Consequentially, education has entrenched “in Africans self-devaluation and self-hatred and a profound sense of inferiority” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 138), which leaves even educated Africans still looking to Europe for their development. Eurocentrism is entrenched in education through capitalism as explained below:

The prevailing neo-liberal ideology that forms the framework of modern education reinforces the Marxist critique that education propagates the oppressive nature of

capitalism by maintaining an unequal class structure that tends to privilege the ruling class (bourgeoisie) over the working class (proletariat) (Oviawe, 2016: 5).

Oviawe's argument problematises universities as centres that produce graduates who are geared towards the accumulation of surplus, which is how inequalities are maintained. In other words, when graduates become part of the elite, they use their newly acquired educational capital to access resources that are generally unavailable to the majority, who are often non-formally educated people.

Not only do universities produce graduates who are assimilated to a capitalist paradigm, but even public universities, at least in South Africa, are criticised for commercialising education. This critique is what has mainly characterised the #FeesMustFall movement, which challenged the idea that education should only be accessible to those who can pay for it.

It is against this background that UNESCO seeks to position HEIs as central to the pursuit of common well-being for all humans and their environment. Thus:

The contribution of HEIs is manifold: theoretical, philosophical and, clearly, ethical. It must also be geared to removing barriers towards sustainable societies and the greater well-being of people and planet (UNESCO, 2022: 14).

While morality operates at a more personal level and is concerned with the distinction between good and bad, ethics is concerned with the same phenomena at a macro level. Thus, UNESCO's call for HEIs to provide ethical grounding for students complements the view of the university as a "moral enterprise" (Luschei, 2016), which I will unpack below.

7.3 Phila ngiphile: towards defining ubuntu

In order to move away from the capitalist approach to education, it is necessary to "re-centre education as a moral enterprise" (Luschei, 2016: 95). According to Luschei, this move entails practicing *convivencia* (See 3.6 above) in teaching and research (2016). Similar to the philosophy of ubuntu, *convivencia* is the promotion of "active respect for others and universal solidarity" (Luschei, 2016: 95). The siNguni phrase 'phila ngiphile' loosely means 'live so that I can live', and reflects a sense of mutual dependency among humans. This value is reflected in MIC100 as the philosophy of ubuntu.

Scholars such as Makalela, Oviawe and Mphahlele have worked through the ubuntu paradigm in educational settings. In short, ubuntu can be described or defined as "a way of life premised on complex intersections between the individual I, and the collective we". (Makalela, 2018: 838). This complex intersection can be described as follows:

Ubuntu is a philosophy of being that locates identity and meaning-making within a collective approach as opposed to an individualistic one. As a result, the individual is not independent of the collective; rather, the relationship between a person and her/his community is reciprocal, interdependent and mutually beneficial (Oviawe, 2016: 3).

Oviawe's definition of ubuntu concurs with the concept as applied in MIC100 and framed through Es'kia Mphahlele's notion of African humanism. Mphahlele unpacks social relations as one of the pillars of African humanism:

The way we conduct our social relationships, human beings matter to the extent that the sense of community is always present. This is the one thing that we never lose. We've been battered around by Western values a lot as well as by the creation of economic needs which we did not have. But ancestral belief, the belief in the ancestral presence and also social relationships, these have stood the test of time (Samin and Mphahlele, 1997: 183)

It is noteworthy that Mphahlele's idea of humanism extends to ancestors, which has implications for MIC100 students, some of whom have ancestral callings that the course recognises in the explicit and hidden curriculum. Some students who may not have an ancestral calling still identify with their ancestors as part of their (the student's)'s present life. Many African ontological systems, at least in Southern Africa, build the identities of the living on those of the deceased – a phenomenon that can be seen in the use of *tinanatelo/lithoko/iziduko*, which often draw on names of those who lived long before us. In English, this is often called praise or clan names.

7.5. Does ubuntu moralise education?

Beyond MIC100, there is scholarly consensus that the values presented in the concept of ubuntu should be central to education (Sibanda, 2016; Oviawe, 2016; Luschei, 2016). For example, both ubuntu in Southern Africa and Confucianism in China offer “a view of education that is closely intertwined with a moral imperative, which serves as the foundation for an education imbued with morality” (Oviawe, 2016: 3). In Colombia, *convivencia* is a concept of similar values to those of ubuntu, “particularly in terms of active respect for others and universal solidarity” (Luschei, 2016: 92). There, *convivencia* has been used in educational institutions to encourage healthy relationships between learners (Luschei, 2016).

There is, therefore, I argue, substantial basis for the claim that ubuntu can be used to answer the question of the role or purpose of the contemporary university. MIC100, as will be shown through examples below, attests to this argument. Based on the data from MIC100 and examples from the scholarly literature, one can use ubuntu to “re-centre education as a moral

enterprise” (Luschei, 2016: 95). This concurs with UNESCO’s view of HEIs as central to advancing “the greater well-being of people and planet” (2022: 14). Below I will bring up some examples from the student’s review of MIC100 to make sense of how ubuntu emerged as a key theme in the data. The examples will, thus, be used to reflect on how the university environment should and can be re-centred as a moral enterprise.

7.5.1 “...we are here today as South African because of it”

MIC100 reflects a possibility where education is not solely geared towards, although it can result in, training students to meet colonial and capitalist aims such as upward social mobility and employability. Rather, the students’ responses in the data show MIC100 as a platform that facilitates a form of education whose benefits are not only material – such as respect for fellow human beings.

At the onset, the MIC100 explicit curriculum presents the concept of ubuntu in the course outline and the weekly programme that students receive. For instance, the topic for Week 3 lecture is “Ubuntu, African Humanism and Ways of Being” (MIC100 course outline, 2020). This concept is present in assessments as it appears in three assignment options, two of which require students to reflect on ubuntu in relation to other topics or concepts covered in the course. The one assignment option that specifically deals with ubuntu is essay option 1 of Assignment 2 in the first semester. The essay instructions on ubuntu can be found on page 6 of the MIC100 Term One Weekly Programme (2020). The aim of the current chapter is mainly to bring out students’ responses in relation to this theme of ubuntu.

One of the students reflected on this theme as follows:

Mostly what I learned is how a person should have sympathy or feel the need to help other people who need help, that’s the spirit of Ubuntu. Some are born with it, some see other people practice it and want to be like them. Ubuntu was the best thing that MIC taught me that we are here today as South African because of it. We are at peace because our leaders of the nation had Ubuntu and reconciled with white people and forget about the past and focus on the future (Colani, 2019)

Colani understands ubuntu as a multifaceted concept that includes sympathy, helping others, and reconciliation. These facets can be translated to interdependence, which concurs with the isiZulu saying that ‘umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’ which in English means a person is a person in relation to other people. The reconciliatory aspect of this student’s response has implications for how such a student would imagine a post-apartheid South Africa, which is partly characterised by discourses around reconciliation.

While ubuntu comes with the risk of being used for cosmetic rainbow-nationalism, Colani's line of thinking concurs with aspects of the restorative justice paradigm, where those who have been wronged can exercise their right to extend forgiveness, as opposed to only focusing on punishing the perpetrators. Such thinking reinforces the ubuntu philosophy of interdependence, wherein as person's wellbeing is affected by the wellbeing of others. Restorative justice, too, considers the wellbeing of both the perpetrator and the victim (Teleki and Kamga in Oloruntoba et al., 2020). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to dwell on the concept of restorative justice. However, I raise it to highlight that ubuntu, as seen in MIC100, presents a framework to deal with a post-apartheid South Africa characterised by lingering pain from colonialism and apartheid.

7.5.2 "I now know that hating is a disease"

In different stages of the democratic dispensation, South Africa has been labelled as a ticking time bomb due to the ills that were suffered in apartheid, whose effects are still with us. Whether or not that label is correct, what has been witnessed in different stages and events of the country is that, hurt and anger still exist – and have at times been misdirected and abused. A quest for justice that focuses only on punishing 'perpetrators', in this case settlers and their descendants, may leave the victim unrestored, particularly where the victim's wellbeing is tied to that of the perpetrator, as the ubuntu paradigm suggests. However, through ubuntu it is possible to consider both victim and wrongdoer for restoration. This view is reflected by Colani's statement that "[w]e are at peace because our leaders of the nation had Ubuntu and reconciled with white people". Teleki and Kamga reflect this position in their proposal that:

... it would almost seem incomprehensible that "vengeance" would apply in scenarios that Ubuntu functions by virtue of the fact that compassion falls directly opposite to the notion of avenging a crime, a bad deed or action that seems untoward within society. Within the setting from which Ubuntu is practiced, it could be argued that the principle of an eye for an eye would probably negate the principle of being compassionate (in Oloruntoba et al., 2020: 308).

Looking at MIC100 through Teleki and Kamga's eyes suggests that as an educational project, MIC100 allows students to confront their histories while presenting an option for them to deal gently and compassionately with the unfortunate aspects of these histories such as apartheid. Importantly, MIC100 does not shy away from dealing with the past. On the contrary, the course expects students to engage with different histories beyond the explicit curriculum – hence the assignments that require students to carry out historical research on their families and communities. What the course then provides, seen through Colani's reflection above, and

through Teleki and Gamga, is a sort of moral framework through which students can deal with what they find in their painful histories. Considering the history of race relations in South Africa, UMP students will inevitably encounter people of different ‘races’ and their associated social, historical and cultural properties. Such encounters may be problematic and hurtful. However, seen through Teleki and Gamga’s argument for ubuntu in restorative justice, students who have been through MIC100 may be better morally equipped for these encounters. For example, a 2020 student confirms: “I now know that hating is a disease, in fact you will not only be hurting the people you hate, but also yourself”. The understanding of ubuntu that this student demonstrates is significant, particularly in the South African context, where colonialism and apartheid left enough reasons for hate and anger. If South Africa is to achieve UNESCO’s SDGs, people must be given the necessary tools to create sustainable futures while dealing with a negative past.

7.5.3 Look at things at a different view

One of the benefits of the concept of Ubuntu that makes the MIC100 curriculum relevant is that it offers students a framework to deal with some of the real-life challenges of marginalisation in society. For example, one student feels that ubuntu has implications for “how to treat our African brothers and sisters and to stop these xenophobic attacks on them, because we are one, one blood, one Africa” (Makwavu, 2019). Here Makwavu applies this concept to a real life South African problem, which is part of what the curriculum is supposed to achieve. This, in turn, addresses the challenges that Nyamnjoh highlights about a consequence of colonial education, namely “that the knowledge needed for African development is rendered irrelevant by a limited and limiting set of values” (2012: 130) which are predominantly Eurocentric. Ubuntu is a value with which Africans are well familiar, although in varying ways as the student reviews point out. In this case, too, where ubuntu gives students the tools to handle xenophobia against fellow Africans, it is evident that this aspect of education carries a moral dimension. This sentiment is consistent with the concept of “*kuhanyisana*” which emerges in the work of Morreira and Chekero, wherein “mutuality can be made between people even where the wider social context remains antagonistic to ‘foreigners’” (2020: 33).

Another student also confirms that MIC100 taught them about the values of ubuntu to facilitate co-existence among people who are different:

MIC has taught me that you can be both Christian and still know and appreciate your culture, it has helped me to realize that other cultures and other beliefs are not better than the other and that we Christians and witch doctors or people who believe in

ancestors can come together and be united because of the end of the day we are all humans (Mzalwane, 2019).

What Mzalwane has learnt in MIC100 is part of what decolonial scholars advocate for through the concept of pluriversality, which entails a world that “overcomes patriarchal attitudes, racism, casteism, and other forms of discrimination” (Acosta et al., 2019: xxvii). Overcoming all of this requires us to accept difference. This sentiment concurs with UNESCO’s call for HEIs to be geared towards “acknowledging the value of difference” (UNESCO, 2022: 14). Appreciation of difference is articulated by another student as follows:

We are a nation of different cultures. We do things differently according to the way we are taught by elders. So when coming across people with a different culture than yours, do not judge but try to Adjust, study and understand that we as people do things differently. Look at things at a different view, respect others and be kind to people (Mehluko, 2019).

What Mehluko points out is that MIC100 undermines the colonial matrix of power, in that differences are not hierarchised, but rather respected and embraced. In the colonial matrix of power, differences must be ordered to bring about levels of superiority and inferiority. Mehluko’s call to “respect others and be kind to people” complements concepts and practices such as *convivencia* (Luschei, 2016) and Confucianism (Oviawe, 2016).

7.6 Ubuntu as classroom praxis

The MIC100 students felt that the course or the institution did not handle ubuntu as a concept external to the classroom, and they were encouraged to apply it in the teaching and learning process. In other words, they were not only learning about ubuntu, but they were also *doing* ubuntu. One student wrote that MIC100 “also teaches Me why Ubuntu (Humanity) is so important to us as pupils” (Student course reviews, 2020). Thus, ubuntu became an aspect of the curriculum that students could apply immediately in daily life. Another student in the previous year also attested that:

... MIC has taught me that we as students, despite our ethnicity, we are a family and we should treat each other with respect and love and try to accommodate each other in spite of the fact that we speak different languages. Ever since I come here in Mpumalanga I was speaking only Xitsonga and now I am learning SiSwati and I am slowly becoming fluent with it all thanks to MIC (Mndeni, 2019).

From Mndeni, we learn that Ubuntu has created conditions that made learning effective even in the non-academic aspects of their life. Mndeni starts learning other languages, not out of the need to assimilate but from feeling recognised and respected. This encouragement to embrace

other languages out of feeling recognised is reflected in scholarship about ubuntu in African languaging practices. Leketi Makalela states that “no one language is complete without the other since they are involved in infinite relations of dependency” (2018: 838). By framing language attitudes through ubuntu, Makalela shows how the practice of ubuntu can greatly encourage students to learn other languages.

7.6.1 “... but it is my language and I am proud”

In South Africa, sePulana is a language that did not receive official status. However, people who speak this language exist and there is a community in an area called Mapulanening (the place of Pulanes). In both years of this study, there were several students, although a minority, who spoke sePulana. One of these students, Sukuma, in her course review in 2019, shared her experience of language complexities in a way that reflects Makalela’s notion of ubuntu and language interdependence. Chapter 8 contains the same quotation, but I use it here to capture an issue that the language issues do not cover, namely the linguistic dimension of ubuntu. Thus, the student stated:

I stood up in front of my fellow students and tell them that I am going to speak my language whether they like or not, whether they hear it or not I do not care, I am speaking it. So they were busy complaining saying they do not understand my language and it is not even there on South African official languages. And I replied if you want to understand something you have to learn but if not you won’t and I concluded it might not be there in South Africans official languages but it is my language and I am proud therefore I am going to speak it. And I was glad some of the people like my friends were supporting me.

Later on all of my classmates were mixing my language with theirs when they are talking to me to accommodate me. And when I am talking now they do not complain they understand me, but when they do not they ask and I help them. MIC really helped me to be patient even though my peers were not treating me well (Sukuma, 2019).

The beginning of Sukuma’s second paragraph confirms Makalela’s point about the interdependency of languages in meaning-making. According to Makalela, due to “their *Ubuntu*, languages are in a constant and simultaneous process of deforming and reforming” (Makalela, 2018: 838). This deforming and reforming can be seen in the above example where students had to open up their ‘official’ languages to borrow from an unofficial language so that they could achieve meaning. In line with the philosophy of ‘I am because you are’, the ‘official’ languages are, because the ‘unofficial’ language is. In other words, where students use different languages, if the ‘unofficial’ language does not work, then the ‘official’ language will not work either, and communication is impeded. Therefore, both languages must work for meaning to

be created collaboratively. In this case, students resolve their language differences by dissolving, to an extent, the superiority-inferiority complex attached to these languages. Such a phenomenon is rare where languages are arranged through the colonial matrix of power, where English, for example, is considered superior, and an English speaker does not have to learn any other language, while the speakers of indigenous languages must meet the linguistic needs of the English speaker. The chapters on language issues that follow elaborate on the power dynamics that come with language practice. In the example of sePulana vs ‘official’ languages, the heart of the conflict is the issue of recognition of the other as an essential part of the wellbeing of the self – as expressed through the greeting, ‘phila ngiphile’.

The above conflict also resonates with Teleki and Kamga’s (2020) conception of restorative justice framed through ubuntu. From the restorative justice perspective, Sukuma does not retaliate with punishment and misrecognition of those who misrecognise her. On the contrary, she recognises their languages, and offers them an opportunity to correct their behaviour. Sukuma’s narrative also reveals reconciliation: “And when I am talking now they do not complain they understand me, but when they do not they ask and I help them”. While it might seem difficult to prove the causal relationship between MIC100 and the way in which this language conflict was resolved, what is clear is that MIC100 provided the context in which the conflict unfolded and was resolved. Moreover, the fact that Sukuma reflects on this in an MIC100 review shows that this student associates this experience with MIC100. The last sentence from the large quotation confirms this: “MIC really helped me to be patient even though my peers were not treating me well”. Sukuma’s position is contrary to the popular view that ‘respect is earned’. In the above scenario, the one who is wronged extends respect to the wrongdoers. This conflict resolution expressed by Sukuma supports the view of ubuntu where respect is granted by recognising another person’s humanity, not necessarily due to what a person does. Sukuma’s view concurs with that of Colani, quoted earlier, that Mzansi is “at peace because our leaders of the nation had Ubuntu and reconciled with white people” (2019). In both cases, ubuntu does not entail timidity or cowardice. Rather, the victims of wrongdoing challenge the wrongdoer with an attitude of grace and a hope that the wrongdoer will correct their doing.

7.6.2 “This is an awesome phenomenon to live by”

From Francis Nyamnjoh’s anthropological viewpoint, the above examples show that MIC100 establishes the context for “conviviality between competing and conflicting influences” (2012: 130). Thus, students are encouraged to find ways to recognise one another and to achieve

harmony despite their differences. This is reflected in Mndeni's statement that "we should treat each other with respect and love and try to accommodate each other" (2019).

The view of the student body as 'family' reveals a sense of interdependence that the students embraced. The metaphor of a family itself entails that a student sees themselves as a member of an organic unit together with other students. Within the paradigm of Ubuntu, such a student would be aware that their actions have implications for others and vice versa. Thus, the premise 'I am because we are' entails that a student will, in their actions, also account for the wellbeing of others who form the unit in which the student belongs – in this case the 'family' of students.

Most of the MIC100 students are black Africans, but it is not a given that they will start the course with all the requirements of the ubuntu paradigm outlined in the literature. For example, Khathala admits that:

If it wasn't for the lecturers I wouldn't care about people's emotions and I would also look down on myself. Referring to Ubuntu, Desmond Tutu said that a person is a person through another person (2019).

Although Khathala's review does not specify what the lecturers did, the need to care has now become part of the values she learnt to embrace through MIC001. Possibly the student recognised 'care' from the manner in which lecturers conducted the class. It is worth noting that the MIC100 lecturers made a point of addressing the needs of the students inside and outside the classroom. For example, it was standard practice for a lecturer to walk to the back of the classroom in order to give attention to a student who spoke in a soft voice. This notion of caring also emerged from the 2020 student cohort, where one student unpacked it as follows:

I learnt about Ubuntu which is an African term for saying we give each other a hand, we help each other, we uplift each other and I am my brother's keeper. This is an awesome phenomenon to live by, it is sensitive and sacred because we make life easier for us as Africans (Pfunani, 2020).

The view that "we uplift each other and I am my brother's keeper" is central to how MIC100 shifts the purpose of education from being geared towards capitalist individualism, to embracing collective responsibility. Such an approach to education can be deemed decolonial because it challenges some of the colonial purposes of formal, conventional education. In other words,

A pedagogical and curricular ethos that is underpinned by the philosophical foundations of Ubuntu would help to ameliorate the long-standing effects of the colonial legacy of the received education system in Africa (Oviawe, 2016: 3).

Part of this colonial legacy is that those who are formally educated do not ordinarily use their education to be their “brother’s keeper” (Pfunani, 2019) due to the rules of capitalism. To borrow the example of South African engineers used by Dr Lwazi Lushaba during a radio interview on SA FM (nd): South African universities produce engineering graduates, yet we still face challenges with rural roads; according to Lushaba, this is because the engineers from these universities are not necessarily trained to think of using their skills to help their communities, but rather someone must pay them for their skills. What Lushaba points out is that the engineers, although having received training from well-resourced institutions, are not trained to be their brothers’ keepers. Thus, the engineers will not use their skills for ‘free’.

Lushaba also referred to surgeons/doctors who only ‘donate’ some hours per year to rural hospitals. This too, shows that being available for the community is regarded as an exception, not the norm. Given the established problem around the purpose of the contemporary university, ubuntu provides an alternative that redresses the ills of coloniality, as seen in the students’ responses.

Among the multiple facets of ubuntu, respect emerged strongly as a precondition of all relationships, according to students. One wrote that:

... we all know that respect is the key to everything without respect there is no dignity to everyone; it does not matter whether you CEO, MANAGER or anything you must learn to respect others. Even at work, I think it also important to teach people about different cultures (Hlompho, 2020).

Hlompho uses ubuntu to counter Euromodernity (Dei, 2012), wherein respect is usually afforded to certain groups of people who occupy certain positions of power. The same student emphasises the need to “always remember that we are different people but respect can unite us and do what we believe is better for everyone (sic)” (ibid.). Hlompho’s sentiment concurs with that of the Sukuma, the moPulane student who extends respect to those who disrespect her, in pursuit of a common good. The philosophy of “what is better for everyone” (Hlompho, 2020) works against the colonial matrix of power, where society is configured to do what is better for the individual or an elite collective, at the expense of everyone else. In the South African context, there are many examples of actions taken by the elite at the expense of the colonized majority. Land dispossession, for example entailed disrespect of colonized people and positioned white people, who in 1913 formed less than 10% of the population, as most deserving. The 1913 Natives Land act allocated approximately 90% of South Africa’s land to the white 10%. Therefore, everyone else had to adjust to the effects of landlessness. These

effects include the poverty and inequality that characterises South Africa today. The elitism that characterises Euromodernity facilitated conditions in which the minority enjoy surplus accumulation while the majority suffer.

7.6.3 “I no longer expect anyone to behave like me”

The subtheme of respect that emerged from the theme of ubuntu concurs with Fraser, who argues that a “remedy for cultural injustice [...] could involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups (1997:15). Respect, in the South African context, has relevance for redress because elitism entailed disrespect of the majority of indigenous cultures. The disrespecting of other cultures seems to have been adopted even among black people, as seen in the experience of Sukuma, whose language was initially rejected by other black students.

The concept of kuhlunipha, which means respect, is therefore necessary to create a context in which people can be acknowledged regardless of any social or economic hierarchy. As the quotation above from Hlompho reminds us, “it does not matter whether you CEO, MANAGER or anything you must learn to respect others”. This shows an understanding of respect that is not based on titles or status. Moreover, this example solidifies the claims of ubuntu as akin to other existing concepts such as “convivencia” (Luschei, 2016) that parallel ubuntu, “particularly in terms of active respect for others” (ibid.: 92). This too has been used in an educational setting.

Adding to the subtheme of kuhlunipha, another student explained: “Cultural consciousness was developed in me, now I am able to love, accept and communicate with people from different cultures and respect their values and opinions” (Mukelani, 2020). From this student, the key words “now I am able to” reveal a shift that has taken place through their journey in MIC100. This raises the question of what would have happened to this student without an intervention such as MIC100? Would the student have obtained a higher education qualification but struggled to respect others of different cultures and opinions? From Mukelani’s perspective, MIC100 provides the basis for rethinking the potential of education to achieve social harmony.

The subtheme of respect requires students to take individual responsibility for respecting others. This shows a personalisation of the attitudinal and behavioural shifts that MC100 encourages. The quotation below comes from a student who used their understanding of cultural differences to take a personal stance on respecting other people:

Many people always thought everyone behaves in his own way because he or she wants to. This happens when people don't take their cultures into consideration. Cultures comes with ideas, customs and behaviors. As different cultures have different ideas, customs and behaviors it means lifestyles of people shall differ in society's. This has helped me to stop judging people due to their behavior because our cultures may be different. I no longer expect anyone to behave like me (Mehlo, 2020).

The irony in the last line of Mehlo's quote is that formal education in South Africa has been geared towards assimilating black students to Eurocentric standards, yet this student opts to not impose her standards on others. Thus, the student states "I no longer expect anyone to behave like me" (ibid.). What the student reviews show is that people can embrace themselves and still embrace and respect those who are different. This trend of MIC100 students accepting differences must also be considered against the first theme, *boosted self-esteem*, which is discussed in Chapter 10. This opposes the colonial way of thinking pursued by many in which a particular ontological and epistemic standard seeks to dominate others.

This process where students value differences demonstrates Fraser's (1997) argument that symbolic change can come out of "upwardly revaluing disrespected identities" (15). Moreover, for MIC100 students this revaluing of disrespected identities is not a task for 'someone else' in a higher position, for it was visible at a horizontal level among students. In other words, historically disrespected people begin to respect themselves and also respect others, instead of historically dominant people being the only ones who receive respect or who determine who else should receive respect. One student observed this horizontal process of respect as follows: "During the MIC classes I have learned so much about respect and Ubuntu, the way our classes were conducted it was always in the most respectful way" (Khulu, 2019).

One of the many consequences of colonialism and apartheid is that there are now several standards, some of which are difficult to attain, by which we judge each other. Prominent standards include religion, race, nationality, gender, and language. Xenophobic attacks in South Africa, for example, emerge from a combination of judgements, including skin colour, language, nationality. A 2019 student raised the issue of judgement:

... what this MIC course contributed into my sense is that judging someone by simply looking at that person is very dangerous and unacceptable because we don't know each other's history and upbringings, we do not know many reasons that can make a person do something and just because we don't understand does not mean we should judge or throw stones but we need to always show Ubuntu (Asati, 2019).

In Asati's case, ubuntu contributes to an outlook in which differences need not lead to threats. The student also demonstrates an understanding that people are the products of many factors, about which others might know little or nothing. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the historicisation of human differences. However, MIC100 encouraged Asati to think of people historically, which is vital in a decolonial context. An historical consciousness is important because it allows students to think critically about social relations, categories and actions. I therefore consider the ability to make sense of history and the past's impact on how people are today as a significant educational move towards moralising education.

7.7 Ubuntu as pluriversal

The theme of ubuntu that emerged from the student course reviews is consistent with UMP's value of diversity. According to the institution, "[d]iversity is valued and celebrated in unlocking a range of interactions, and enhancing exposure to a wide variety of diverse cultures, backgrounds, views and opinions" (UMP Strategic Plan, 2015: 6). Based on the student course reviews, and the explicit and hidden curriculum, MIC100 has effectively advanced the institutional value of diversity. Based on their course reviews, students were impacted positively by this value while also contributing to its actualisation, which they attribute to the ubuntu paradigm. By applying ubuntu, MIC100 students have been encouraged and enabled to respect, celebrate and embrace diversity.

This finding also implies that ubuntu is effective in achieving the decolonial goal of pluriversality, which is partly articulated by UMP as 'diversity'. It is worth noting that as an institutional value, diversity may limit the possibilities of difference, for instance where diversity is quantified to measure demographic representation. By contrast pluriversality is interested in the lifeworlds of the people who present as demographically different (Acosta et al., 2019). MIC100, in this case, has operated beyond the rhetoric of 'I am because you are'. It shows, through examples, how students applied this concept when dealing with each other and with their different lifeworlds. It is noteworthy that what was theory in terms of UMP's values and in terms of the MIC100 explicit curriculum, became the course praxis. Ubuntu was not simply an academic theory, but was *practiced* by both staff and students.

The theme of pluriversality through ubuntu offers universities an opportunity to approach diversity in a manner that is more meaningful to students than a simple presentation of difference through numbers. Put differently, while an institution can claim diversity through demographic factors such as 'race', geographical origin and language, the case of MIC100 reveals a more sophisticated approach to embracing diversity. In the MIC100 approach, the

course requires that students learn to engage with difference in a non-hierarchical manner with parity of participation in mind. Thus, MIC100 did not only see difference, but it also worked with difference to co-create the teaching and learning experience. In other words, MIC100 students dealt with difference outside of the colonial matrix of power, as seen in Sukuma's story of her sePulane language.

7.8 Ubuntu and the contemporary university

These findings have several implications. One is that ubuntu is attainable in a way that students can demonstrate its applicability with clear and realistic examples. From an epistemological perspective, these findings present ubuntu as an African paradigm that has a place in formal education. In fact, some research advocates a more deliberate inclusion of ubuntu in the formal curriculum. In Zimbabwe, there has been a call for "the inclusion of the concept of hunhu/ubuntu in the national curricula right from pre-school to university" (Sibanda 2014: 29). The valorisation of "African identity" (ibid.) is one of several reasons that Sibanda presents for the incorporation of the ubuntu paradigm in curricula.

My analysis reveals that this paradigm can enable students to confront problems faced by society in ways relevant to their sociocultural backgrounds. One student connects their perceived lack of ubuntu to the problem of violence in South Africa, as follows:

Ubuntu is very rare to find in this new generation, for an example majority of man have turned their back on women these a high rate of gender base violence, killing of women and children, rape and violence against the elderly (Vimba, 2020).

Aware of the problems of gender-based violence, Vimba uses the concept of non-recognition to offer a diagnosis. The non-recognition that this student mentions concerns men not recognising the humanity of their victims – women, children and the elderly. From an epistemic point of view, it would be easier for such a student to engage their community in dealing with these problems, than for a student whose 'solutions' are Eurocentric and not easily relatable to Africans. Such a student becomes the ideal graduate from an African university that seeks to be relevant to the context of its location.

A key implication of the above discussion is that the theme of ubuntu problematises the purpose of the contemporary university. The case of MIC100 generates sub-questions from the broader question of the role of the institution, namely:

1. Can the university see and present education as a moral project?
2. Can the university produce graduates who are not self-centred?

3. Can the university restore African ontologies and epistemologies?

When measured against the findings from MIC100, the answers to these sub-questions are all positive, as the student's course reviews show. However, the paradigm of ubuntu central to these findings also has potential problems. One of the major critiques of ubuntu is that it tends to remove individual agency in favour of collective good. However, the students' reflections presented scenarios where one's wellbeing was not compromised by the search for collective wellbeing. One student's review states that "[t]he basic element of Ubuntu is self-respect, self-love, according to what we being thought you can't love and respect others while you failed to apply that basic to yourself" (Munye, 2020). Munye's understanding presents ubuntu as a paradigm that entails wellbeing for the self as a critical prerequisite for pursuing wellbeing for the other. Contrary to the colonial and capitalist philosophy of individualism, ubuntu entails that that which is good for the self must be available to the other. Coloniality seeks to elevate Europe above the rest of the world while taking from the rest of the world. However, Ubuntu seeks collective action to benefit the world, while anticipating effort from both the individual and the collective.

Whereas coloniality thrives when others are looked down upon and disrespected, ubuntu thrives when everyone is recognised and embraced. This sentiment is reflected in Langutelani's review, that the course "has also made me accept everyone as they are and not to look down on anyone unless I am admiring their shoes" (2019). This statement is important for the way in which it imagines co-existence. Langutelani imagines a world in which we must look out for that which is good in each other, as opposed to the colonial approach that renders everyone and everything that is not European as bad.

Borrowing Langutelani's metaphor of shoes, Eurocentric education has looked down on Africa not to admire our shoes, but to take them away and in turn tell us that our feet are bad and require saving by Europe. Such instances have been demonstrated by the devaluation of indigenous languages, the marginalisation of indigenous knowledges in formal education, the disrespect for indigenous religions, and many other processes where Eurocentrism claims to be the standard. Ubuntu provides possibilities for education to heal our feet and restore our shoes – in their different kinds.

7.9 Conclusion: "we are all united, in one way or the other way"

The theme of ubuntu, considered against the colonial background of formal education in South Africa, presents opportunities for tackling coloniality in ways that enable us to embrace our

own ontologies and epistemologies. Unlike in Chapter 9 – Translanguaging in MIC100, where success depends on voluntarism by the teachers, ubuntu is grounded in the explicit curriculum and is anchored by UMP's value of diversity. That makes this aspect of MIC100 more attainable and less dependent on the interests of individual teachers. With ubuntu embedded in the MIC100 explicit curriculum, this philosophy also framed the hidden curriculum. This is evident in the stories that students shared in their reviews. Most of these highlighted a change in their interactions with each other as well and with the world outside the classroom.

I close this chapter with a quotation from Sonke, which captures different facets of the concept of ubuntu as covered in MIC100:

I learned that as individuals, we come from different backgrounds with different beliefs and perspectives. So we should not judge other people based on how they look. We should not judge people based on gender. We should not judge people based on what they eat. We should not judge people based on what and who they believe in. We should not judge people based on race. We should not judge people based on ethnic group. They reason why we should not judge each other is that we are all united, in one way or the other way (student course reviews, 2020).

Chapter 8: Coloniality through linguistic hierarchies

8.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explain some of the ways in which coloniality and social injustices are perpetuated in everyday language practices and attitudes. The chapter will use the data to unpack ways in which language is used to organise a hierarchy of recognition. In this hierarchy of recognition, speakers of marginalised languages often battle epistemic and ontological marginalisation. I decided to use language to demonstrate issues of colonial hierarchies because a problem that may seem merely linguistic on the surface is not only “a linguistic problem, but typical of existing inequalities in the world and the politics of dominance” (Mda, 2010: 5). The use of language for domination can be explained as follows:

Racial domination was tied to language domination, as those who had power belonged to a particular race, and so their language(s) became the language(s) of power, and vice versa for the Africans and the African languages as the dominated and powerless groups (ibid.: 13).

The idea of race frames the colonial hierarchy in which whiteness is the epitome of humanness, and thus languages associated with whiteness enjoy superiority. In South Africa, this hierarchy also plays out along ethnic and cultural lines among formerly colonized peoples. For example, people whose languages were codified by missionaries enjoy some resources from whiteness, such as education in their ‘official languages’ – even though the idea of ‘official’ is problematic – as I will discuss below.

The chapter will also discuss responses to such marginalisation as examples of agency by marginalised people. In addition, this chapter is significant because it enriches our appreciation of the translanguaging practices on which Chapter 9 reports. Drawing on my locus of enunciation, I partly employ my storytelling heritage to share real-life encounters that have implications for my understanding of colonial language hierarchies.

8.2 Some theoretical considerations on language(s)

The literature review in Chapter 3 deals in depth with the theories that are relevant for understanding the language question in the postcolonial context, particularly in South Africa. This section will, therefore, not repeat the review, instead it will indicate those parts of the literature that have made a significant theoretical contribution to my analysis in this chapter. There are three main views on language in the postcolony. The first view regards English as a ‘global language’ that presents better opportunities than indigenous languages (Achebe, 1997; Alexander, 2013). According to the second, language is a carrier of a people’s culture

and an instrument for navigating between self and the other (Ngũgĩ, 1981). The third view presents translanguaging as a way of recognising and employing all available linguistic resources from any language in a multilingual context (Hurst and Mona, 2017). The last view is echoed by the findings of this study, because it was possible to conduct teaching and learning by accommodating several linguistic recourses that were available in MIC100, as the next chapter will show.

8.3 Contextualising South African languages

Let us return to the quotation from Sukuma used earlier when analysing ubuntu. It matters here too because it reflects the multifaceted issues that affect language justice in South Africa. The quotation also problematises the question of policy and language use, and the possible creation of hierarchies:

I stood up in front of my fellow students and tell them that I am going to speak my language whether they like or not, whether they hear it or not I do not care, I am speaking it. So they were busy complaining saying they do not understand my language and it is not even there on South African official languages. And I replied if you want to understand something you have to learn but if not you won't and I concluded it might not be there in South Africans official languages but it is my language and I am proud therefore I am going to speak it. And I was glad some of the people like my friends were supporting me.

Later on all of my classmates were mixing my language with theirs when they are talking to me to accommodate me. And when I am talking now they do not complain they understand me, but when they do not they ask and I help them. MIC really helped me to be patient even though my peers were not treating me well (Sukuma, 2019)

As previously stated, Sukuma is referring to sePulana, which is not on the list of 'official' South African languages. Sections 3.11 and 3.12 in the Literature Review explains some of the processes and framing of the idea of an 'official' language. Suffice it to say here that South Africa has languages such as sePulana that are not formally recognised, yet their speakers exist. For analytical purposes, I divide the phenomena presented by Sukuma into two 'layers' of complexity, namely A and B.

In Layer A we see that while sePulana does not have 'official' status as a South African language, there are South African people who speak this language and live according to the culture to which the language is attached, particularly in Mpumalanga and Limpopo. Without simplistically equating culture with language, it is worth pointing out that at least in Southern Africa, the names of the spoken languages allude to the ethnicities and cultures of the speakers. As Ngũgĩ waThiong'o points out, "any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of

communication and a carrier of culture” (Ngũgĩ, 1981: 13). For example, there is isiZulu the language, yet there is also isiZulu the traditions, rituals, belief systems, and all other ways of life that are followed by people who identify as abeZulu (Zulu people). Thus, the prefix ‘isi’ means ‘in accordance to the Zulu way of doing’, which includes, but is not limited to, language. In the case of sePulana, which denotes a spoken language, some of the cultural resources of sePulana are also signified in the name itself, in that ‘pulana’ comes from the word ‘pula’ which means rain, and this group of people are known for rain-making as part of their traditions. For Ngũgĩ, then, an indigenous language is “inseparably both a means of communication and a carrier of the culture of those people to whom it is a mother-tongue” (ibid.). The sePulana speakers, therefore, go through life facing a daily linguistic and, by extension, cultural marginalisation through the schooling system. For example, they must learn in sePedi which is part of the ‘Sotho’³⁹ language groups. MaPulana are not the only South African group whose language was omitted from the list of ‘official’ languages, as I explain below.

As Rakgogo and Zungu (2022) point out, SePulana is one of the 27 dialects of what is known as Northern Sotho. These 27 dialects include sePai, kheLobedu, and sePedi. However, sePedi was elevated to a standard language while the 26 other dialects were not, because sePedi was the dialect that German missionaries first learnt and for which they developed an orthography. This is one example of how colonialism infiltrated people’s cultural processes, and the effects of such colonial configurations linger today – known as coloniality.

SePulana is spoken in north-eastern parts of the Mpumalanga province such as Bushbuckridge, and it is also spoken in Limpopo and Gauteng (Khweyane, 2014). In Mpumalanga there is a region called ‘MaPulaneng’, which means ‘the place of the Pulana people’. In terms of number of speakers, I have been unable to find official sources beyond news articles that estimate one million. For example, in 2021 an article in the *Daily Maverick*, ‘The Mapulanas’ fight for mother-tongue recognition’, estimated speakers of sePulanato be “more than a million” (ibid.) in the country. The scarcity of quantitative data may be due to the fact that sePulana is not an ‘official’ language, which entails lack of formal mechanism to count its speakers. This is reflected, for example, in the country’s census data where language distribution only counts the 11 official spoken languages, excluding Sign Language which was not official at the time of research. Speakers of sePulana are likely to have been classified under sePedi, as this is the

³⁹ ‘Sotho’ as a grouping of languages is contestable. For example, some baTswana people who are classified under the ‘Sotho’ umbrella feel that they are misrepresented. Hence, my use of this word here is in scarce quotation marks.

language that is provided for them in education. Thus, all languages that are not ‘official’ in Mzansi fall under the ‘other’ category. In South Africa, it is important to note that the number of *official* languages does not account for number of actual languages spoken – which entails nonrecognition of certain groups.

Layer B concerns English as the dominant language. This means that even if sePulana had official status, the moPulana student would still be denied the opportunity to learn in her local language in a South African university. South Africa has 26 public universities. For statistical references, the DHET’s 2015 Report on the use of African Languages as Mediums of Instruction found that 23 of the public universities that were included in the data had English as the language of teaching and learning. In addition to English, Afrikaans is also used as a language of teaching and learning, particularly in some historically white universities (*ibid.*). This report reveals that African languages are far from being languages of teaching and learning, for no university indicated an African language as an official language of teaching and learning. Where an institution included indigenous languages other than Afrikaans in their selection of languages, these were merely to show that “SA HEIs recognise multilingualism in their policies” (*ibid.*: 29), without necessarily employing African languages in teaching and learning. In other words, the African languages are simply welcome, but are not used for the core business of the institutions. This is consistent with the practice that has emerged at UMP, where African languages are highly functional, but only outside the classroom. Thus, a new university such as UMP that was not included in the DHET’s report also falls into the trap of “Anglonormativity”, which expects that everyone “should be proficient in English, and are viewed as deviant or deficient if they are not” (McKinney, 2016: xvi). The nonrecognition of African languages entails that even “African languages are taught in English or Afrikaans” (DHET, 2015: 31). This dislocation shows a serious disrespect of African languages in academic engagement. Hence, my argument that students such as Sukuma suffer linguistic injustice at different levels.

In Sukuma’s case, linguistic injustice started at the basic education level and was institutionalised, for example, by the Language in Education Policy (LEP). The policy states that “[t]he language(s) of learning and teaching in a public school must be (an) official language(s)” (1997: 2). For maPulana, this policy excludes their language from formal education since it is not “official” as per LEP requirements. Despite this exclusion, sePulana remains a “form of speech which is used in daily communication at home” (Khweyane, 2014: 9) and in communities. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to dwell on the full process that granted official status to particular South African languages, the example of Sukuma, the

moPulana student, shows that an injustice exists, and she must constantly struggle for recognition – and she is representative of many who face similar struggles.

For purposes of this study, though, her example demonstrates that MIC100 was a platform that validated such struggles. Sukuma found a context in which she could strive for linguistic recognition: “I stood up in front of my fellow students and tell them that I am going to speak my language whether they like or not.” She used her agency to confront the colonial hierarchy that characterised her struggle for recognition as a speaker of an unofficial language.

From a language perspective, Sukuma faces a struggle against potential linguicide. Firstly, her ways of languaging as a moPulana have been excluded since primary education as she had to learn in languages that were not her home languages: English as the supposedly most superior, and sePedi as the official South African language that her school(s) was allocated. While students from the ‘official’ language groups still struggle linguistically when they have to travel between English and their home languages, she has a longer journey. She has to shuttle between her home language, the dominant regional language, which is sePedi, and then English. Since sePulana does not have official status, Sukuma has not received a fair chance to know her home language as a language of academic engagement since at school she used sePedi. For such a student, the notion of ‘home language’ is complicated by the fact that the state recognises ‘sePedi’ as her home language, though it is actually a dialect that co-exists within a group of dialects in which her actual home language, sePulana, is found. It is beyond the scope of this study to dwell on the debates about how dialects and languages are constituted. However, suffice to point out, again, that the promotion of sePedi from a ‘dialect’ to a ‘standard language’ stems from white missionaries’ religious intentions towards the indigenous people. Based on interactions with maPulana students, I have observed that they could engage in different dialects of seSotho, which included the ‘official’ seSotho and sePedi. Much the same applies to isiZulu speakers who can communicate with limited ease with speakers of the other Nguni languages such as isiXhosa and siSwati. However, while Sukuma can speak other languages in the seSotho group such as Sepedi, in practice sePulana remains a separate language – as I have also observed in the Bushbuckridge region. In MIC100, this was evident because maPulana would always raise their hands when we asked about the language groups represented in the classroom. In terms of layer B’s complexity, Sukuma is one of the many students who must navigate between English and their home languages. The description of Sukuma’s complication, and that of many other African language speaking students, exemplifies this definition of coloniality, as “the lingering nature of the multiple and entangled power relations

of superiority and inferiority established under colonialism—the colonial matrix of power” (Christie and McKinney, 2017: 163).

Standardisation of many South African languages was generally the product of white people in the colonial era, and the categorisation of languages was a process of inclusion and exclusion. In fact, the so-called standard languages “prevail as the norm because of the economic, political-military, or cultural-symbolic power of the rulers, not because they are ‘natural’ in any meaning of the term” (Alexander, 2005: 2). As I argued above, the reasons for standardisation of languages such as sePedi have little to do with the language practices of their indigenous speakers.

Therefore, I argue that the current language hierarchies present the risk of linguicide. Kumalo argues that concepts such as linguicide and epistimecide do not adequately reflect the South African context. For instance, he argues for an invention of a new concept as follows:

This new concept would serve the purpose of highlighting the violence of colonial imposition, while not eliding and further burying the knowledge that was developed by Black/Indigenous thinkers – including their response to colonial violence (2020: 25).

However, Kumalo does not account for the fact that some languages and knowledges have been more severely affected than others in the colonial attempt to organise Africans according to colonial standards – some of which were religious, in the case of codifying dialects in order to translate the Bible. For example, the state has relegated SePulana as a language outside academic engagement. This is evident where learners who approach sePedi writing from a sePulana background are penalised in basic education as their dialect is not catered for in the sePedi medium of instruction (Khweyane, 2014). Thus, there is a silencing suffered by speakers of marginalised languages. Contrary to Kumalo, Mda asserts that “[b]eing silenced or voiceless, therefore, means the culture associated with those without a voice is not practiced, and therefore suppressed, and ultimately extinguished” (Mda, 2010: 8).

Mda’s argument concurs with Prah, who argues that the exclusion of indigenous languages in education is dangerous because “it is in these languages, spoken by at least 90 per cent of us, that our histories, cultures, and indigenous knowledge rest” (Prah, 1999: 39). Prah’s point is precisely why the language issues that emerge from MIC100 must be engaged with, as they highlight both the problems and possible effective responses. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) also recognises the injustice that accompanies current language practices in the HE sector:

... it is unfortunate that the present language practices in HE, which legitimise and overvalue English, are in fact perpetuating social inequalities of the past, rather than enabling social transformation envisaged for a South African society in the South African Constitution (DHET, 2015: 13).

This statement highlights the seriousness of the language question in HE. Universities are complicit in undermining the South African constitution by depriving indigenous South Africans of the recognition of their languages and their right to access education in these languages. As Prah (1999) notes, the epistemologies that could be represented by indigenous languages lag in intellectual life. This, I argue, is part of the reason for the fallacy that English proficiency is a measure of intelligence. This overarching language practice at HEIs perpetuates coloniality, because it perpetuates several practices and norms of formal colonization, such as the misrecognition and displacement of indigenous epistemologies partly through exclusion of local languages from education.

8.4 Language practice at UMP

At the time of conducting this research, UMP did not have a language policy. However, English was the default medium of instruction and language of official communication. Signage, names of buildings, email communications, newsletters, and curriculum documents were presented in English, except in the departments that taught indigenous languages, namely siSwati and isiNdebele. The university has a Teaching and Learning Policy (TLP) whose objective is as follows:

The purpose of the Teaching and Learning Policy is to present the University of Mpumalanga's approach to and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment and the underlying principles. The Teaching and Learning Policy will support UMP in achieving its vision, mission, values educational purpose (UMP Teaching and Learning Policy, 2016: 4).

Significantly, the 43-page TLP is silent on the language question. In other words, while the document outlines UMP's "approach to and understanding of teaching, learning and assessment and the underlying principles" (ibid.), reflection on language itself is absent from the underlying principles. Given the coloniality of HE in South Africa, I argue that a university without a decolonial stance on language is a university that effectively perpetuates colonial language practices in which English assumes dominance. Further, in this case the dominance is assisted by official institutional practices. At the time of research and writing, UMP had no official position or plan of language justice, except for approaches employed in MIC100 which I discuss in the next chapter.

While the dominant language of teaching and learning was English, I observed that outside the classroom students spoke mostly African languages, with siSwati being the most popular. The out of classroom interactions in indigenous languages involved students, security guards, taxi drivers, cleaners, campus shopkeepers, teachers, and administrators.

8.5 Linguistic hierarchy in personal encounters

Below I share some ethnographic stories connected to the points I raise in this chapter. While these are personal, real-life encounters, my report will take the form of ‘mcoco’, which is a form of telling stories from my cultural background. Mcoco enables me to find some light-heartedness while detailing encounters, some of which had traumatic effects.

8.5.1 What kind of language is that? English as authority

Having interacted daily with at least ten UMP security personnel between 2019 and 2022, it is worth noting that I have only conversed in English with two security members. Both held senior positions, were mostly based in the office and did not wear the security uniform. In one instance I observed that English was used as a language of power and dominance. Around March of 2019, when I was still new at UMP, I was unhappy with what I perceived as poor service in the allocation of access cards and parking discs. Upon approaching the two senior officials who both spoke siNguni (siSwati and isiNdebele), we started the greeting with the regular ‘sanibonani bekunene’ [hello good people], to which they both replied ngesiNguni. I proceeded to explain ngesiSwati my dissatisfaction with their service, and requested to be granted proper access to the buildings where I would work and teach. One of the officers responded to my request by suggesting another delay, ‘kutomele uphendz’ ubuye’ [you will have to come back], citing a backlog of access requests. When I responded with ‘kahle-kahle lana niyasizulisa’ [in essence we are just being sent from pillar to post], the officer then switched his tone and language to English in anger: “What kind of language is that?”, he asked. The question was not about my spoken language, but the meaning produced through it. It was clear that he was offended by my insinuation that they were inefficient in their jobs. He shouted at me in English so that everyone else in the room could hear the conflict. I apologised ngesiSwati. Accepting my apology, he responded in English, “Jah, but you must not say things like that. We are all colleagues here and we are trying to work with each other”.

What I inferred from this encounter is that upon claiming power and asserting his position, English was the preferred language by the officer. Moreover, I also inferred that English allowed him to detach from the communal regular encounter we had started on (sanibonani), which in a way sets a social contract of mutual recognition and respect. When he spoke in

English, it felt to me that less of mnaka (brother) and more of ‘officer’ was speaking. In that particular encounter, English was utilised to break the social contract that was initiated through African languages – wherein the greeting ‘sanibonani’ means ‘I recognise you’, and the response ‘yebo’ has to do with consent. English also became the language through which the officer asserted his authority.

8.5.2 Testimonial injustice in a Toyota Quantum: accent as permission to speak?

In another encounter with a taxi driver who, according to my observation and that of fellow passengers, was driving dangerously, siSwati became the context for contested citizenship. One morning, when I had no access to my car I went to town (Mbombela CBD) to catch a taxi to UMP. Consistent with a Mzansi taxi rank, the taxi marshals shout and point out the taxis that take different routes. Pointing to the taxi that goes to UMP, a marshal simply shouts ‘Mpumalanga!’, without mentioning ‘university’. Remember we are already in Mpumalanga, so why would a taxi go to Mpumalanga, when we are already in Mpumalanga? But the regular commuters seem to understand well, and staff and students proceed to board the taxi. I notice that this community of taxi operators and passengers have developed their own commuting language which they adhere to with ease. When I recognise a few faces from UMP, I also get on board. “Sanibonani”, the driver greets us before departure. We answer, “yebo”. Social contract done – Sisonke⁴⁰. Or so I thought. Yho, does the driver not turn into a Shumakha⁴¹?! As we fly on the bumpy roads, common phrases in the taxi are “eish” and “yho” (exclusive to South Africa) whenever the driver overtakes or does something dangerous! The last intersection is four-way intersection, where we turn right towards the university and is the busiest and most dangerous. While we drive uphill, cars, buses and trucks coming downhill from the Whiteriver direction can easily finish us, so several cars are waiting until the oncoming traffic is clear before they can turn right, but not Shumakha. Mnaka⁴² proceeds to overtake all the stationary cars, passing them on his right side, blocking their view of oncoming traffic. Then he turns right such that it’s the oncoming cars that must now slow down for us. “Yhooo”, even louder from almost all the passengers. You know where the danger is? Ekse, the kind of claustrophobia that you get when your calculations reveal that you will not be able to leave the taxi before impact. It was like that! As soon as he is done turning, there is a small silence, I guess we are taking in the moment, or we are now just grateful to be alive. But someone must

⁴⁰ This means ‘we are together’ and can also be used in colloquial greetings.

⁴¹ In Mzansi, a person who drives too fast can be referred to as the former Formula 1 driver, Michael Schumacher. Some of us in Mzansi pronounce the surname as ‘Shumakha’.

⁴² Brother in siSwati.

say something, I thought. So, I address the driver and tell him, “mnaka, ushayela kabi. Please ukhumbule kutsi uphetse bantfu” [brother you drive rough. Please remember that you are carrying humans]. Eh, big mistake I made! He responds by asking if I know how to drive and if I have a license. I think he thought I was a student. As I think of ways to answer him, another passenger responds, instead: “akungeni ndzawo kutsi une license, nemuntfu longana license uyakhona kubona kutsi ucishe wasifaka engotini” [it doesn’t matter whether he has a license, even a person without a license can see that you almost put us in an accident]. But I respond and confirm that I do have a license, and that if he also has one, he should also follow the road rules which he should know. It is on the issue of road rules that the citizenship issue starts. “Watini ngemtsetfo wendlela wena? [what do you know about road rules], he asks? He proceeds to add kutsi “awusiye newa la eSat’ Afrika mara ufuna kus’tjela ngemigcwaco [you are not even from South Africa but you want to tell us about roads]”. It is interesting that he thinks if I am not from South Africa, I must not be familiar with functional roads. That is rich coming from a South African driver who dodges potholes every day. I mean, the South African road where he almost killed us should have had traffic lights years ago – but asikho lapho [topic for another day]. Anyway, at this point I am highly interested in the question of citizenship that he raises as a response to me criticising his driving. So, I ask him how he knows that I am not from Sat’ Afrika. He points out that “kute lokhuluma nje ngawe lophuma la eSat’ Afrika” [there is no one who speaks like you who is from South Africa]. “Ngikhuluma njani?” [how do I speak], I ask him. He points out kutsi “siSwati sakho si-deep! Uyasiva nje kutsi lesi saseSwatini. Akusiso lesala” [your siSwati is so deep, you can hear that it is from eSwatini. It is not the one from here].

Unfortunately, at the end of this journey things turned a bit more violent as the driver threatened to beat me up in front of students, colleagues and other taxi drivers. Importantly, he dismissed my points about road safety on account of ‘foreign’ citizenship status which he based on my usage of siSwati (or at least he used this to deflect). This belief in his superiority seemingly gave him licence to be violent.

The taxi driver is not the only one who thinks like that. During xenophobic attacks in South Africa, perceived language use can become a source of danger or a resource for safety. Of course, this way of thinking reflects not only ignorance, but also an unfortunate hierarchisation of humanness and recognition that is arranged along a hierarchy of languages. In the case of this taxi driver, we share the same language, siSwati. But my use of it, according to him, “si-deep” [is so deep] that it can only be spoken by someone from a country with poor roads,

eSwatini. Thus, language in this case is not limited to the speech encounter – it represents worlds with which the speakers are associated, sometime erroneously based on stereotypes. Akin to the case of the moPulana student, language here became political, and was both a platform and an instrument of contestation. In the case of the driver, his idea of hierarchy of languages causes him to uphold politically determined state borders as natural and eternal. For him, someone who belongs on the other side of the border is unworthy of his attention, even if lives are at risk. The borders are as colonial as they are real to him, yet he does not see this. Such is the dilemma of coloniality. We don't see it, yet we breathe it all the time (Maldonado-Torres, 2010).

This encounter with the taxi driver is not the worst of its kind. In South Africa, people have been wrongfully arrested for using less acceptable languages, dialects, or accents, and some have even been killed. The 2008 xenophobic attacks epitomise such unfortunate injustices that manifest through language hierarchies. Owen Sichone details some of the instances where South Africans were caught in the xenophobic crossfire due to their language:

Each new attack seemed more vicious than the last as mobs attacked, robbed and raped their way into the public eye demanding the deportation of foreigners. But soon, not just foreign migrants were under attack – ‘They are killing Shangaans,’ some residents of Ramaphosaville informal settlement on the East Rand shouted as they ran for their lives (2008).

The complication of ‘Shangaans’ (also referred to as maTsonga or maChangane) is explained in Chapter 9, where some students reflect on their experiences while belonging to this cultural and language group. I use the extract from Sichone's (2008) account to demonstrate the seriousness of the challenges associated with South Africa's colonial linguistic hierarchies. The fact that some language attitudes entail threat to life means that universities as places that should serve humanity cannot afford to be passive on issues of language justice. Thus, within the broader problem of linguistic hierarchies, it should be a minimum expectation that a university in South Africa will recognise and embrace local languages in teaching and learning. The personal experiences I shared, alongside Sichone's account of xenophobic attacks, show that the injustices that students face on the basis of their languages mirror the realities outside the classroom. Thus, if a university is to prepare students to responded to these societal realities, the curriculum, in its different levels, must deal with the language question with more seriousness. As I will argue in the recommendations, UMP has to deal with the question of language policy with urgency.

8.5.3 A Sample of language repertoire in Mbombela Campus

In the table immediately following, I provide a sample of typical phrases used in the daily life of the university by different stakeholders. The table demonstrates that on the Mbombela campus in the daily realities of most of the university's stakeholders, outside of teaching and learning and outside of formal communication, English is not the norm. Hence, the university community members bring into the university space rich language practices from their communities. This raises the question of whether the university recognises these language practises or marginalises them.

Table A: Typical phrases in UMP's daily life

Phrase	Source language(s)	Meaning in English	Used between whom?
Mngani	siNguni	Friend	Peers/friends
Skeem	Colloquial, Afrikaans roots	Friend	Peers/friends
Sanibonani/sawubona	siNguni	Hello	Indiscriminate
Yhiii	xiChangane/xiTsonga and siSwati	Expresses attitude of complain.	Indiscriminate
Okay (often pronounced "hokheyi" or "okhey")	English	Okay	Indiscriminate
Uyahlanya	siNguni	You are crazy/mad	Peers/friends, or older person to younger person.
Ola/hola	Tsotsitaal (with earlier traces from Europe)	Hello	Peers/friends, often youth.
*Sir	English	Male authority who is older than the students.	Students to male lecturer or male administrator.
*Babe	siSwati	Father, Sir, Mr.	Students and workers, academic and admin staff to workers.
*Mam	English	Mam/madam	Students to female lecturer or female administrator.
*Make (pronounced maakeh)	siSwati	Mother/Mrs/madam/miss	Students and workers, academic and admin staff to workers.
Shame (often pronounced "shem")	English	May be pronounced like 'shame' in English, but seldom carries this direct meaning when used in vernacular settings. Can express sadness, pity, ridicule, plea (as in 'please' – thus "ngiphe shem/shame" would mean "give me please").	Indiscriminate

*On 'babe' and 'sir': both can be used to refer to a male figure in a respectful way, however 'sir' is mostly used when the addressee typically represents or is associated with formal education and non-menial labour; a lecturer would be called 'sir' while a gardener would likely be called 'babe'.

* On 'mam' and 'make': similar to the male equivalent above, these are used to refer to female figures in respectful ways, however 'mam' is often used to refer to a figure who is associated with education, such as a lecturer or administrator; 'make' is mostly used when referring to older female workers such as cleaners.

The cases of babe/sir and make/mam reveal some of the ways in which language arranges people along a modernist hierarchy of labour and educational status.

The language practices of the university stakeholders, based on my observations, show that stakeholders bring their linguistic capital into the university environment. Even when English linguistic resources were used, the users appropriated such resources to suit their realities on campus, which are also connected with their realities in their communities and homes. Typical interactions on campus, therefore, take the form of translanguaging since different linguistic resources from different languages are employed simultaneously to create context-based meanings. For example, the meaning of “shame” as pointed above, would depend on the context in which the phrase is used rather than what the phrase is expected to mean in English. Thus, speakers do not necessarily have to be speaking in English to use words from English. My analysis is that the university community exercises agency in their daily language practices.

However, the use of such linguistic capital stops for contexts such as official proceedings, formal communication, and teaching and learning processes. When inside the classroom and when writing tests, assignments and exams, students and staff switch to English as the language of academic engagement. MIC100 is the exception to this norm, and is unpacked below in the next chapter. My observation here is that while the university does not have a formal language *policy* in place, its language *practices* undermine the agency of stakeholders, and prevent them from fully incorporating their indigenous languages into the entire life of the institution. As a result, Anglonormativity enjoys a privileged status that is guarded by the institution’s formal language practices, thus relegating African languages to non-academic and informal engagement. This is evident in the use of more indigenous phrases to refer to stakeholders whose jobs are considered lower in terms of class and educational status, while those whose jobs are considered closer to the promises of modernity seem to be referred to in English. Thus, beneath the daily language encounters, I argue, a certain value system is being reproduced, and division being entrenched. *Mam* belongs in the classroom and office, while *make* belongs in the garden and spaza⁴³.

It is worth noting, with caution, that some of the linguistic associations are generally linked to South Africa’s labour systems. Black people who hold positions that were historically reserved for white people are addressed more often in English, to denote that they are now in a higher position in the hierarchy of labour. Thus, they are addressed using the ‘higher’ language. The

⁴³ Also known as a tuckshop, often informal small scale business.

reverse is also true. The faces of gardeners, drivers and cleaners are representative of the working-class parents of UMP students – almost all of whom are NSFAS beneficiaries. These parents are unlikely to have attained the educational levels of the lecturers and administrators. Hence, they are addressed in the languages less associated with education – notwithstanding the elements of respect that are embedded in the indigenous languages, elements of respect not found in spoken English. However, an official language policy of multilingualism could be based on observation of these nuances in the particular social life of UMP, and other public university campuses in their respective locations. In the absence of such a policy, a colonial hierarchy of languages may continue to organise the university stakeholders along a colonial hierarchy of identities associated with these languages.

8.6 Conclusion

My overall argument in this chapter is that in South Africa there is a colonial hierarchy of languages. This linguistic hierarchy is simultaneously a hierarchy of recognition in which people who are associated with certain languages are more likely to be accepted than others. I have drawn on some personal stories and some observational data of UMP to argue that such a colonial hierarchy of languages affects the university. I also link the language hierarchies in the academy with South Africa's language realities, which have been configured by coloniality – notwithstanding that people are using their agency to deal with the colonial configurations. Therefore, I use this chapter to argue that multilingualism in the South African context is an important and serious issue that must be addressed. In addition, this chapter provides a rationale for the next chapter, in which I report on, and advocate for, the translanguaging practices that took place in MIC100.

Chapter 9: Translanguaging in a typical MIC100 classroom

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the translanguaging practice that characterised teaching and learning in MIC100, particularly in instances when I was conducting the class, and in some of the written assessments. The chapter uses examples from some of the class engagements, students' assignments, and student course reviews to report on the translanguaging practice. The chapter also reflects on the reconfigurations on classroom power dynamics through translanguaging, as well as interpretations. It also advocates for translanguaging as a route to parity of participation in HE.

9.2 Contextualising language dynamics in MIC100

MIC100, which was established in 2018, used English as the language of teaching and learning, although a move towards multilingualism took place, as I will detail below. It is worth restating that when MIC100 was established, UMP had no language policy, and the Teaching and Learning Policy was silent on the language question. When I joined the university at the start of 2019, I found that MIC100 continued with English as the default language of teaching and learning. The Course Co-Ordinator was the only lecturer, and she was only fluent in English. Shortly before I arrived at UMP, MIC100 was allocated a Fulbright⁴⁴ Fellow from the USA, and her role was mainly to support students with English.

For assignments where students had to draw on their indigenous languages, such as the 'self-description' which included clan names, students were allowed to use their home languages, but were required to provide English translations. While there were practical reasons for this approach such as the need for a monolingual lecturer to assess students' work, obliging students to provide English translations when they used African languages in their writing was, in my view, unfair as it shifted the burden of linguistic justice to the students. When I joined the MIC100 teaching staff, I advocated for students to use more of their indigenous languages in class and in assessments. I could make this call because I speak over eight South African languages, with only a little tshiVenda and Afrikaans. In the second semester of 2019, an additional lecturer who was fluent in tshiVenda joined the MIC100 teaching staff. Therefore, the need for students to provide translations fell away.

⁴⁴ This is an academic exchange programme based in the United States of America that offers students and researchers the opportunity to spend time in universities outside their home countries.

As of 2022, the MIC100 course outline did not take a position on language use. This reflected the fact that the university as a whole did not have a language policy. Thus, the practice of multilingualism in MIC100 was based on an invitation by the teaching staff during class. The course outline and weekly programme were written in English, and local languages only appeared where they referred to titles in the course resources (names of indigenous poems, names of videos, etc.). Local languages were only used as part of instructions in the weekly programme to translate clan names as they were a necessary requirement for the self-description assignment. That part of the instructions appeared as follows:

How do you identify yourself? e.g. what are your names, praise names, family associations, clan associations, totem associations (e.g. izibongo, isiduko, izithakhazelo, liboko etc) (MIC100 Weekly Programme term One, 2020).

The inclusion of four indigenous phrases within long instructions written in English, I argue, means very little for the course's official approach to language practice. At best, this shows the poverty of English when it is used to describe phenomena that are deeply culturally embedded. As for other parts of the course material, indigenous languages appeared as descriptions of resources, as one example from the MIC100 Weekly Programme (2020) shows:

Figure H: Example of course material

RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Cope. T. 1968. <i>Izibongo: Zulu Praise-Poems</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press
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This example illustrates that indigenous phrases such as 'izibongo' only appear when they are part of the original title of the programme's recommended learning resources. Clearly, the explicit curriculum subscribed to Anglonormativity, and the default response from students was to engage in the course in English in class, in email communications with staff and in assessments. However, a linguistic shift later occurred, as will be described below.

9.3 Examples from class sessions

In the first class meeting of every year of the research duration, the focus was on introducing the course and staff to students, and for staff to get to know the students. In the first semester of 2019, when the staff consisted of the English-speaking lecturer, the English-speaking Fulbright teaching assistant, and myself, the practice of multilingualism would ordinarily start only when it was my turn to introduce myself. I would start my introduction with greeting the room in different languages: "*sanibonani, dumelang, avuxeni, eita, molweni ndah*". Students

responded in the various languages I used: “yebo (siNguni group), ahe/age (seSotho group), ahe (xiTSonga), eita/hola (Tsotsitaal), ewe (isiXhosa), nda/ah (tshiVenda: the tshiVhenda response is divided into male and female respectively). Following these greetings, I proceeded to identify myself:

ligama lami nginguMsakha, kaMona, kaMashashane, lowashaya inyoka wayibeka endleleni watsi labanye matawundlula bayidobhe. Wayasha imbuti wayibeka emhlangeni. Bakakhe bantfana wabatfuma dutane, balabanye wabatfuma ekudzeni

In all the years from 2019 to 2022, the responses to this introduction of my names always comprised ululation, whistling and other sounds and phrases of celebration such as ‘musho!’.⁴⁵ After the introduction of my names, I would ask where the students came from, which was broken down into South African provinces and the countries of students who came from outside Mzansi. In every introductory session there were always students from all the South African provinces, except Northern Cape in 2019. The majority of international African students would be from eSwatini, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi. The non-South African students could also greet if their languages were not among the South African language groups.

This practice of greeting in the introductory class reveals a linguistic mechanism through which staff and students bring their cultural lifeworlds into the academic space. For example, the siNguni greeting, ‘sawubona’, which loosely means ‘hello’ in English, actually carries several cultural properties. However, this greeting also goes beyond ‘hello’, for it symbolises recognition, with the central word being ‘bona’, which directly means to see. Thus, ‘sawubona’ means ‘we see you’. It is worth noting also that this greeting takes a plural form even when the greeter is one person and the greeted is one person. This ties into the ubuntu aspect of our interactions where an individual is simultaneously recognised as part of a collective. When greeting more than one person, the greeter can say ‘sanibona’ or ‘sanibonani’ but the plural ‘sa’(we) still remains even if the greeter is one person. The greeted then reply ‘yebo’, which directly means ‘yes’. The ‘yebo’ response symbolises consent or agreement to be recognised. The exchange of the two words, ‘sanibonani’ and ‘yebo’ forms the foundation of a social contract and interaction between people who will share a space and a moment – a recognition is extended, and consent or agreement is expressed. In the educational context, this entails that the teacher (greeter) expresses recognition of his/her students, and the students return agreement.

⁴⁵ Musho directly means ‘state him/her’ and is celebratory response that is made when someone introduces themselves through their clan names.

While the above example applies to the siNguni groups (isiZulu, siSwati, isiXhosa, isiNdebele), other language groups have their own practices of founding a social engagement. Some are similar to the siNguni ones, while others differ. The tshiVenda and xiTsonga often incorporate a sense of time in their greeting. For example, in xiTsonga the greeter says ‘avuxeni’ usually in the morning – the ‘ni’ in ‘avuxeni’ expresses plurality. The seSotho ‘hello’ for example, is ‘dumelang’, which is how the greeter says, ‘do agree’ and the ‘greeted’ respond ‘ahe’ which means ‘yes’, thus agreeing. ‘Dumelang’, too recognises the greeted in plural and can be used even when greeting an individual (although the more individual one is ‘dumela’).

The above descriptive narrative of greetings comprises examples of some of the cultural exchanges that would have been lost had the greeting happened purely in English. The greeting, ‘good morning’ in general interaction through English does not usually elicit a response of consent and/or agreement in a manner that works in these African languages. We do not usually reply ‘yes’ to ‘good morning’. It is worth noting that the cultural and linguistic exchanges that take place in these indigenous greetings may seem complex, yet they occur almost instantly as the greeting happens. This is because these students have spent years of their upbringing in the linguistic and cultural contexts that enable them to easily mobilise their linguistic capital in social interactions and meaning-making processes.

This multilingual introduction, therefore, set the context for the rest of the academic year, and encouraged students to communicate in languages in which they felt comfortable during class. As one student put it, MIC100 encouraged “students to express themselves freely and even gave us an opportunity to speak the language we were comfortable with in class” (Nkululeko, 2020). The notion of “the language we were comfortable with” has significance for the ways in which multilingualism is perceived in education. Here languages were not used in a purist sense that, for example, emaSwati will only speak siSwati while maTsonga speak xiTsonga, or that emaSwati will only speak xiTsonga to maTsonaga. Rather, the language practice took the form of translanguaging, which entails “using several [...] languages in the same sentence” (Brock-Utne, 2016: 36), hence the idea of using *languages* with which the speakers were comfortable.

Having established that all languages were welcome, during the discussion of kuhlonipha⁴⁶ as an etiquette of class engagements, I invited the class to consider ways for everyone to use their language for learning. During this request I offered that if anyone commented or asked a

⁴⁶ To respect.

question in a language I understood, I would interpret their input for the rest of the class. However, for languages I did not understand or that I understood little, I asked students who understood these to take up the interpreting role – and they always agreed. It is worth noting that there was never any opposition to my proposal for in-class discussions, but there was opposition when it came to written assignments, as will be shown below. The multilingual class participations have also extended to MIC100 classes where I was not the main lecturer, but I was present either as an observer or co-lecturer. However, most of my reporting will focus on the classes where I was the main lecturer.

It is against the above arrangement that our lessons contained a diversity of linguistic resources, which entailed translanguaging. The practice of translanguaging entails “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (Canagarajah 2011, 401). Below I offer examples of how translanguaging took place.

9.3.1 Kuyasheka, not diarrhoea: shuttling for meaning across languages

In one lesson where a student from Kwazulu Natal asked her question in isiZulu, translanguaging was clearly epitomised in that the humour contained in her question relied on knowledge of both isiZulu and siSwati, and xiTsonga to a limited extent. The student wanted to know if it made sense to explain an academic concept in a certain way. Put in isiZulu, she asked, “kuyasheka ukuthi...?”. As I repeated her question so that the rest of the class could hear, students responded with laughter. The humour was found in the following translanguaging dynamics:

Original question in isiZulu: Kuyasheka?

Direct translation from isiZulu to English: Is it sayable?

Different meaning of the word ‘*sheka*’ in siSwati: having diarrhoea

Possible meaning of the word ‘*cheka*’ in xiTsonga (where a listener finds equivalence between ‘ch’ and ‘sh’): having diarrhoea

Meaning translated from siSwati/xiTsonga to English: is it having diarrhoea

From a translanguaging point of view, the above example demonstrates that students understood how the two siNguni languages work. Perhaps this understanding resulted in the student who asked the question not being offended but able to join in the laughter at the accidental homonym. What this encounter demonstrated was that students operated across more than one language to enrich their interaction: the isiZulu language grounded the

educational question “is it sayable”, while siSwati and possibly xiTsonga furnished the humour about diarrhoea. In such instances, even the shy students participated in class, at least by laughing. Nonetheless, I proceeded to answer the student and the rest of the class, and humorously pointed out that “ngesizulu, yebo kuyasheka” [in isiZulu, yes, it is sayable]. This answer, when framed through siSwati or xiTsonga., would mean “yes, it is having diarrhoea”.

9.3.3 I am who they see.

In another example, during a discussion of inhlonipho, which is the concept of respect, I invited students to comment on how they preferred to refer to me. One male student suggested, “mine ngingatsi ankeli [I would say uncle].” On the surface, it might seem that the student wished to refer to me as uncle because I was older than him. However, there is a cultural gendered nuance to how the term is used. In the townships and some rural areas, ‘ankeli’ can be used among peers and simultaneously symbolise respect. In addition, in the context of Tsotsitaal, males are more likely than females to use the term – thus by calling me ankeli, the student also denotes their possible gender position while showing respect to me. Otherwise, ‘malume’ could still signify uncle in a way that does not engage the gender of the speaker – although to varying extents, which are beyond the scope of this discussion. What the example of ‘ankeli’ points out is that students were incorporating resources from one language into their own linguistic repertoires that reflected their locus of enunciation (body, culture, age). It is worth noting that during this lesson, no one suggested that I be called by any official title or ‘proper’ English term. In other words, students did not offer terms like ‘lecturer’, ‘teacher’ or ‘sir’. Rather, their preferences reflected the sociocultural context that informed their understanding of their relationship with me. Hence, suggestions such as ‘ankeli’ were accompanied by others such as ‘mnaka’ [brother], ‘lomdzala’ [elder], which mirror relationship dynamics in the communities around the university. In other words, how students saw me was, to a large part, a reflection of their loci of enunciation. It was at this lecture that I also explained how my locus of enunciation limited my compliances with some of the politically correct pronouns such as ‘them’ and ‘they’. I explained that “ngesiSwati, umuntfu muntfu. Bulili bakho abungeni ndzawo nangikhuluma nawe or ngawe [in siSwati, a person is a person. Your gender does not factor when I speak with you or about you]”. SiNguni languages do not have gendered pronouns such as ‘she’ and ‘he’. I also pointed out that exceptions exist in some African cultures such as tshiVenda, where greetings are gendered: “ngatshiVenda, when I say ‘ndah’, you reply and say ‘ah’ if you are female, and ‘ndah’ if you are male”.

9.3.4 “i-identity buwena bakho”: Africanising George⁴⁷

The practice of translanguaging means the mixing of different languages in the process of meaning-making so that the student population can share linguistic resources. For example, during the topic of identity students would often say “i-identity buwena bakho”. Here English is mixed with siNguni as follows: the prefix ‘i’ before ‘identity’ comes from siNguni and denotes a thing. This prefix is added to the English ‘identity’ in order to Nguni-fy the English word. The phrase ‘buwena bakho’ is siNguni for ‘your you-ness’. Thus, the students were pointing out that the concept of identity denotes a person’s sense of who they are. This translanguaging practice in the classroom is representative of how ordinary South Africans speak in daily interactions. For example, the popular phrase ‘mara why unje’ contains properties of Afrikaans, English and siNguni as follows: ‘mara’ comes from Afrikaans ‘maar’, which means ‘but’; ‘why’ is from English, and ‘unje’ is siNguni for ‘like this’. What this points out is that speakers of African languages in Mzansi borrow from other languages, including English and Afrikaans, and adapt the borrowed words to the grammatical rules of their indigenous languages, such as adding the correct indigenous prefixes (u, i, ma, etc.) to make a European word comply with the indigenous syntax.

9.3.5 Musho! Students unpack their loci of enunciation in writing

‘Musho’ is an isiNguni phrase for ‘announce/describe him/her’ and is usually uttered when a speaker announces who they are, often through tinanatelo (clan names). Tinanatelo enable Africans to summarily announce their locus of enunciation, since in sinanatelo there is often the person’s biographical information such as names, geography of origin, family trade, lineage, totems. This autobiographical announcement is often poetic, metaphoric, and incorporates idioms. It is therefore appropriate that students use African languages, because these are best positioned to capture such biographies.

Following the invitation to multilingualism in written assignments in 2020, less than 5% of the students opted to write their self-description fully in African languages. Less than 30% wrote strictly in English while the majority blended more than one language, including English. Below are some of the examples:

Igama lami ngingu...[name removed for confidentiality], intokazi enhle yakwaNdlovu. Intombi yomuZulu ezigqajayo kakhulu ngolimi lwayo kanye nemvelaphi yayo. I turn 20 on the 12th of April. I was born in a small town in KwaZulu Natal called Vryheid at Vryheid Hospital. Intombi eyangithwala izinyanga eziyisishiyagalolunye igama

⁴⁷ The word George is often used by black people to refer to the English language. The word is linked to the colonial history; English settlers spoke a language that represented King George III and IV.

ngu...[parent name removed for confidentiality] Owabeseshadela kwaGumede, oQwabe (Ntokazi, 2020).

From a translanguaging perspective, it is noteworthy that Ntokazi does not stick to one language in her writing. This type of languaging is consistent with the South African reality, where people often operate in more than one language in one utterance – translanguaging. It is also noteworthy that there are certain signifiers in the student’s self-description essay where she elects to stick to isiZulu, and this is likely due to the poverty of English when signifying African clan names. While cognisant of maintaining confidentiality, I share the clan name below as an example. It is safe to share this clan name because it does not single out one student, because several beNguni share in it, especially boNdlovu:

Ndlovu

Gatsheni

Boya benyathi, obusonga busombuluka

Mpongo kaZingelwayo

Nina bakwaNdlovuzidl’ ekhaya, ngokuswela abelusi

Zase zeluswa intombi uDemazane

Nina bakwaKhumbul’ amagwala

Nina bakwaDemazane, Ntombazana

Nina bakwaS’hlangu sihle

Mthiyane

Ngokuthiya amadoda emazibukweni

Nina bakwaMdubusi (ibid.)

One of the explicit benefits of translanguaging in the above example is that a black student has the opportunity to express herself within her locus of enunciation. For example, “*intokazi enhle*” expresses the bodily position of beauty, which matters in terms of positive self-esteem. Here the student informs the reader that she is beautiful. The “into” in “intokazi” denotes “a thing” in English, while “kazi” denotes greatness. To write this in English would probably present translation challenges, since in English it could be problematic to refer to a human, especially a woman, as a thing. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine how, from a philosophical perspective, language reflects a people’s ontology. Suffice it to confirm here that “intokazi” in the siNguni sense is not offensive, and that the student may refer to herself as a

great beautiful woman. Here there is a simultaneous expression of self and self-affirmation that is difficult, perhaps impossible, to express in English.

In all the self-descriptions that contained indigenous languages, it was common for students to stick to the African languages when signifying their clans, and to use English when providing less complex information. In another essay, Madlokovu wrote as follows:

I am usthenjwa , vezi , ngqoyi , mngadi, ngema , madlokovu , wena wase ngweni , ntusi yenkomo, goda elimnyama elihamba libahila amaqina namaqakala , wena wasefule , sithuli sasengweni esingasho lutho kumunt , mathanga awahlangani ahlangana uma ebona umyeni , mashiya amahle ngathi uzoshumayela , madlokovu kangakanani ngob nase ntendeni yesandla uyanela . Ngingumanene the daughter of ... [parent name removed] and the late ...[parent name removed] omadlokovu (Madlokovu, 2020).

When I mark these kinds of assignments, I become aware of not only the limitations of English but also of the technology of writing. In Mzansi and other parts of the continent, when one expresses their clan names there is usually an accompanying bodily disposition and action which is often joyous and celebratory. However, writing does not allow the bodily part of the enunciation to inform the text, which hampers meaning. Moreover, the hearers of clan names often respond with certain bodily actions, gestures and sounds such as ‘musho’ or ululation. However, as a marker of a written text, I cannot return these body-dependent enunciations to the student. I therefore argue that a case can be made for these kinds of assignments to have the option of oral presentations. This is consistent with the idea of “linguaging” (Adami in Sherris and Adami, 2019), which allows for different semiotic resources to be employed in communication. This assignment “evidences the need and potential of adopting a fully semiotic perspective onto communication in today’s diverse contexts” (ibid.: 49).

Another noteworthy finding from the translanguaging practice in MIC100 is that the African languages tended to employ more poetic and metaphoric meaning-making approaches than English. Below is an example where a student wrote about his parents’ impact on his upbringing:

Vatswari va mina va ni dyondzise ku rhandza vanhu ku vana na mahanyelo na vumunhu ta ni hi mu-Afrika ku xandla vuya xandla famba. What I like about my parents is that they are loving, caring and supportive in each and everything I do (Mutswariwa, 2020).

“Xandla vuya xandla famba”, which is in xiTsonga, directly translated, means “hand come, hand go”. However, the intended meaning is to do with generosity, with the hand symbolising

exchange. The above student then immediately switches to English to give a direct account of what he likes about his parents.

Beyond the self-description, it is noteworthy that the degree of multilingualism fluctuated in written assignments. The self-description was the first of four major assignments for the whole academic year. The second and third assignments were written mostly in English, probably because the middle two assignments required students to draw mostly from material provided in the explicit curriculum. Apart from the indigenous poetry, most of the readings were in English. Thus, two factors influenced the uptake of multilingual writing in the first and fourth assignments: 1) the students were writing about themselves, and 2) the sources (parents, grandparents, etc.) who informed the assignments existed outside of English. For the first assignment, the students themselves were part of the resources. The fourth assignment, in my analysis, was more influenced by the second factor since students were not writing about themselves, but about the elders and the knowledges that came from these elders who often spoke African languages.

In one example of the ‘Let the elders speak!’ assignment, one student conducted research on traditional practices of amaNdebele. Accompanying his written submission, the student included a video in which he interviewed his grandfather. The interview took place mostly in isiNdebele. In both 2019 and 2020, the course Convenor requested that students include an English translation of their project for assessment purposes. In the case of this student, it is evident that even their ‘English’ submission was conceived in isiNdebele, hence the blend of the two languages:

Amandebele it known that they undergo initiation school. The purpose is to change iingaba zabo(their stages) from childhood to adulthood. What must be known is that ladies are grown from amatlawana to umntazana. Their ceremony is Iqude, then followed by umhlubulo (sic) (Ntombiyabo, 2020).

Conceived in English, the subject of Ntombiyabo’s paragraph above would likely be ‘Ndebeles’ or ‘Ndebele people’ as opposed to ‘Amandebele’. It is also worth noting that Ntombiyabo does not fully comply with the instruction to translate into English, particularly where key words are involved. For example, words such as “amatlawana”, “umntazana” and “Iqude” are key as they denote specific stages and ceremonies. There are several possible reasons why the student did not translate these significant words. One reason could be the lack of English equivalency for these words. However, my view is that the teacher must bear the burden of translation,

particularly in a context where African languages are supposed to be employed “as languages of scholarship, research as well as teaching and learning” (DHET, 2020: 11).

Most of the interviews that students conducted for their final project incorporated, and in some instances used only, African languages, but the majority of the submissions were *written* in English. This was at the convenor’s request, and it would have been too much work for students to submit two linguistic versions of the same assignment. Due to ethics limitations, I cannot use any of the video or audio recordings of these interviews.

9.4 Making a case for translanguaging

The practice of multilingualism may be daunting if teachers assume that they must first be able to speak several languages proficiently. However, the processes pointed out above present translanguaging as an alternative multilingual process in which no one is expected to be an expert in any one particular language, particularly during classroom interactions. Translanguaging works as a process of decolonization, particularly when viewed through the decolonial concept of pluriversality. A pluriversal world is one in which different “people’s worlds should co-exist with dignity and peace without being subjected to diminishment, exploitation and misery” (Acosta et al., 2019: xxii). Since language is one of the ways in which students express their being and presence, from a pluriversal perspective translanguaging entails a co-existence of languages. This move is also socially just because it enables and encourages students to choose from all available language resources in order to suit their participation in the academic project. Translanguaging, therefore, enables agency.

Some of the benefits of translanguaging which I observed include: 1) dignifying and recognising marginalised languages; 2) encouraging students to learn more languages than those they came to MIC100 with; and 3) making the teaching and learning process more vibrant and engaging.

9.4.1 Benefit one: dignifying and recognising marginalised languages

In class some marginalised languages such as xiTsonga, sePulana and kheLobedu gained representation, and some of the student reviews support this point. For example, this mTsonga student attests:

... never has been a day where I seat and listen to people criticize my fellow brothers and sisters and I keep quiet about it, I defend my heritage, my identity and my tribe because well at the end of the day I am Tsonga and there’s nothing wrong with that, I am not apologetic for who who I am or where I come from (Mtsonga, 2020).

To contextualise this quotation, xiTsonga is a language that was marginalised during the apartheid era, and it remains marginalised. XiTsonga-speaking people are often caught in the crossfire during xenophobic events in South Africa – as seen in Owen Sichone’s (2008) account of xenophobic attacks. They have been arrested by police because they appear and sound ‘foreign’. As a child I also faced this harassment by police during my primary school years at Poorjtie⁴⁸. I have a xiTsonga maternal side, but when I lived in Gauteng for my primary school education, I had limited opportunities to use my xiTsonga cultural and linguistic resources. These limitations occurred both at school and in the community. Teachers often made it clear that ‘isiShangane’⁴⁹ was not welcome in the school yard. ‘isiShangane’ is often used synonymously with ‘xiTsonga’, so when maChangane from Mozambique face xenophobic attacks, maTsonga face similar risks. This is not the place to explore the complexities of what makes Tsonga and Changane, but it is worth noting that people who speak these languages have enough in common for ‘outsiders’ to mistakenly regard them as the same. In many instances, including in my own family, we use Tsonga and Changane interchangeably.

One of the coping mechanisms for maTsonga in South Africa is assimilation in order to feel safe and to be integrated. In Gauteng townships, for example, maTsonga are known for their ability to quickly learn other languages, and I attribute this to the inferiority complex that is suffered by the xiTsonga language, among many reasons some of which maybe more positive.

It is against this background that the MIC100 student, Mtsonga, would default to defence mode, as seen in the statement “never has been a day where I seat and listen to people criticize...”. This student reminds us that the question of language is tied to that of identity. Accordingly, disrespect for the xiTsonga language also entails disrespect of Mtsonga the person: “I am Tsonga and there’s nothing wrong with that, I am not apologetic for who I am or where I come from”.

Another student in 2020 admitted that before her encounter with MIC100 she used to hide her Tsonganess for fear of criticism:

I’m a Tsonga, in the past years when there are people that are not speaking xitsonga I will just keep quiet because most people criticize us but after I learned MIC100 I got a

⁴⁸ This is a township in the South of Johannesburg. Due to its location close to the mines, many of the community members were foreign migrants. I think this is why police used question our origins.

⁴⁹ This is an isiNguni way of saying xiChangane, which is often used interchangeably with xiTsonga. The word ‘Shangane’ is often used in derogatory ways by tribalists, yet it actually means a cultural/linguistic group that exist in Southern Africa – more notably Mzansi and Mozambique.

chance to understand where I am coming from even opened my eyes to how beautiful and unique I am (Xongile, 2020)

The fact that Xongile's eyes have now been opened "to how beautiful and unique" she is, is reason for celebration and concern. We should celebrate that the student, through experiencing the recognition of her language and culture, feels confident to embrace her identity. However, it is concerning that without such an encounter in MIC100, her sense of self would likely have remained negative. Before her eyes were opened to her own beauty, how did she perceive herself? Had she not enrolled in MIC100, for how long would she have suppressed her Tsonganness without seeing her beauty? In Xongile's case, clearly language goes beyond spoken and written communication. This phenomenon concurs with the view expressed by Madiba⁵⁰ that "[i]f you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart". In other words, and in the case of this student, recognition of her language goes to her heart. Viewed through the frame of the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2009), Xongile had been operating from a position of inferiority. As she says, "I will just keep quiet". The phenomenon that this student's experience expresses is what scholars mean by coloniality. In other words, in a formal sense South Africa is politically no longer a colony, but through the patterns left by colonialism that include the hierarchisation of indigenous languages, people continue to experience life through the matrices established in the colonial era. This is why translanguaging in this context is a decolonial exercise. In Xongile's case, translanguaging enabled her to reclaim her self-esteem and dynamism, for "even now I talk in xitsonga without regret because I can see that there are people or even at school they are promoting that you must be proud without regret".

Responding to the research question on "How did the multilingual approach impact on your participation, understanding, and achievement?", Phambili reflected on her language experience as follows:

It was amazing especially for someone who's always looking forward to learn something new every time. Each lecture before starting we were greeted by different languages and that according to me, it was a great way to start day of learning. It was encouraging as it made each and every individual to be free and revived the spirit of Ubuntu amongst us as students and our lectures of course. And as you can guess, the moment everyone feels free, the participation, enthusiasm just reach the greatest levels and surely we'll pass and indeed we obtained that progress.

⁵⁰ Here Madiba refers to South African former president, Rholihlahla Mandela, whose clan is Madiba. The former president was affectionately referred to by this clan name.

The connection between the notion of freedom and multilingualism or translanguaging helps us to understand the contexts in which English constrains students. In other words, if an MIC100 student felt that being allowed to communicate in African languages created a learning context in which they felt free, what happens to students who are confined to English, especially when English is not their home language? This connection between language and freedom has also been made in a translanguaging study at the University of Cape Town, where one participant stated that “I feel there is no need to decolonize the syllabus as we are freely able to write our essays and speak in the language we are comfortable in” (cited in Hurst and Mona, 2017: 144). The connection that students at two very different South African campuses make between multilingualism and freedom strongly suggests that Anglonormativity restricts black students who do not speak English as a home language. In other words, according to students, English dominance at these universities removes freedom, while translanguaging restores it.

The language practice under observation in MIC100 created an overall appreciation for African languages as vehicles of resistance against coloniality and Eurocentrism. In some cases, the effects of this process have gone beyond the classroom and the institution. For example, Makweru states that the course enabled her to guide her younger brother, who “communicates in English permanently, I who was informed by MIC guided him to go back to our roots and not forget who he is” (2020). Notably, Makweru links the concept of language to ontology, for he must “not forget who he is”. Makweru knows that language selection also entails selection of positionalities. This confirms Fanon’s assertion that “[t]o speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture” (Fanon, 1967: 8). While the sibling who had been constantly communicating in English might be experiencing pull factors such as those promised by Euromodernity, according to Fanon the sibling does so in a context of inferiority. Fanon, thus argues:

Every colonized people—in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality—finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country (ibid.: 9).

While Fanon’s argument here might be true for the English-speaking sibling, the language issues in MIC100, although resulting from colonialism, are more complex than the binary opposition of ‘African vs European’. In other words, it is not only that students have to choose between English and their ‘own language’, but simultaneously some of their ‘own languages’

such as xiTsonga have been framed as inferior compared to other African languages. The case of Sukuma, the moPulana student cited in the Ubuntu chapter confirms this complication, for the maPulana people have to switch to sePedi as their ‘official’ language since sePulana is one of several South African languages without official status. In this case, maPulan get their ‘civilisation’ through sePedi – notwithstanding that English remains the most powerful and influential of the official languages by colonial standards.

9.4.2 Benefit two: encouraging students to learn more languages

Another outcome of the language practice in MIC100 is that students felt encouraged to learn other African languages because they felt that their ‘own’ language was recognised. For example, in 2019 another xiTsonga speaking student said that “since I come here in Mpumalanga I was speaking only Xitsonga and now I am learning SiSwati and I am slowly becoming fluent with it all thanks to MIC” (Mudyondzi, 2019). This response is worth viewing in relation to the issue I pointed out earlier in the chapter that xiTsonga is one of the marginalised languages in Mzansi. Mudyondzi, who does not seem to have been defensive regarding her language, was inspired to embrace another language. I consider this a decolonial phenomenon. While coloniality seeks to hierarchise all languages, students are pushing back by recognising the importance of languages other than their ‘own’.

Another reason why translanguaging is decolonial is that in all the responses where students had an interest in learning other languages, not one mentioned English. Considering that using “the former colonial languages in Africa has become a social marker and serves to keep a tiny minority at the top” (Brock-Utne, 2016: 33), the move by students to centre African languages undermines the claim that English is a superior language. Moreover, I argue that such a move can foster graduates who will not fully conform to elitism and Euromodernity. If an education system enhances the value of the languages of the ‘uneducated’, then the colonial language (English) may be decentred, which is a goal of decolonial theory. This move by MIC100 students, I argue, teaches us that it is possible to advocate for what has been marginalised without being an apologist for the dominant as seen in my thematic analysis of UMP. In the thematic analysis chapter, I highlight a possible problem where UMP traps itself between ‘Africanness’ and a Western orientation by creating a dichotomy between the two. Yet in MIC100, students demonstrated through language that the marginalised can be recognised and embraced without having to defer to the dominant – thus freeing themselves from the idea of a dichotomy between African languages and English.

This relative de-hierarchisation of languages, for English generally dominated due to its presence in the explicit curriculum, also problematises some of the ways in which multilingualism is ordered in South Africa and the continent. As Brock-Utne notes, “first language (L1), second language (L2), etc. frequently do not fit the African situation” (2016: 34). Since MIC100 took a translanguaging approach, students did not seem to treat languages as separate ‘silos’. Rather, they borrowed whatever linguistic capital they needed from whichever linguistic resources were available across all the languages. Moreover, when students did borrow from English and Afrikaans, they ‘Africanised’ the borrowed resources, placing colonially dominant languages on the same level as indigenous languages. Had the explicit curriculum included African languages, my analysis is that the dominance of English would have been seriously challenged, at least during class interactions – though this would also depend on the language approaches of the lecturer in charge.

The rejection of a language hierarchy is epitomised in the ambitious reflection of a 2019 student, Zonke, who stated that “now I am in a process of learning all the eleven official languages in South Africa”. From a social justice point of view, it is interesting to note from Zonke’s reflection that students, not the university, drive the process of recognising excluded groups – although the lecturers had to set up an enabling environment by first recognising the students. This phenomenon amplifies Nancy Fraser’s (1997) view on recognition as an appropriate response to cultural marginalisation, which in the case of MIC100 is seen through language. Fraser argues that:

The remedy for cultural injustice [...] is some sort of cultural or symbolic change. This could involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups. It could also involve recognizing and positively valorizing cultural diversity. More radically still, it could involve the wholesale [sic] transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change everybody's [originally italic] sense of self (ibid.: 15).

Applying Fraser’s theory to MIC100 brings out the following outcomes:

- a) “upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups”: this happens when lecturers elevate African languages as languages of intellectual engagement in the classroom and in written assessments (with the limitations pointed out above); in turn, the ripple effect is that students promote languages other than their ‘own’ by being positive about learning them.

- b) “recognizing and positively valorizing cultural diversity”: as shown in the narration about how the introductory class unfolded, the diverse cultures represented in the room were invited into the teaching and learning space, and this continued for the rest of the course.
- c) “The wholesale [sic] transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways that would change everybody's [originally italic] sense of self”: in this one case study, I think it is too early to confirm whether there has been a complete transformation of social/language patterns; likewise, it would be premature to confirm that everyone's sense of self has been transformed; however, what can be confirmed against the data, is that the processes outlined by Fraser in category C have indeed started to happen; for example, patterns of cultural representation, through language in this case, were transformed, while others that were problematic collapsed; moreover, the transformation of ‘sense of self’ appeared to be common in the student data; while I cannot make specific confirmations in this particular study, it is worth keeping in mind the size of the MIC100 class which was 400 in 2019, and 780 in 2022; these numbers are significant when one considers the possible impact of MIC100 type interventions.

9.4.3 Benefit three: making teaching and learning more vibrant and engaging

Studies (DHET, 2015; Hurst and Mona, 2017) have highlighted the critical link between language and education. The DHET's own research cites language barriers as a contributor to low throughput rates for black students (2015). Thus, the language question goes beyond recognition and embracing diversity, for it is central to a university's core business of teaching and learning. Given that UMP is a very recent addition to South Africa's HE, it is problematic that, at the time of research and writing, the institution lacked a language policy or position as part of its founding vision. This is partly what coloniality refers to, a continuity of thought and action dating back to the colonial period in which there is tendency to defer to Western standards and expectations – in terms of language in this case. The upholding of Western standards, through Anglonormativity in the case of language use at UMP, reflects what Paulo Freire refers to as internalisation of the oppressor's image:

The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility (Freire, 1993: 47).

My observation of the institution's practice concurs with Freire's argument: that UMP, while established after formal colonialism, by default upholds the values of a colonial education, in so far as the dominance of English is concerned. This silent assent does not directly confirm Freire's fear of freedom at an institutional level, but rather an indecisiveness on the question of language. On the part of students though, there were initial signs of fear of freedom: while the majority of MIC100 students did not come from English-speaking backgrounds, they preferred to struggle in English rather than risk writing in their home languages – regardless of the liberatory possibilities. This fear dissolved as students were sensitised to the colonial background to South Africa's language hierarchy.

The language approaches adopted in MIC100 had positive effects on the teaching and learning processes, as the student course reviews indicate. For example, Nhlambuluko explains:

MIC module is unique from other modules because it makes you be yourself, you don't have to speak English always in this module, and you express yourself in your own language without being told not to (2019).

In terms of the teaching and learning process, when students cannot express themselves, it is difficult for teachers to engage with the ways in which students think about what they are being taught. When students limit themselves to English, both teacher and students lose a lot of nuances. This makes it difficult for the teacher to gauge how well students understand the course content and its associated skills. From the side of students, this limitation can also inhibit them from engaging with the teacher because of the linguistic barrier they have to overcome. The language issue is at the core of student's ability to understand the course, and this is reflected in Twisisa's reflection below:

All the 3 lectures ensures that each and every one of us understands whatever topic they will be teaching about and if there are any big English words that we seem to be struggling with, Msakha gently translate them to us in Seswati (2019).

It is worth remembering that although two of the three lecturers in 2019 spoke only English, they still contributed to a linguistic environment in which students understood what they were being taught. One of the ways in which this was done, as pointed out by the above student, was collaboration amongst the teachers and students. In this case, I would play the interpreter's role even when another colleague was teaching, and students also provided interpretations.

Multilingualism in MIC100 was not limited to the classroom as students were encouraged to write all assignments in any language they were comfortable with, particularly from 2020 when I had a better grasp of the course myself. Mvumo attests:

This course has made me realise the importance of knowing and speaking my language fluently so. It allows me to speak and communicate in my language even if we are in class, we are writing assignments and other thing (2020).

Mvumo's reflections on her language experience show that the MIC100 language practice was unusual, which is evident in the statement, "it allows me". There is the sense of being 'allowed', and the sentence "even if we are in class, we are writing assignments" points out that instances of multilingualism were the exception. This reflection suggests that Mvumo did not expect to be permitted to communicate in her language, particularly in formal academic tasks "in class and in assignments". However, according to one of the lecturers, Dr Wethu, "[w]e don't have to be clapping hands you know, for people to be writing in their own languages" (2021) as this should be the norm. In other words, students should not be struggling with English when they have a wealth of linguistic resources that should be deployed in their education.

From a teaching and learning perspective, if students struggle with English during class conversations, one would expect them to struggle when they write assignments in English. In fact, the practice of writing, particularly in English, can fail to engage with the loci of enunciation of many students whose normal way of communication predominantly relies on those oral practices (Mona and Hurst Harosh, forthcoming) that characterise African languages.

In a questionnaire response, a student confirmed that "[t]he multilingual approach had an impact because I was able to understand the course better and also participate during classes" (Vumani, 2021). This response strengthens the argument that in South Africa multilingualism should be an integral part of a socially just educational process, where social justice refers to parity of participation (Fraser and Honneth, 2003). It is significant that students ascribe their ability "to understand the course better and also participate during classes" (Vumani, 2021) to multilingualism.

In her questionnaire response, Phosa felt that there should be more multilingualism:

a throw of African language here and there would be good, just to show the diversity part and add understanding as known not every student is good in English or has a good English background .Some student come from government school where English was just a subject not a priority (Phosa, 2021).

While Phosa is the only respondent who calls for "a throw of African language here and there" even though the rest of the student data confirms that the "throw" occurred, at a qualitative level her input is significant. She links the issue of language in MIC100 to language practices in parts of South Africa's schooling system. That "[s]ome student come from government

school where English was just a subject” highlights an important fact in the relationship between English and black students, particularly in schools and communities where English is not widely used. Such a relationship, according to Phosa, implies that English in these schools is an area of learning and not necessarily a means of learning and communicating. Even in the university space where English is the dominant language of communication, black students have used English in not so ‘English’ ways as seen in the translanguaging research (Hurst and Mona, 2017) at UCT. For example, one UCT student wrote in their language history assignment that she is “an almost twenty year old Swazi girl who is infused with so many lingos, but can only praat drie tale” (ibid.: 142). It is true that in some government schools there is little communication in English. Even during English lessons, such as the high school I attended in a Gauteng township, the English lessons were taught using African languages. Therefore, a student who comes from such a background, even if they have good grades in English, might still linguistically operate outside of English.

As some of the students pointed out, although in problematic ways, there should be some authority that permits and encourages them to use their linguistic capital freely, and the lecturers therefore played a crucial role in creating a conducive environment. As seen earlier in the chapter, I had to be intentional about normalising the use of African languages in the pedagogic process. Concerning colleagues who only spoke English, they too had to be willing to relinquish power to myself and the students, which made the teaching and learning process more collaborative.

Willingness to share power in teaching and learning is central to the failure or success of multilingualism (translanguaging in the case of MIC100). For instance, the course convenor who was white and spoke English had the power to determine how the course would unfold. Moreover, by virtue of her ease in the language that dominates academia, students would probably have followed her lead and used English unquestioningly. The convenor could also have used the lack of an institutional language policy to block multilingualism. In other words, the convenor had the power to direct MIC100 towards Anglonormative monolingualism, but she chose to relinquish this power to a more junior lecturer and the students. She had to be comfortable with witnessing her class communicate in ways she did not often understand.

Power sharing also meant that the Fulbright Teaching Assistant from the USA had to allow her English to be decentred as students were given opportunities to use their own linguistic resources. Students had to witness someone who spoke English with an American accent

assume a position of knowing less, as she required interpretations when students contributed in class.

Though able to communicate in over eight South African languages, I too had to share power and make myself vulnerable in several ways. There were still students who spoke languages that I either understood poorly or did not understand at all. For example, the maShona students had to include me in the group of people who needed interpretations during class interactions. When students of the same language such as chiShona interpreted for one another, at times I had to trust that this was more about their learning, than me being linguistically included when they interpreted. Rather, it was about ensuring that their peers understood so that no one was left behind in the lesson. It was evident that the peer interpretations worked in that the receivers, upon my request, would communicate to me in English their latest understanding of whatever they needed translated, and it would make sense.

9.5 Some examples of linguistic power-sharing

One of the classes in which I had to share the most power was on the topic of African expressive forms, particularly the sections on proverbs and idioms. This was largely due to the fact that a lot of idioms that were shared could be best articulated in African languages, and that is what students did. I could still engage with some of the examples that were offered from the different language groups, and the class collaborated in interpreting so that the idioms and proverbs being shared could be understood widely. Most of the peer interpretations took place in African languages, not in English. For example, a moSotho student gave the example of “o seke wanyela sediba” [do not shit in a well]. I repeated this example louder and broke it down in a mixture of English and isiNguni, combined with body language, particularly on the ‘shitting’ part, which I felt a bit awkward articulating verbally. However, my repetition only entailed breaking down the words, but not giving meaning: “ho nyela is to relieve yourself [demonstrating with my hands behind me]”. As the class burst into laughter, I proceeded to explain that “sediba is a well”, and they immediately went “ohh”, which in this context signalled a recognition of the same idiom but in many other languages, one of which is siSwati in which one student explained the actual meaning of the idiom as follows: “Lesisho sichaza kutsi umuntfu angakwentela intfo lehle, wena ungabese udlala ngaye, ngoba utomdzinga ngalelinye lilanga”. I then took this siSwati explanation and repeated it in English: “when someone helps you with something, do not mistreat them or be ungrateful because you might need them again at another time. It is the same sentiment as ‘do not burn bridges’”. Only after

the idiom or proverb had been dissected across African languages was it translated to the rest of the class in English.

One of the vulnerabilities that I as a teacher encountered concerned how the colonial matrix of power has affected the relationship between African languages, intellectual endeavour and power. Since African languages are less associated with intellectual engagement than English, I had to risk being regarded as the black academic who speaks less of the language of ‘intelligence’ and more of the languages that are seen as intellectually ‘poor’. I had to risk being taken less seriously than my English-speaking colleagues, which often happened in the first few days of the course. However, for me the end justified the means – as the students’ experiences show through the data.

9.6 Conclusion of chapter

Because the language practice used in MIC100 enabled the course to be more decolonial and socially just, it problematised the UMP’s position in the decolonial project. The lack of an institutional language policy for an ‘African’ university meant that the practice of multilingualism was left to voluntarism. The danger with such voluntarism is that success depends on certain individuals who must carry the burden of redress, with risks – as pointed out above. Reliance on voluntarism encourages institutional inertia with regards to the language question.

While the UMP did not have a language policy at the time of writing, the findings from MIC100 could be used, at UMP and beyond, to formulate policy-based practice. UMP still has a rare opportunity to incorporate some of the approaches from MIC100 into its language policy and practice before a conformist institutional culture is embedded. This recommendation is also discussed in the Recommendations and Conclusion (Chapter 11).

Chapter 10: Feeling Ayoba!⁵¹

“When you remind people who they are, they gain strength, they gain power, they gain confidence to be able to stand in the world, proud and bold because they understand who they are. Hence we set your roots at the foundation”

10.1 Introduction

The quotation above is from one of the MIC100 Lecturers, Dr Wethu, when she replied to my question about the benefit of MIC100 to students. Her response concurs with what students said in their reviews: MIC100 positively impacted students’ self-esteem. This chapter unpacks the issue of students’ self-esteem that emerged from their experience of the MIC100 curriculum. As the literature review has shown, decolonial scholarship confirms coloniality’s negative impact on the self-esteem of the colonized (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Nyamnjoh, 2012). Thus, the theme of students’ self-esteem that emerged from the case study requires its own chapter, particularly given the seriousness of the impact that colonial education had and continues to have on Africans. The students’ reflections highlighted below reveal several positive possibilities when the identities of black students are affirmed through curriculum practices. This chapter does not discuss the full details of *what* it is that MIC100 did which led to an enhanced sense of self in students. The *what* aspects have been discussed in other chapters such as Chapters 7 and 9 above. This chapter centres the experiences of black students who feel that MIC100 has encouraged them to embrace their identities. In other words, the chapter depicts what happens, from the students’ perspectives, when their identities are recognised, embraced and respected.

10.2 Undermining the project of self-hate

In order to contextualize these student reflections here, it is important to remind ourselves of some of the problems of formal education, particularly where it marginalises African identities. Formal education in Africa has broadly “served to reinforce in Africans self-devaluation and self-hatred and a profound sense of inferiority” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 138). Many other scholars, including Erasmus and De Wet (2003) and Kessi and Cornell (2015), have identified this problem. This critique of education is worth viewing against the general understanding that people who have been colonized generally “develop a very low self-esteem and consistently manifest inferiority complexes” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 48). We should also recall that the

⁵¹ The South African phrase ‘ayoba’ is generally used to refer to positive feelings. The phrase is often used during shared creative moments such as dance and music to capture the positive feelings that emerge from the interaction.

establishment of formal education, at least in South Africa, was mainly to further colonization, alongside undermining Africans in several ways, which included their exclusion from certain types of educational institutions. When Africans eventually gained physical access to HE, their identities continued to be undermined.

What the MIC100 student reviews reflect is that the curriculum should and can be configured so that it destabilises the colonial project that seeks to entrench self-devaluation and self-hate in Africans. In the absence of intentional strategies to undermine the coloniality that overshadows the curriculum, the default configuration of education will continue to perpetuate “cultural violence, self –hate, and mimicry” (Nyamnjoh, 2012: 132) in Africans. This point is evident in the students’ reviews that show that students had embarked on processes of self-hate and mimicry, but that the MIC100 curriculum challenged the damaging colonial processes that students had undergone.

10.3 Person before knowledge: An African Humanist approach to learning

A common response in the student reviews is the feeling that the “MIC 100 course has not only contributed but it has pushed me into a point where I am feeling more confident about my identity” (Hlukile, 2020). Below I describe the framework that MIC100 utilised to achieve this outcome as described by students.

Based on Mphahlele’s concept of African Humanism, MIC100 highlights the identity of knowers or knowledge-seekers as an important part of knowledge-making:

In order to anchor ourselves through the ‘rediscovery of self and identity.’ [he urges us to] get to know ourselves, our continent, through a study of African history, religion, cosmology, literature and the arts, before we move to other areas of knowledge through a combination of our cultural resources and others at the higher levels of education... We have to expand our intellectual horizons by studies and research conducted outside the lecture room in addition to what the syllabus prescribes (Mphahlele 2001, p. 209 cited in MIC100 course outline, 2019).

For Mphahlele, African epistemologies and ontologies are necessary for an effective, decolonial higher education environment. The notion of ‘anchoring ourselves’ that Mphahlele calls for is both necessary and decolonial because it counteracts the undermining of African ways of being through education, and enables Africans to return from the “zone of nonbeing” (Fanon, 1976a: 8 in Gibson, 2011: 76) into which coloniality has pushed us. This zone of nonbeing is explained as follows:

In the colonial world, according to Fanon, the colonized are denied their freedom and

thus relegated ontologically to the status of things – things like stones. They are denied their dynamism; they are forced violently into an unfree and inhuman “zone of nonbeing” (Gibson, 2011: 76).

Higher education, at least in South Africa, has not adequately facilitated paths of return from the zone of nonbeing – as evidenced by the #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) and #FeesMustFall (#FMF) movements. However, interventions such as the first-year, social science foundation course DOH1009 at UCT (Morreira, 2019) show that one can create pathways to the zone of being. DOH1009 was created “to provide careful, theoretically informed curriculum design and pedagogical intervention” (ibid.: 164). The case of MIC100 at UMP provides further evidence that recovery is possible. This was reflected in Dr Wethu’s view that students should receive the opportunity “to understand themselves better before they continue with their academic journey” (2021). Dr Wethu’s conception of ‘better’ focuses on the parts of students’ identities that coloniality ordinarily marginalises. Next I discuss ways in which students experienced this intended outcome.

10.4 Positive self-esteem a foundation for confidence: students’ perspectives
The reviews should be read against Chapter 6 (MIC100 curriculum) and Chapter 7 (Ubuntu) to appreciate *what* was done in order for students to arrive at the sense of self that their reviews portray.

10.4.1 “this burden of ‘race’”

A 2019 student describes a difficulty that she grew up with, that MIC100 engaged with:

Growing up I have had difficulties in finding my purpose but ever since I enrolled myself in this course, I discovered many things about myself especially when it comes to my heritage and background. I have now uncovered my strengths and weaknesses and my talents[...] This course taught me to go beyond what I am capable of in order to discover my natural abilities (Khulani, 2019).

Khulani connects her identity to her sense of potential. Evidently, a curriculum that values who she is also enables her to improve her sense of capability. She admits to past struggles with her sense of ‘purpose’. It is therefore worth asking what would have happened to such a student had she proceeded through university without an intervention such as MIC100 that improved her sense of ability to find her goal in life. Khulani’s experience shows MIC100 as responsive to the call for the creation of “an inclusive culture that realises the suppressed creativity of African people” (Connell, 2007: 97). Reading Khulani’s review through Connell means that creativity is tied to the extent to which a person is confident in who they are. Khulani’s experience supports the explanation that coloniality “induce[s] in the African a feeling of

inferiority, a tendency to lose confidence in himself and his future” (Boahen, 2000: 495). The lack of confidence in one’s future is evident in Khulani’s “difficulties in finding my purpose” (2019), which she overcame through MIC100.

Similar to Khulani, Nhlakanipho’s review raises the question of believing in oneself. Nhlakanipho problematises the colonial epistemic approach wherein knowledge is presented in ways that are divorced from the knower. For this student, self-knowledge has been key to learning:

This module is where you connect with your inner self and start believing in yourself and be proud of who you are. [...] To know yourself is the beginning of wisdom. [...] This course helped me in the process of knowing about myself (Nhlakanipho, 2019).

Nhlakanipho’s experience is significant, given the argument that “human creativity is destroyed by dull, homogenizing education systems” (Acosta et al., 2019: xix). We see from Nhlakanipho that the educational approach taken in MIC100 does not seek to homogenise students, but rather encourages individuals to discover and embrace who they are.

In other words, education at any level need not alienate students and require them to assimilate as educated elites who assume identities that are detached from their sense of ‘Africanness’. Boahen (2000), who has highlighted this issue of elitism through formal colonial education, argues that “the educated elite that was produced was by and large an alienated elite, an elite that adored European culture and civilization and looked down on African culture” (801). There is vast scholarship on the concept of alienation, particularly in sociology, and a full discussion of the concept is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice to point out that the seriousness of alienation is reflected in Seeman’s description of the experience: “powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement” (Seeman, 1959: 783). Seeman’s framework of alienation is important because it helps us to grasp the impact of formal, Westernised education on the self-esteem of the colonized, and to appreciate interventions that restore ayobaness in that education – as in the case of Nhlakanipho.

Thus, against Boahen’s (2000) depiction of the alienation that formal education induced in Africans, Nhlakanipho’s review is important, because it highlights the need for a curriculum that creates conditions for students to “start believing in yourself and be proud of who you are” (Nhlakanipho, 2019). Such a curriculum is both possible and necessary – as the students’ experiences of MIC100 confirm.

Bombi expressed pride in his African identity as one of the outcomes of MIC100:

MIC, through all these topics, has given me life and for me to be a proud young, African black man who now can stand on top of the tallest mountain and tell the world that I am an African and I am proud of it (Bombi, 2019).

The experience that Bombi describes is contrary to that of a typical black student in a colonial university – at least from studies by Kessi and Cornell (2015) and Erasmus and De Wet (2003). This is not to say UMP is not entrenched in coloniality. Rather, through MIC100, students can embrace their blackness or Africanness as an advantage, and not as a deficit. To appreciate this phenomenon, it is worth recalling some of the studies that have explored the experiences of black students in a university that epitomises coloniality – the University of Cape Town. Many black students in Kessi and Cornell’s study “expressed that ‘feeling black’ led them to internalise the negative imagery of incompetency attributed to them and, therefore, to question their own abilities” (2015: 4). An earlier study of racial experiences of students at UCT, found that black students battled against the “feelings related to this burden of ‘race’ (anxiety, anger, irritation, powerlessness, invisibility, marginality, fatigue)” (Erasmus and De Wet, 2003: 4). These research findings are important when one frames the kind of experience that UMP students might have endured without measures to address Eurocentrism, which valorises whiteness over blackness. While it is significant that black students are a majority at UMP, this does not guarantee that they will feel more at home there than at institutions with fewer black students, particularly since whiteness and coloniality transcend the physical appearances of people. When Kessi and Cornell conducted their study at UCT, “black students still constituted just over 50% of the student body” (2015: 2), yet black students in general did not feel at home in the institution. What the cases of UMP and UCT demonstrate is that, parity of participation for black students requires more than physical access to the institution. Intentional efforts to invite and affirm the identities of students from groups that have been previously excluded in academia are necessary, which the example of MIC100 demonstrates, notwithstanding the limitations of UMP that this study points out.

10.4.2 “Nkambule msutfu’mswati”

One of coloniality’s many effects on the colonized is that it inflicts “dependency syndromes which make them very timid” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 48). Thus, universities entrenched in coloniality are likely to produce graduates who suffer from some type of timidity that can manifest in several ways – including glorifying Eurocentrism. This does not mean that all black students will become timid. There are several examples of black students doing the opposite – #RMF is one of such example. However, the fact that it takes student uprisings to hold HEIs accountable demonstrates a failure on the part of these colonial institutions to make serious

efforts to include black students. Thus, the example of MIC100 is important because black students who went through the course confirm the opposite of what many black students have experienced at a typical, historically white colonial South African university. In other words, students who went through MIC100 at UMP did not report that their blackness had been rejected. Rather, these MIC100 students felt that the course encouraged them to embrace their blackness. Instead of leaving them timid or demotivated, MIC100 increased their sense of confidence. Khulumile's review of MIC100 reflects this sentiment:

I feel more confident now and I am never shy to speak up when I have to. I speak my mind now because I now know who I am and what I stand for. It's like I am a new person (Khulumile, 2020).

Khulumile expresses a shift in how he thinks about himself and the world. The locus from which this student has shifted is where many Africans remain stuck: where we do not use our voices, where we are not confident enough to advance our own ideas, and where the West speaks over and 'for' us (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Nyamnjoh, 2012). In as much as decolonial scholarship establishes a connection between coloniality and lack of self-confidence, it is noteworthy that Khulumile's confidence indicates that he has an increased sense of agency – "I speak my mind now because I now know who I am and what I stand for" (Khulumile, 2020).

In terms of the student's sentiment that "I now know who I am", the chapter on the MIC100 curriculum discusses the processes that uncover the sense of self that students express – particularly through pedagogical practices and assessment tasks. It is important to highlight that MIC100 did not tell students who they were or should be. Rather, it created conducive conditions for students to explore and embrace their identities – a process that involved knowledge-bearers beyond the university gates such as family and community members. Julia highlights some of the assessment tasks that were key to her inner journey:

The course has contributed to me knowing my identity in depth especially with the identity assignment, I found out about my history and origin which were not only fascinating but very educational. I found that clan praises aren't just mere praises but they carry meaning, the meaning of who we/ I truly am, my identity as a black child (Julia, 2020).

Julia's experience of self-rediscovery went beyond simple 'fascination', beyond 'educational' (ibid.), to a deeper self-knowledge and authenticity. In other words, the student embarked on a journey of learning that concerned her identity, rather than simply learning to satisfy the course requirements. This reflection undermines the idea of the university as a place where students

go to ‘get’ knowledge. Rather, the university becomes a place that facilitates generation of knowledge from different sources, with the student at the centre of the knowledge-generation process.

Through the process that Julia describes above, different students had different outcomes in relation to their identities. Thus, the course countered some of the effects of “homogenizing education systems” (Acosta et al., 2019) that accompany coloniality’s pursuit of a one-size-shapes-all Westernized identity. In other words, the ways in which MIC100 facilitates learning does not seek to lead students to a similar sense of being, which would entail assimilation. For example, Hlukile’s learning led her to an unexpected discovery of her lineage, which she embraced. As a result, she wanted to encourage other people to embark on a similar journey of self-discovery. Hlukile’s experience of MIC100 elaborates on the dynamic aspects of her “roots” that she engaged with through the course:

The course had no choice but to make me understand who am I, my authenticity and also my root. Actually I grew up in a place near Swaziland so everything I did was only familiar with the Swazi tribe so I thought I was one but because of the researches I have been caring through in this wonderful course I got to find out that I am bicultural because I am a Sotho and a Swazi at the same time “Nkambule msutfu’mswati” referring to my praises. So I feel so different ever since I got a chance to find out the reality about me not only that there is that feeling of even advising some people to go research about themselves (Hlukile, 2020).

In other words, although the student expresses an improved sense of identity due to having enrolled in MIC100, the course itself did not bestow that identity on her. Instead, the course helped the student to enhance and embrace an identity outside of the colonial university system that she already had. According to Hlukile, it is the duty of the curriculum to foster self-rediscovery. She states that the course “had no choice but to make me understand who am I” (ibid.). In other words, according to Hlukile, what MIC100 has been doing in terms of identity is not optional. Where education has undermined African identities, it is significant that a black student expects the university curriculum to make her understand who she is, instead of assimilating her.

10.4.3 “I symbolize the people who taught me everything”

Siko expresses a similar sentiment about MIC100 – that it helped her to reclaim her identity:

I can safely and confidently say it gave me back my identity. It taught me more about my own culture. It gave me the desire to go out and gather more knowledge about my culture and where I originate (Siko, 2019).

The language of students such as Siko who describe the process of reclaiming their identities highlights an important phenomenon – that MIC100 “gave” them their identity – yet it is clear in their narrations that they did not derive a new identity from MIC100. Rather, MIC100 facilitated a process in which students could reflect on and embrace those aspects of their identities that the colonial university does not value.

These reviews suggest that MIC100 is aware that students are not blank slates, but rather humans who should be able to bring who they are into the learning process. Thus, while the course teaches key academic concepts as described in Chapter 6, students still find that “it speaks more about me as a student, my roots, my identity and the central concept of ‘rediscovery’ of self” (Vumbula, 2020). From a decolonial perspective, this entails respect for the loci of enunciation of the students. In other words, the course respects “the geo-political and body-political location of the subject that speaks” (Grosfoguel, 2011: 5). In a colonial epistemic context, the locus of the African student, which affects how they come to know the world, is irrelevant. This happens when black students are admitted into an overly colonial institution, where they experience a conflict between their identities and the need to survive academically at the institution (Kessi and Cornell, 2015; Erasmus and De Wet, 2003).

It is noteworthy that the student reviews reveal a link between students’ sense of self and their eagerness to be citizens of goodwill. For example, Nosizwe explains:

Cultural heritage studies build my self-esteem and put pride in myself because I can see how important cultures are. Now I have an opportunity to contribute to my community in meaningful ways (Nosizwe, 2020).

Nosizwe’s reflection must be understood in the context of the course’s ubuntu paradigm, which embraces the communal aspects of African identities. Thus, Nosizwe links her improved self-esteem and pride in herself to the need to do good for her community. Nosizwe came from a cultural background that had already taught her communal values, thus MIC100 reaffirmed those values. In terms of her background, Nosizwe stated:

Although I grew up without parents who have had taught me about culture and our origin, but the family where I grew up on taught me. Even the community where I live on still teach me and we still do cultural practices. I learnt that everywhere I go I represent the place where I came from, my actions represent how do we interact with other people and how we approach things in my family. I symbolize the people who taught me everything until I reach the stage I am in today (Nosizwe, 2020)

Nosizwe's sentiments concur with scholarship on ubuntu, which confirms that in ubuntu one's sense of self is connected to a broader community. Thus, her reflection concurs with Sibanda's (2014) framing of a person with ubuntu, as one who locates him/herself within his/her community. The sense of self that emerges from MIC100, therefore, counters some of the challenges of modernity, which entail "a belief in the individual as independent of the collective" (Acosta et al., 2019: xxii). The phenomenon of a positive sense of self linked to eagerness to do greater good for the community presents an opportunity to imagine the university as a place that produces graduates who will change the world outside of capitalist and individualistic thinking.

The affirmation of African identities works to undermine Western modernity as students highlight appreciation of aspects of their identities that are not locked within capitalist paradigms. For example:

I am grateful that my course has Mpumalanga in context (MIC) as a module because I personally think this module has helped me find myself more and develop me in both traditional and spiritual way (Thuthukile, 2020).

In a typical colonial educational setting, I argue, Thuthukile's reflection would be more likely to mirror a sense of being 'developed' into career aspirations that relate to her studies, for example as an accountant, a lawyer, or any other career identity that their qualification affords them. However, in the case of Thuthukile, she "developed [...] in both traditional and spiritual way" (ibid.). Chapter 6 points out some of the ways in which spirituality was recognised and engaged with in the course, as opposed to being treated as a phenomenon that lies outside of the academic space. While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore issues of spirituality and identity, that students see the spiritual aspects of their beings as key to their identities, and thus relevant in their academic journeys, is significant. This phenomenon makes spirituality a factor in the graduate attributes of students who completed MIC100. The affirmation of spirituality also means that it is possible to imagine 'educated' people outside of the colonial matrix of power. Therefore, the kind of 'development' that Thuthukile has experienced shows that students need not leave important parts of themselves outside the academy in order to take up new, often Western-oriented selves as they receive their education.

The student review data concurs with scholarship that sees the link between respect for African culture(s) and respect for African identities. For instance, Nabudere argues that "[t]he gap that has been created between the African elites and their people arises out of the fact that the elites

were taught through foreign culture” (2003: 11). This necessitates the inclusion of African ‘culture’ in affirming the identities of Africans, which Hlukile’s reflection affirms:

I now know very well where I come from and why I was raised with the manner that contributed to who I am today. Learning about the importance of my culture built my self-esteem and made me more proud and comfortable with who I am and my differences to others (Hlukile, 2020).

In view of Nabudere’s (2003) argument, it is noteworthy that in Hlukile’s case the inclusion of her culture “built” her self-esteem and pride in who she is, and encouraged her to embrace where she comes from. HEIs have to practice cultural sensitivity, because educational processes are cultural processes within an institution that accepts students from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, students are aware that affirmation of their cultures grounds them and helps them to be better people and students, as Kufasi pointed out:

Culture is most important in terms of knowing who you are. The module helped me embrace my culture in a very good manner. I did not know that I will find a module that teaches about culture and this helped me embrace it. I really find it lovely to know about my culture and that there is a module that teaches about culture. I know that now I have been proud of my culture (Kufasi, 2020).

Given that identities are shaped by the cultures to which the holder of the identity belongs, Kufasi’s reflection is a reminder that respect and recognition of African identities must go with respect for African cultures. This is also consistent with Nancy Fraser’s view that symbolic justice may “involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups” (1997: 15). Hence, Kufasi’s reflection that “[c]ulture is most important in terms of knowing who you are” (ibid.). Thus, the fact that MIC100 helped her embrace her culture has positive implications for her self-esteem. In other words, if culture influences identity (which I argue does), then a positive sense of one’s culture can lead to a positive sense of one’s identity – thus a positive self-esteem.

10.5 Towards a future where graduates feel ayoba

The student course reviews discussed above demonstrate that it is possible to design a curriculum such as MIC100 that addresses the issues of negative self-esteem that African students are likely to experience throughout the education system. The reviews present an opportunity to imagine a future in which African graduates feel good and confident in who they are, and for them to feel positive about their communities. Given that the lack of opportunities to “develop a ‘sense of self’” (Luckett et al., 2019) can lead to demotivation and demoralisation (ibid.), I argue that the opposite will be true for people who have such an opportunity. Thus, it

is worth imagining that such students would use their education to respond to world challenges in ways that respect alternatives that do not conform to Eurocentrism. I make this proposal on the basis that Eurocentrism has created in Africans “a state of mind which at times encouraged an uncritical imitation of European powers” (Boahen, 2000: 495). In other words, Eurocentrism breeds alienation, which collapses the state of *ayobaness* that manifests through a positive sense of self. Thus, when students feel more recognised as Africans, the inclination to mimic Eurocentric ways of being and of knowing is undermined. And they feel *ayoba*.

10.6 Conclusion

The student reviews highlighted in this chapter point to the curriculum as an important influence on how students feel about themselves. While HEIs, rightfully so, may establish projects of inclusivity indirectly related to the curriculum, the curriculum remains the most important space in which students engage directly with the core function of institutions that affect them – teaching and learning. Therefore, the curriculum, I argue, is the most direct and most relevant platform for institutions to meaningfully include and affirm identities that are often excluded from the academy. The student reviews indicate that the university can be a place where students feel proud of who they already are, instead of trying to assimilate into coloniality. Moreover, the reviews show that a positive self-esteem is likely to give students the confidence they may need after graduation. Thus, HEIs can use the benefits of a combination of decolonial, inclusive, and inclusivity-oriented teaching and learning methods and curriculum to enhance graduate attributes.

CHAPTER 11: Recommendations and Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

This final chapter assembles the thesis' key points to formulate its recommendations. These recommendations are based on what was found by examining efforts to implement social justice in HE at one of Mzansi's two universities founded after the end of formal apartheid. Since this is a case study, one must be very cautious about generalising. Nevertheless, the recommendations are based on the broader South African HE sociohistorical context. The chapter will then offer concluding remarks that include reiteration of the need for decolonization.

11.2 Framing injustices in education through decoloniality

This study views the epistemic and ontological injustices faced by black students in higher education as an outcome of the coloniality of South African education in general. In South Africa, formal education has followed a Western script from its genesis (Soudien, 2010: 2). This Western script establishes a direct link between a hierarchy of knowledge and a hierarchy of identities that is organised on a "racial axis" (Quijano, 2000), in which supposedly inferior racial identities are deemed to possess inferior knowledge. To explain and counter this linkage, I used decolonial theory. That theory provided the overall framework for this study because it provides an effective diagnosis of the injustices within higher education. In other words, decolonial theory makes it possible to trace the injustices faced by African students back to the colonial encounter, and to explain the continuity of colonial patterns of power – coloniality (Maldonado-Torres, 2010).

From a social justice perspective, coloniality in education entails nonrecognition of black people's identities and their cultural resources, including their epistemologies and ontologies. Hence, the study relied on social justice theory, alongside decolonial theory, to argue that restoration of justice requires "upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups" (Fraser, 1997: 15). This is what the University of Mpumalanga (UMP) sought to achieve through its MIC100 curriculum. To this end, I have presented MIC100 as an example of what is possible.

11.3 Verdict on MIC100?

This study has explored the idea of working towards social justice in the curriculum by using MIC100 at UMP as a case study. The overall findings confirm that MIC100 was implemented in a manner that achieved social justice, particularly because it took approaches that can be considered decolonial. These decolonial approaches include the translanguaging practices that

undermine Anglonormativity (McKinney, 2016) and the colonial hierarchy of languages. MIC100 could create conditions conducive to “parity of participation” (Fraser and Honneth, 2003) because the course recognised the African identities represented in the class and reaffirmed these identities’ cultural products, such as their knowledge systems.

The ubuntu philosophy was central to the MIC100 curriculum’s theoretical framework. This philosophy was not just a subject of study, for it became a praxis for both students and lecturers. This philosophical approach enabled the curriculum to recognise the kinds of cultural capital that African students are likely to bring into the teaching and learning process. A significant part of my findings is that through ubuntu philosophy, education can and should be used for the wellbeing of all humans, regardless of their background and status. As a consequence, ubuntu contributes to graduate attributes, because students are more likely to see their qualifications as resources that will contribute to the kind of change they want to see in their communities and broader society. Of the official graduate attributes listed by UMP, one that resonated the most with the MIC100 curriculum anticipates graduates who are “Ethically and Socially Aware Agents” (UMP 2020). In this case, MIC100 has used ubuntu to model ways in which other courses at the university can work towards the desired graduate attributes.

The phenomenon of ubuntu also complicates the idea of the contemporary university’s social role. The case of MIC100 shows a shift from the idea of students only studying for better-paying jobs and material accumulation, towards being active citizens who connect their own wellbeing to the wellbeing of other human beings – as the ubuntu philosophy explains: ‘I am because you are’. Thus, ubuntu undermines the colonial and capitalist logic that drove implementation of formal education in South Africa.

11.4 Recommendations from the case study

11.4.1 Foregrounding the hidden curriculum

Activities at the level of the hidden curriculum (also known as the regulative discourse) were key to the socially just approach that MIC100 took. The hidden curriculum is what students are taught “about the dominant culture of a university and what values it reproduces” (Le Grange, 2016: 7). In MIC100, lecturers made a point of recognising the cultures and value systems of African students. This finding demonstrates that teachers should view teaching and learning as a cultural process, and that they should be intentional about the kind of culture that their teaching will value. The absence of such intentional choice, I argue, allows coloniality and Eurocentrism to thrive at the expense of black students whose cultures the explicit curriculum does not recognise.

There is a constant interaction between the explicit curriculum and the hidden curriculum. Hence, teachers must account for the ways in which one layer of the curriculum works with the other. For example, because the explicit curriculum in MIC100 was presented in English, English became the default language, and it was not easy to advocate for African languages. Chapter 9 demonstrates this point. Therefore, how the curriculum is enacted as a socio-cultural practice has implications for who will present it and who will receive it. A multilingual explicit curriculum could be presented, but an Anglonormative and/or monolingual teacher would struggle at the level of the hidden curriculum, and language barriers between teacher and students would hinder the latter's epistemic access. This speaks to a link between the kinds of curriculum that a university seeks to promote and the kinds of teachers and teaching capacity that should be encouraged. It is not enough to simply change the explicit curriculum while the teachers remain unchanged – in terms of the cultural orientations and value systems that inform their teaching practices. Thus, HEIs must address the question of curriculum change alongside the question of staffing. An initial change that is easy to implement could be priority employment of multilingual tutors to meet the linguistic needs of diverse students.

11.4.2 Expanding decolonial practices beyond individual courses

While MIC100 has been exemplary in terms of creating conditions conducive to the practice of decoloniality and establishing parity of participation, the general institutional environment within which the course operates remains problematic. One problem concerns MIC100's position as the main course that embraces approaches such as ubuntu, indigenous knowledge systems, and translanguaging. While this research did not examine all of the courses at UMP, the students' reviews of MIC100 clearly reveal it as different from other courses in terms of the approaches listed above. The review instructions did not ask students to do so, but students clearly compared MIC100 with other courses, and this reflects their awareness of what was missing from other courses. My recommendation here is that the university should find ways for the rest of the courses at the institution to at least take up some of the approaches found in MIC100. This requires both re-positioning at policy level, and buy-in from those who will implement the policy. For example, the lack of a language policy entails that, while MIC100 advocates translanguaging, other courses maintain Anglonormative trajectories. Concentrating decolonial 'work' in one course risks embedding the assumption that such work has been completed, and requires no repetition or reinforcement. If decoloniality is 'ghettoised', the rest of the institution may fall deeper into coloniality.

11.4.3 Urgency of the language question

The two chapters on language have demonstrated the various ways in which coloniality disrespects African languages in education broadly, and in higher education in particular. In the absence of a language policy that champions multilingualism, UMP misses an opportunity to confirm its identity as an African university by incorporating African languages. By leaving the language question unresolved, colonial practices and attitudes towards African languages will continue to thrive. If it does not resolve this matter, UMP as an institution established through a Western framework is likely to contribute to the freezing of the “languages of the colonised into a folkloric condition due to a lack of recognition and resources” (Mamdani, 2019: 15). For an African university, the use of African languages should be the norm, and as Dr Wethu puts it, “we don't have to be clapping hands” as multilingualism “is supposed to be something that happens” (2021). The literature review and the two chapters on language have demonstrated the close links between language, culture and identity. Thus, my recommendation on the issue of language is that UMP should implement a language policy that acknowledges and reflects the history and aspirations of the stakeholders of the institution, particularly students, teachers, and the workers on campus.

11.4.4 MIC100 as data for UMP's decision-making

Based on the students' reviews of MIC100 which I have analyzed while guided by the relevant theories, I recommend that UMP should use MIC100 as part of its data to review and inform some of the institution's trajectory. This can be explored in terms of institutional identity, values, teaching and learning policy, language policy, as well as graduate attributes. Such an exercise should not be at the exclusion of other courses at UMP, but I advocate for the inclusion of MIC100 as a critical course because it is found to present a rare example of what a socially just curriculum could look like. Outside the course itself, MIC100 students, as their reviews showed, have significant understandings and expectations of using their education to change society – this is a finding that UMP should engage with when reflecting on the institution's graduate attributes. The findings reveal that students can, and should, play an active role in informing some of the key decisions that the university takes – especially decisions that in turn affect students. Thus, I am of the view that it will be to UMP's benefit if an efficient mechanism can be established for the institution to engage with students' views and input, as the university grows. This, I recommend, requires carefully thought-out transdisciplinary approaches such that different types of knowledges can inform the institution's decision-making data.

11.4.5 Addressing the trap of dichotomy

The thematic analysis chapter revealed UMP's conflicted entanglement in coloniality, particularly through the institution's formal messaging in its official documents and the university's website. For example, UMP assumes a dichotomy between European knowledge and 'Africanness'. I believe this is because coloniality is part and parcel of Western modernity (Mignolo, 2011; Quijano, 2000) which UMP, and many other formal education institutions, generally seek to pursue. To address this conflicted entanglement, which affects us all in some way, I recommend a dedicated investigation that will enable the institution to speak 'freely' about its goals, without feeling obliged to apologise for or defend Eurocentrism. Such a study would enable UMP to clarify its position in the wider colonial/modern world in which universities find themselves. This would present UMP with the opportunity to lead other institutions that seek to advance their 'Africanness'.

The need for UMP to resolve this African vs Eurocentric conflict is urgent, given the fact that Westernised universities in Africa are configured "to produce high-cost caricatures, [who are] yet another group of mimic men and women for a new era" (Mamdani, 2019: 26). In other words, a colonized university works towards producing graduates who are exaggerated imitations of 'Westernised' students. For UMP, this risk is higher for students who do not enrol in a course such as MIC100.

The implied dichotomy between African and Eurocentric lifeworlds as seen in official UMP documentation is part of my rationale for decolonization, not as a simple replacement of European things with African things, but as a process that seeks an equitable co-existence. Hence, the decolonial concept of pluriversality which "recognises that different cosmologies exist in complex and entangled power relations in the present" (Christie and McKinney, 2017: 165). Such a recognition provides the basis for Europe to co-exist with the rest of the world, while redressing injustices of *Eurocentrism*.

11.4.6 The need to recognise stubbornness of coloniality

The case of MIC100 has shown positive results after implementing approaches towards a socially just curriculum, but the case of UMP as a whole proves the stubbornness of coloniality. This is so because while UMP is new and has no colonial and apartheid history, it generally mirrors universities established in Mzansi's pre-democratic era. This is particularly the case with the formal running of the institution. For example, the Mpumalanga province contains communities that have traditional leadership, yet traditional leadership has no representation on the UMP council. This undermines the institution's search for relevance within its

immediate society. Here, the pursuit of an African identity is undermined when African types of leadership are excluded from the institution, making UMP a platform for coloniality. This observation concurs with Maldonado-Tores's view (2010) that "as modern subjects we breathe coloniality all the time everyday" (97). Just as Maldonado-Tores's observation applies to people who were not born during the colonial era, UMP shows it to also apply to institutions without a colonial history. I highlight the stubbornness of coloniality to affirm that decolonization cannot happen passively and unintentionally – particularly because the very genesis of formal education in Mzansi is colonial by intention.

11.4.7 A sophisticated approach to purpose

The above issues that I have pointed out thus far, are tied to the questions of why a university exists, and for whose benefit. Just as it was clear why colonial education was established, the contemporary university needs to be clear about its purpose or role. My view is that clarity of purpose is critical and can be used to specify and establish the policies and practices of an institution. While UMP articulates its envisaged purpose as "[a]n African university leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation" (UMP vision), the stubbornness of coloniality requires that purpose to be specified. Thus, it matters who the university seeks to lead, what counts as an opportunity, and how sustainable development and innovation are defined. This can be further complicated, for instance by asking, what counts as an innovative contribution towards the constitution of an African university when the council of the institution excludes traditional leaders?

The question of purpose has serious implications for how the university prepares for its students, especially because a clearly defined purpose must account for who the anticipated student is. When the institution is clear about its anticipated student, the curriculum in its different dimensions can be evaluated to determine whether it is fit for purpose for such a student. Therefore, I recommend that UMP, and other institutions, take steps to continuously meet the needs and aspirations of its changing student body. This also means that the institution's purpose cannot be fixed. Hence, a socially just approach to defining an institution's purpose will have to account for the everchanging dynamics of society and the students who come from such a society. My overall view on the purpose of the contemporary university is that defining the purpose of the university in contemporary South Africa cannot be a once-off exercise.

When the university has clarified its imagined students, it can respond better to some of the issues that are raised in the preceding chapters. For example, if the purpose is to teach a student

who comes from an African language background, then it should be clear that Anglonormativity undermines such a purpose. If the purpose is to teach a student who has been raised within African communal value systems, then the ubuntu philosophy is appropriate for such a student. I use these examples to argue that the African university (in the case of UMP and others that pursue ‘Africanness’) must be constantly adaptable while recognising the need for redress. I therefore lean towards the idea that to fulfil a socially just purpose, an institution must be pluriversal. Grossfoguel’s definition of pluriversality – “the many defining for the many” (2013: 89) – entails that a pluriversal institution should be able to work with diversity of identities and epistemologies. This claim is anchored in the view that pluriversality “overcomes patriarchal attitudes, racism, casteism, and other forms of discrimination” (Acosta et al., 2019: xxvii). In a pluriversal institution, English can co-exist with African languages, just as knowledge from the West can co-exist with other forms of knowledges. Thus, a pluriversal institution can fulfil its purpose towards a diversity of anticipated students. Pluriversality also has the potential to release UMP from the possible dichotomous trap between African and Western knowledge, making the institution “a centre of ecologies of knowledges” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 49). In such an ecology, knowledge from any part of the world, including Europe, should have its space without assuming superiority.

Through MIC100, UMP demonstrates that a university can exist for purposes that lie beyond colonialism and capitalism. Specifically for UMP, the question of its purpose in contemporary society needs to be constantly revisited as the institution establishes its identity as an African university. I recommend that any institution that seeks to achieve social justice should pursue this exercise of questioning its purpose, especially in view of the stubbornness of coloniality in education.

11.5 Siphethfo: To Conclude

11.5.1 Introduction

In the main introduction to Chapter 1, I described the background against which I decided to undertake this PhD research project. I also shared personal experiences that I would not wish any student to undergo at a learning institution. My personal experience of social injustices motivated this research project. I subsequently traced these and similar injustices to colonialism and coloniality – both prominent concepts in the dissertation. Attribution of these higher education injustices to colonialism and coloniality provided the rationale for my adoption of decoloniality for this study. My literature review dealt with decoloniality and all other key concepts and theoretical frameworks that I applied to the conceptualisation, design,

implementation, writing and reflection on this research. Below I draw the dissertation to its conclusion by highlighting some of the key issues that emerged in the study, and offer my closing remarks.

11.5.2 The question of recognition

From a social justice perspective, the question of recognition traverses all the social injustices that characterise HEIs, especially those injustices that arise from coloniality. In terms of the colonial matrix of power which justifies racism, black people are simply in a struggle for recognition in a system that ‘super-recognises’ Europeans at the expense of the colonized. Inherent in any process of marginalisation on the basis of language, gender, culture, race, religion, and any sort of epistemic and ontological orientation, is the illusion that one orientation is superior and more valuable. In the context of coloniality and education, that orientation is Eurocentric, and all who fall short of it also fall short of the colonial requirements for recognition. I used decolonial theory along with theories of social justice, because there can be no social justice without recognition (Fraser and Honneth, 2003; Fraser, 1997). This dissertation has tried to show what it looks like, what can happen, when intentional efforts are made to recognise students from marginalised groups. Thus, the student reviews show that being recognised enabled them to thrive in and outside the classroom. Hence, I use this dissertation to call on those who are involved in education to make a genuine effort to recognise their students – both ontologically and epistemically.

11.5.3 The question of language

There are two reasons why the language question has taken up the lion’s share of the research project and the dissertation. One is due to my own multilingual background and practices, which I discussed in the introduction to establish my locus of enunciation. The second concerns the centrality of language in the decolonial project, which Mamdani explains as follows:

... the decolonising project has necessarily to be a multilingual project whose purpose should be not only to provide Westernised education in multiple languages but also to provide the resources to nurture and develop non-Western intellectual traditions as living traditions with the capacity to sustain public and scholarly discourse (Mamdani, 2019: 25)

Efforts to decolonize the Westernised university should always be cognisant of the need to respond to the fact that colonialism has disrupted and excluded indigenous languages from academia. In the South African context, nonrecognition of African languages reflects the nonrecognition suffered by speakers of these languages. Until the language question is addressed, speakers of African languages will remain disrespected and undermined in HEIs.

The case of MIC100 has demonstrated some of the ways in which language is essential to making teaching and learning vibrant and engaging, while contributing to recognition of speakers of these marginalised languages. Thus, language is a critical requirement if we really want to achieve parity of participation in education.

11.5.4 To restore, to heal and to be ayoba

Chapter 6 on the M100 Curriculum, Chapter 7 on Ubuntu, and Chapter 10 on Feeling Ayoba point out possible ways to use the curriculum for positive change beyond academic achievement. These chapters used the data to show that it is possible to use the curriculum, at the explicit and hidden level, to restore marginalised and excluded epistemologies, and the people who come from these epistemic backgrounds. As the data revealed, students felt that ubuntu, which is simply the fact of being human, was restored because they felt recognised. While the immediate goal was facilitation of epistemic access to the curriculum for purposes of academic performance, the extent of the impact of this curricular intervention is noteworthy. That some students started to relate better to themselves and to other students shows that the curriculum can become a platform for an improved relation to self and other. Given the kind of damage that coloniality has inflicted on the colonized, as pointed out in the literature review, it is significant that MIC100 students were left with boosted self-esteem, and that they wanted the same for others. To me, this shows that decolonization is a necessity not only for academic purposes, but also for dealing with the individual and collective damage and pain that colonization has caused. I hope some of the principles that emerged from MIC100 can be applied outside of formal educational settings since coloniality affects all spheres of life (Maldonado-Torres, 2010).

11.6 Final remarks

I have been fortunate to be able to conduct such research in an area where I could also contribute to decolonization and social justice. My practice in higher education, and my research contained in this dissertation, have directed me to some answers, which I discussed in the dissertation's various chapters. However, this process has also left me with questions, some of which I will air here. Key among these is whether South African formal education in general and its higher education in particular, can achieve social justice outside of decolonization. I base this question on Mignolo's assertion that decoloniality entails that "the regeneration of life shall prevail over primacy of the *production and reproduction* of goods at the cost of life (2009: 161). Mzansi's education was primarily established for the "*production and reproduction* of goods", and indeed "at the cost of life" (ibid.) for Africans. Just as modernity

presents benefits that we enjoy, albeit unequally, production and reproduction also have their benefits. However, it is the resultant cost of life that troubles me. The sub-question, therefore, is whether we (lecturers, policymakers, etc.) are contributing to a cost of some sort to life by not decolonizing our institutions. Walter Mignolo himself refers to decolonization as an option, but I now find coloniality itself to be a matter of life and death – particularly against the understanding that death is not necessarily an instant event as I have argued in the language parts of the dissertation.

The fact that Africans must disengage from parts of who they are in order to participate in academia, entails a form of death – with some dying more slowly than others. Unfortunately, some eventually die physically when they cannot cope in these colonial institutions. Epistemic displacement, nonrecognition, and assimilation are part of the language used to explain the injustices faced by the colonized in universities. All these terms entail that some core aspects of Africans cannot thrive in the colonial university environment. However, coloniality in the university space mirrors the coloniality experienced in society in general, where the consequences may be harsher. The severity of the consequences of coloniality are seen, for example, in the brutal killing of people who fall short in the colonial matrix of power. In Owen Sichone's (2008) account of xenophobic attacks, the colonized use the borders created by the colonizers, and the resultant language hierarchies, to decide who gets to live.

This research now joins the work of several others who have shown that pro-life (decolonial) interventions are possible. Morreira (2019) used black consciousness as a path to parity of participation, while Hurst and Mona (2017) have used translanguaging to develop socially just pedagogies that undermine coloniality. MIC100 is another example of how to decolonize. The case of MIC100, and others cited above, presents a perspective in which Africans are not frozen in a state of victimhood. Rather, these are examples of people using their agency to take charge of their own decolonization. MIC100 demonstrates that when those with power create conducive conditions, students can exercise their agency to challenge coloniality. This is not to say that the agency of the colonized always needs permission. #RhodesMustFall (RMF) reminds us that the colonized can exercise their agency even if those who hold power do not create conducive conditions. I have since learnt that when I use the power that I hold as a lecturer for social justice, students do not use their agency against me, but alongside me. There is no need for another #RMF protest action, if those with formal power use it positively to restore black life in the university.

The dissertation has shown some of the ways in which those in power can restore life. In the case of MIC100, a white English-speaking lecturer and Course Coordinator had to relinquish parts of her power to achieve language justice. She also had to ‘divorce’ Eurocentrism to recognise an African spirituality that affected several MIC100 students. I risked being seen as the ‘inferior’ black lecturer while conducting myself in ways that invited black students to bring themselves into the course – through translanguaging. This reveals that social justice requires sacrifices, including the sacrifice of power, privilege, and status.

Through the students’ experiences of MIC100, which I used in this dissertation, I hope to have shown what it could look like if we all contributed to decolonizing the curriculum. My task was to explore whether MIC100 could stand as an example of a socially just curriculum through decoloniality – and this task was the research question. With all its limitations and challenges, I find that MIC100 is an example of the initiatives that work towards social justice in HE. I hope the case I presented above, backed by data from the students, and analyzed through theory, confirms this.

Reflection: “It is written”: a reflection on the process of this dissertation

Mirroring the general acceptance in academia, there is what I sometimes find as overemphasis on written text as ‘valid’ knowledge. This could be linked to the understanding that written academic texts have been peer-reviewed, and therefore should be valid – but I think this is one way of framing validity. This brings me to citations. Of course, it is good to always surface what has already been said (or missing) about a subject. But some of what has been said exists outside of books – does that make it less valid? What happens if I get what I really think is a good idea during my sleep? The PhD-way around it would be to check who has written on that idea, so that I can cite. Can’t I just say “(in my vision/dream, 2022)”? Can I reference my grandmother who actually led a whole epistemic institution of bangoma? So already a rich part of my epistemic heritage is excluded from the knowledge making process here. I comply though, because I want to pass the PhD. So that is another part to it, there are certain parts of the process that I would not ordinarily do. Yet I do them to fulfil some of the explicit and implicit requirements of a PhD.

Another example of this personal negotiation is the language use. The language use here does not reflect my general language practice – although there are parts of the dissertation that highlight my linguistic endowment. It also does not reflect the general language practices of ordinary people in Mzansi. Things like how English forces you to choose a gender even when you are not trying to think about gender. If I was writing ngesiNguni, I would not have to constantly think about the ‘correct’ gender pronoun, since our pronouns are inclusive (they are not gender-specific). So, this makes academic writing possibly a process of assimilation. It rewires the brain.

These kinds of compromises leave me with some sense of guilt, especially where I do what I feel I should not be doing but I am expected to be doing. I console myself by the reminder that the PhD might give me some ‘license’ to eventually do more of what I want to do. In other words, when I get the PhD, I will be taken more seriously. I can’t wait for that time, because I want to be able to disseminate this work in ways that I think might be more accessible – like writing songs of decoloniality and social justice that people outside of the university space can access. And producing in African languages. The current output, as a dissertation is too specialized, for an academic audience – and I think this can limit impact.

The writing process has its own benefits, though. For example, a thinking process can be traced, and it can be checked against other people's recorded (written) thinking. But having gone through the process made me think that perhaps it works and dominates because it has been given attention for a long time while other epistemic processes are not nurtured at equivalent levels. Coming from an oral literacies tradition, this type of academic practice can be too disembodied, such that all of the meanings I have been trying to convey had to be reduced to the written text. The order of the written text also does not feel 'natural'. The whole thing is not necessarily bad, but it just makes me wonder how else could it have been done, and what happened to those modes? But I think that is a question I will grapple with in my post PhD work – I see music being part of it.

For now, Moja.

Ngingu Msakha.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of documents analyzed

Analyzed for the MIC100 curriculum:

- Interview schedule for 2019 MIC lecturers
- Interview schedule for 2019 MIC students
- MIC course outline 2020
- MIC weekly programme term one 2020
- Sample of Self-description Assignment 2019

Analyzed for UMP's discursive themes (thematic analysis):

- 2019 Annual Report: details UMP's performance for the year ending December 2019.
- Our Pioneering Journey: Summary of UMP's establishment and key happenings.
- Policy Framework for Teaching and Learning: A collection of UMP policies on teaching and learning.
- Proposal for a Common Course at the University of Mpumalanga: context to the establishment of MIC100.
- UMP 2022: UMP's seven-year strategic plan.
- UMP Faculty Brochure: List of the university's offerings to prospective students.
- Welcome Message from Vice Chancellor": published on UMP's website at time of research.

Interview schedule for 2019 MIC lecturers

Thank you for taking your time to take part in this research project.

Introduction of research

For my PhD, I am conducting research to explore whether and how MIC deals with issues of social justice, against the background of South Africa's colonial history. This interview that you are participating in will form part of the data for the research project.

Procedure

I will ask you questions in relation to the course. Please answer as elaborate as possible. Just a reminder that you will be treated as anonymous. However, due to your role as one of the teaching staff, the content of the interview might provide clues to who you are – are you comfortable with that? You can opt out of this interview anytime. I will record this interview (with your permission) and the recording will be transcribed. Once the transcription is complete I will send you a copy so that you can please confirm. Even after the interview, you can ask to be excluded from the study.

Questions

We are about to start with our interview. Please let me know at any point where you might need clarity.

(Should the interviews not happen in person, students will be asked to fill in their answers in the answer boxes below)

Question 1 – about you role/designation

Please tell me about your role at UMP. Please share to the extent that you are comfortable, and bearing in mind that some of the information can work as hint of your identity.

--

Question 2 – your take on UMP's positionality

Given South Africa's colonial past and the existing inequality, what do you think the role of UMP in society should be?

Question 3 – the establishment of MIC [this question might only apply to course convener?]

Why was MIC established?

Question 3 – project theory behind the course

What did they think needed to be done, to achieve what result?

Question 4 – alignment with the direction of the university

Do you think MIC aligns with any of UMP's values, vision, and mission? If so, which ones and how does the alignment happen?

Question 5 – Benefit of MIC to students

How is the course imagined to benefit students, and to what extent is this realized?

Question 6 – is MIC designed for social justice?

Would you say MIC addresses social justice? If so, what in what area and how?

Question 7 – MIC in the context of western academia

Due to coloniality, universities function within Eurocentric paradigms. How does MIC navigate the eurocentrism that is usually found at universities?

Question 8 – considering the age of the university, what are the implications of MIC for building UMP's institutional culture?

Question 9 – dealing with knowledge

What is MIC's epistemological position? In other words, what would be considered valid knowledge and how is this decided? Who can be a knower, and how is this decided?

Question 10 – language practice

What is MIC's position on language for teaching, learning and assessment? Please comment on whether the current language practice in MIC is working or if it has any challenges?

Question 11 – any areas of improvement?

Are there any areas of MIC that you think need improvement? If so, what are they and what kind of improvement is needed?

Question 12 – areas of replication to other courses/institutions?

Are there any parts of MIC that you would recommend be adopted in other courses and other institutions? Please elaborate?

Question 13 – any other input regarding MIC?

Is there anything else regarding MIC that you think is relevant for this research project?

Interview schedule for 2019 MIC student

Thank you for taking your time to take part in this research project.

Introduction of research

For my PhD, I am conducting research to explore whether and how MIC deals with issues of social justice, against the background of South Africa's colonial history. This interview that you are participating in will form part of the data for the research project.

Procedure

I will ask you questions in relation to the course. Please answer as elaborate as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Just a reminder that you will be treated as anonymous, and that you can opt out of this interview anytime. I will record this interview (with your permission) and the recording will be transcribed. Once the transcription is complete I will send you a copy so that you can please confirm. I will be available to guide you in the process. Even after the interview, you can ask to be excluded from the study.

Questions

We are about to start with our interview. Please let me know at any point where you might need clarity.

(Should the interviews not happen in person, students will be asked to fill in their answers in the answer boxes below)

Question 1 – confirming consent

Do you understand what this study is about and do you consent to proceed with the interview?

--

Question 2 – who you are

Would you please tell me about yourself? How would you describe your background? What are you studying at UMP?

Question 3- first impression of MIC

What was your first impression when you first found out that you had to enrol for MIC, and when you started the course?

Question 4 –ending impression of MIC

Towards the end of the year, what was your impression of MIC?

Question 5 – influence of MIC on self identity

Has MIC influenced your identity in any way? If so, please share

Question 5 – influence of MIC in viewing society

Has MIC influenced how you view, understand, and interact with society in any way? How?

Question 6 – dealing with knowledge

Were you able to participate in the learning process by bringing your own knowledge? And how do you feel MIC treated you as a knower?

Question 6 – indigenous knowledge

What do you understand by indigenous knowledge? How would you say MIC treated indigenous knowledge systems?

Question 7 – culture

Has MIC had any impact in how you view and understand your culture and that of other people? Please elaborate?

Question 8 – heritage

Has MIC had an impact in your understanding of heritage? Please elaborate?

Question 9 – assessment

What do you think about the relationship between the course objectives and the assessment tasks that were given for the course?

Question 10 – resonance of assessments with lived experience

Did the MIC assessments resonate with your lived experiences? Could you personally relate to the questions that were asked in the assessments?

Question 11 – performance

What marks did you get for your major MIC assignments? Are there any factors in the course that contributed to the marks you got, what are these factors?

Question 12 – language in MIC

What are thoughts about the language approach used in MIC? How did the multilingual approach impact on your participation, understanding, and achievement?

Question 13 – comparison

In comparison to other courses, what are some of the issues that stood out for you in MIC?

Question 14 – areas of improvement

Are there any aspects of MIC that you thought need to improve or change, if so please elaborate?

Question 15 – aspects that can be replicated

Are there any aspects of MIC that you think should be implemented in other courses? Which are these and why do you think they should be implemented in other courses?

Question 16 – in retrospect

It has been about a year since you completed MIC. When you look back, would you say MIC has influenced your life? If so, please elaborate?

Question 17 – MIC in context of UMP

Does MIC reveal anything about what the University of Mpumalanga stands for?

Question 18 – MIC in terms UMP's values, vision and mission

Do you know any of UMP's values, vision and mission? If so, does MIC promote them or not, and how?

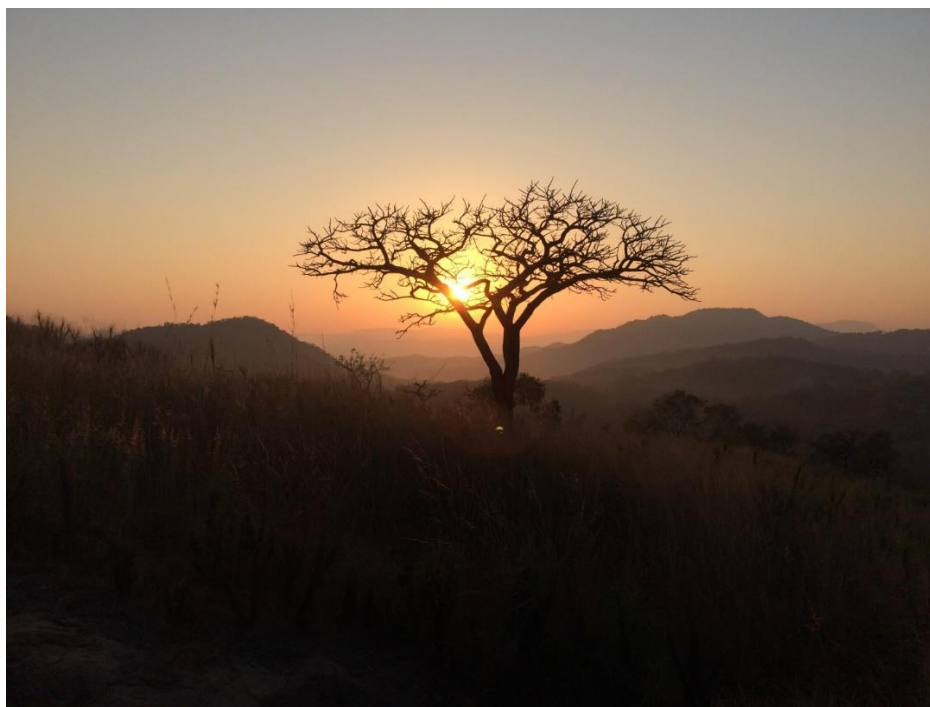
Question 19 – transition between high school and university

Has MIC influenced your transitioning to becoming a university student? If so, please elaborate?

Question 20 – any other input

Is there anything else that you feel you wish to discuss regarding MIC? If so please go ahead

Appendix 4: MIC course outline 2020



**MPUMALANGA IN CONTEXT:
AFRICAN IDENTITIES, HERITAGE & HISTORY
2020
(Course code: MIC 100)**

Introduction

In his autobiography *Afrika My Music* Es'kia Mphahlele (2001)⁵² appeals for the introduction of an 'African Humanist'⁵³ foundation in African higher educational institutions. In order to anchor ourselves through the 'rediscovery of self and identity' he urges us to "get to know ourselves, our continent, through a study of African history, religion, cosmology, literature and the arts, before we move to other areas of knowledge through a combination of our cultural resources and others at the higher levels of education... We have to expand our intellectual horizons by studies and research conducted outside the lecture room in addition to what the syllabus prescribes" (Mphahlele 2001: 209). In order to achieve this expansion of learning beyond the classroom, he encourages scholars to return to their communities "to discover their own folklore, local history, local heroes, geography, ethnology and so on" (*ibid.*: 210). He cautions, however, that "We should not regard culture as a museum artefact: it should continue to absorb and redefine the technological, economic and political systems, which we must master if we are to participate effectively in international business and politics" (*ibid.*: 209). In other words he advocates that global scientific/technocratic knowledge (what is often referred to as Eurocentric knowledge), traditionally taught in tertiary educational institutions, and local cultural knowledge, are both essential components of learning if we are to be able to operate successfully in a global society and yet retain the anchorage and roots of our local identities.

This course is an attempt to fulfil such a vision by introducing students to some of these formative elements of Mphahlele's African Humanist pedagogy (educational principles) from which they can draw and further develop in their future studies and life paths. It recognises that each student has a unique history and story to tell within the broader sweep of human history and life on earth, and exploring these will help us to understand our past and present experiences, and our potential for the future.

In the **first term** the course draws on Mphahlele's central concept of 'rediscovery' of self, to initiate the process of coming to know ourselves, our identities, and our common humanity, as seen through the lens of African knowledge, philosophy and wisdom. In African societies this knowledge, wisdom and philosophy has always been powerfully expressed through oral and artistic/ritual performance, and we will explore these forms in more detail through examining both texts and video footage.

In the **second and third terms** we examine what global scientific knowledge and more formal historical studies can tell us about our origins and the 'great journey' of our ancestors from their early beginnings until our present day. This place we currently call 'Mpumalanga' (the place of the rising sun) will serve as a focus point to explore and expand our understanding of our broader history. However, it must be appreciated that boundaries are ephemeral, contested and constantly changing. The histories and cultural heritage of this province are complex and deeply embedded with those of our neighbouring provinces in South Africa, other contemporary nation states of Africa (such as Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe) and even beyond to other continents. For millennia there has been a constant flow of people, cultures and ideas across these boundaries that have helped to shape who we presently are. We will start the theme on our origins by exploring the unique attributes of our geological landscape, the emergence of life forms, and our early human ancestors. These early beginnings are significant to our present as this area of Mpumalanga holds the key for understanding the origins of earth, other life

⁵² Mphahlele, E. 2001. *Afrika My Music: An Autobiography 1957-1983*. Braamfontein: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd.

⁵³ Extract from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Es%27kia_Mphahlele on 'Afrikan' Humanism (deliberately spelt this way to distinguish it from the European imposed spelling of 'African'): "a set of traditional values and beliefs that promote Afrikan culture and spirituality as an inclusive life philosophy for the betterment of humankind."

forms and the human species (*Homo sapiens*). We will then explore the evidence of human development, enterprise and culture that has been left by the ancestors in this region of Africa and beyond, including the emergence of great civilizations in Africa, up to the more recent struggles in the shaping of South Africa. The contemporary groups that have contributed to the saga will be considered and as it is important to be aware that history can be told from multiple perspectives and standpoints we encourage students to do their own self-initiated research within their own communities to add to, challenge or refine the more formal narratives. We will then consider the importance of human rights, justice and reconciliation to remind us of our responsibilities as citizens, not only in Mpumalanga and South Africa, but also the rest of the world with which we are inextricably linked.

In the 1st 3 weeks of Term 4 we will reflect on our natural heritage with a particular focus on the history and impacts of resource exploitation in the province, its contributions to economic and social progress and its negative impacts. Finally, with a focus on Kruger National Park, we will consider the history and importance of nature conservation within the context of the various global environmental crises facing us. Thereafter, for the rest of Term 4 there will be no classes and time will be dedicated to student's writing up their 'Let the Elder's speak' project and finalising their Individual Portfolios (see Assessment).

Aims and intended outcomes:

- To enhance self-awareness and ignite a respect for our rich African history, heritage, culture and knowledge systems.
- To explore the ways that African ideas, knowledge and philosophy are expressed through oral performance and other embodied actions or symbols, such as in dance, music, art and other forms of material culture.
- To encourage self-reflection of one's own experiences, thoughts and attitudes.
- To respect that there are multiple perspectives and ways of seeing and knowing the world.
- To develop a more holistic understanding of the complex forces that have contributed to our present realities by focussing the lens on the area that is currently known as Mpumalanga.
- To inspire and prepare students to be informed and responsible local, national and global citizens.
- To develop skills of critical analysis by considering evidence, interpretations and arguments for the topics under consideration.
- To enhance reading and writing skills.
- To motivate students to strive for continual enquiry and knowledge accumulation beyond the classroom context.
- To stimulate intellectual thought and discussion among students and staff.
- To encourage learning from engagement with communities and the wider world.
- To develop skills of accessing web-based resources and presenting material using different approaches and technologies.
- To appreciate the need for our resources and heritage to be cherished and harnessed in sustainable ways.

Course Structure and Credits

This will be a year-long four term course in which the satisfactory completion of tasks and assessments will be required in order to graduate.

The course earns 12 credits which amounts to approximately 4 hours of work per week (2 hrs class contact and 2 hrs self-study). The weekly structure will be as follows: There will be double lecture period a week, and, especially in the first term, a period of computer laboratory-based Moodle exercises (CLME) per week. Students will also be expected to attend occasional invited guest seminars and participate in at least one field trip during the year.

Teaching/Learning Format

Enhanced Learning through Technology – Moodle (myump.ac.za)

The course will make extensive use of blended teaching and learning techniques based primarily on ELT (Enhanced Learning through Technology) using Moodle (myump.ac.za) and other online resources such as videos, audio podcasts and electronic journal papers and books. The ‘flipped classroom approach’ will be used, which encourages student preparation of assigned lecture material and content for further discussion in class, with the guidance of the lecturer or facilitator.

Seminar Series

Weekly preparation/class sessions will be augmented by occasional lectures from invited experts in the field, covering the various topics to be addressed in the course.

Field Trips

There will be a number of field trips over the year, guided by local experts, whereby students will have the option of visiting key sites of interest relevant to the topics under discussion. In order to facilitate transport logistics these field trips will be made available over a number of weekends (Saturdays) during the year, commencing in Term 2. Students are expected to participate in at least one trip during the year and a report of their experiences and findings will be included in their end of year Individual Portfolios. Note that travel waivers will need to be signed by students. Anticipated field trips are as follows:

- The Barberton Makhonjwa Mountain Geotrail
- Kruger National Park

Assessment & Marks

Assessment of student performance will be based on the following activities

1. Attendance of lectures and computer lab exercises = 10% of year mark
2. Computer Lab Moodle Exercises (CLME) = 20%
3. Individual Portfolios = 70%

Satisfactory completion of the course will be a pass of 50% and above.

Note 1: Evidence of satisfactory participation and completion of an assignment **on time** and **without plagiarism** will automatically earn the student 30%. Marks above that will be awarded on scholarly merit.

Note 2: There will be no written exams for this course.

The assessment components listed above are outlined in more detail below:

1. Attendance (worth 10% of Year Mark):

Students are expected to attend all their classes and a register of attendance will be taken. Students who miss classes due to illness or bereavement etc. are required to submit their sick notes or letter of confirmation for compassionate leave to either the Admin assistant (Room 121) or Dr Bernard (Room 124) in Building 10 A (East Wing) within 2 weeks. Please note that regular attendance will enhance your overall marks and could determine if you pass or fail the course.

2. Computer Lab Moodle Exercises (CLME) (worth 20% of Year Mark):

This will be based on 2 - 3 computer-lab exercises done per term. Instructions on the nature of these exercises will be provided in the weekly programmes for each term. As the Computer Labs have limited ports, and depending on the size of each class, students will be allocated into groups based on timetable availability (A, B, C etc.). Please note these group allocations, their times and venues for CLME classes will be put up on Moodle at the end of the 1st week of term.

3. Individual Portfolios (worth 70% of Year Mark):

Each student will be expected to produce one portfolio which is comprised of continuous assessments over the year (Component 1 essays 1, 2 & 3). Students are urged to stay up to date with their portfolios throughout the year to avoid last minute rush and overload. The portfolios will be based on the following components:

3.1 Component One (= 60% of IP mark):

Written essay assignments should be between 800-1200 words. All written assignments are to be uploaded and submitted on the relevant assignment submission link provided in the first block of Moodle. In addition you are also expected to upload your essay via Turnitin for Plagiarism check. These links will be put up in the relevant Moodle weekly slot within 2 weeks of the due date. Please make sure you submit your essay with a Submission cover page and plagiarism declaration form (provided in the first Moodle block). Essays submitted without identification and a declaration sheet will not be marked.

Assignment 1: Self-description exercise— see Week 2 (You will be guided through how to upload this assignment task in the computer lab period).

Final submission deadline due Monday 23rd March 2020 by 23h00

Assignment 2: Choose an essay topic that you find interesting in either Term One or Term Two and address the questions set out for that topic in the preparation task block of this weekly handout. You will also find the recommended readings and videos in the essay topic preparation block.

Final submission deadline due Monday 22 May 2020 by 23h00

Assignment 3: Choose an essay topic that you find interesting in either Term Three or Term Four and address the questions set out for that topic in the preparation task block of this weekly handout. You will also find the recommended readings and videos in the essay topic preparation block.

Final submission deadline due Monday 28 September 2020 by 23h00

3.2 Component Two (= 10% of IP mark):

A short review (600-1000 words):

Write a short review on how the MIC course has contributed to your sense of identity, heritage, history and/or culture,

OR,

Write a short review on **either** a fieldtrip **or** a guest lecture that you have experienced this year.

Final submission deadline due Monday 19 October 2020 by 23h00

3.3 Component Three (=30% of IP mark):

Let the elders speak! Project (800-1200 words)

The purpose of this task is to encourage you to do self-initiated research on a chosen topic of your preference relating to subjects we have covered in this course i.e. on a socio-cultural, IKS or historical related issue. These can range from local history, music and dance groups, other indigenous knowledge forms e.g. medicinal knowledge, farming techniques, animal husbandry, rituals and ceremonies, mining or related technological skills (e.g. smelting), art forms, poetry, ceramics and other crafts etc.

- **Step One:** Select a theme you find interesting that relates to your cultural history or heritage (or an IKS topic)
- **Step Two:** Identify elders or knowledgeable people in your home area who have particular skills and/or know about the social history of the area/province they reside, their origins, their cultural practices and identities.
- **Step Three:** Please ask your informants their permission to record and document some of their insights and stories relating to these.
- **Step Four:** With their informed consent you may use photographs, short digital video and/or audio recordings, as well as written text (no more than 2000 words) in your presentation. Please note that if you use video footage or audio recordings they must be in a compatible digital format and in short clips (no more than 10 mins in length or less than 120MB so they can be uploaded onto Moodle). You are welcome to just provide written text if you prefer (no more than 2000 words). If your video footage is not in English please provide a translation either in sub-titles or as accompanying text. Please note that more guidance and information on editing videos will be provided by Mr Mona in the 3rd term.
- **Step Five:** You will present your findings in your Individual portfolios for the last week of Term 4. Thus follow-up research can be done in the September vacation at the end of the third term if you wish.

Final submission deadline due Monday 02 November 2020 by 23h00

Summary of assessment components and their mark weights

ASSESSMENT TYPE	SUB -MARK	COMPONENT YEAR MARK
1. Attendance of Lectures & CLMEs		10%
2. Computer Lab Moodle Exercises		20%
3. Individual Portfolios: • Component One • Component Two • Component Three	60% 10% 30%	70%
TOTAL		100%

EVALUATION

Students will be given an opportunity to evaluate the course at the end of the 1st and 2nd semesters.

TEACHING STAFF

COURSE COORDINATOR

[Details removed for anonymity]

LECTURERS

[details removed for anonymity]

TERM ONE

Code: MIC 100

THEME: EXPLORING AFRICAN IDENTITIES, KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS & CULTURAL HERITAGE

Course Coordinator & Lecturer:

[details removed for anonymity]

Lecturer:

[details removed for anonymity]

Ngap Lecturer:

[details removed for anonymity]

Ngap Lecturer:

To be announced

Please Note: This programme and the electronic resources listed in it are available on Moodle (<https://myump.ump.ac.za>). ALL students must be registered on Moodle to access these resources. Please make sure you have your login and password details that were sent to your UMP email address after registration. All students must attend the MIC computer lab practicals in the New Library Computer Labs (Seminar Rooms 008 and 022) so that you can be assisted on how to use the computer systems.

Note: This programme is provisional and may have to be adjusted slightly during the semester. Please keep abreast of what is posted on Moodle for the weekly slots.

If you have any problems accessing Moodle please report this promptly to the course coordinator.

TEACHING FORMAT – WEEKLY CLASS CONTACT – SEMESTER ONE

- 1 x double lecture period
- 1 x Computer Lab Moodle exercise practical (CLME): Venue: New Library computer labs – Learning Seminar room no 008 (downstairs) & 022 (upstairs). These will be from weeks 2-6 in Term One, and thereafter 1 in Term 2 (see weekly programme below for dates).

MIC course classes will be divided into smaller groups with different timeslots for computer practicals in order to fit students into the computer laboratories

TEACHING FORMAT – MOODLE

The MIC programme in this handout is presented in weekly slots. Each slot starts with the topics and activities to be addressed in class and in the computer practicals for that week, followed by the topics, questions and resources for preparation for the following week. The topics covered for each week will be put up on Moodle.

ASSESSMENT TASKS - TERM ONE

(Please refer to your MIC 100 Course Handout for your assessment tasks and weighting of marks for the year)

Please note that this course is based on continuous assessment. Attendance in class and computer practicals contribute 10% of your final mark.

A. Assignments for Individual Portfolio Marks – Semester One

Written essay assignments should be between 800-1200 words. All written assignments are to be uploaded and submitted on the link provided for submission in the first block of Moodle. You are also expected to upload your essay via Turnitin for Plagiarism check. These links will be put up in the relevant Moodle weekly slot within 2 weeks of the due date. Please make sure you submit your essay with a Submission cover page and plagiarism declaration form (provided in the first Moodle block). Essays submitted without identification and a declaration sheet will not be marked.

Assignment 1:

Self-description exercise– see Week 2 (You will be guided through how to upload this assignment task in the computer lab period).

Final deadline for submission of Assignment One: Monday 23 March 2020 by 23h00

Assignment 2:

Choose an essay topic that you find interesting in **either** Term One **or** Term Two and address the questions set out for that topic in the preparation task block of this weekly handout. You will also find the recommended readings and videos in the essay topic preparation block.

Final submission for submission of Assignment Two: Monday 23 May 2020 by 23h00

In Summary – Choose one essay topic from any of the following 9 options (please refer to the topic preparation block for the questions to address):

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Term One - | Week 3 - Essay option 1: | Identities – Ubuntu & African Humanism. |
| | Week 4 – Essay option 2: | Ways of Knowing – Knowledge & Wisdom |
| | Week 5 – Essay option 3: | Proverbs/idioms, storytelling & poetry |
| | Week 6 – Essay option 4: | Art, music, dance and/or ritual |
| | Week 7 – Essay option 5: | African literature |
| Term Two - | Week 3 - Essay option 6: | Mpumalanga - Geological History and Origins of Life |
| | Week 4 – Essay option 7: | Human Origins in Africa and their spread 'Out of Africa' |

Week 5 – Essay option 8: Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (1) -Middle to Late Stone Age: The Emergence of Culture

Week 6 – Essay option 9: Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (2) – Iron Age: The Stone-walled Settlements and Material Culture

B. Computer Lab Moodle exercises (CLME):

CLME 1 & 2 – You have one CLME quiz assignment in Term One (week 4) and one in Term Two (week 4).

Please read this weekly programme in conjunction with the MIC course handout.

TERM - ONE WEEK - ONE 10-16/02/2020	THEME: General Introduction
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	- Welcome and General Introduction - Purpose, Aims and Learning Approach of the Course - Assessment in MIC - Information on Assignment 1 task to be prepared for next week - General discussion: 'inhlonipho' - Understanding respect in an African space and in a university context - with Mr Mona
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practical this week
PREPARATION FOR WEEK TWO	
Identities and Origins: Getting to Know Ourselves:	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment One	1. ASSIGNMENT ONE: Write a short presentation/narrative of who you are (approx. 800-1200 words) – see key points to consider in guidelines below.

Final deadline for submission of Assignment One: Monday 23 March 2020 by 23h00

Note 2:

- If you have access to a computer please type your assignment in MS Word and save it on a USB/flash stick.
- For students who are not familiar with or have access to computers please **handwrite** your assignment and bring it to computer practical class. We will assist you with using MS Word.

NB!

PLEASE COULD ALL STUDENTS BRING A USB MEMORY (FLASH) STICK AND EARPHONES WITH YOU TO COMPUTER LAB PRACS.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE USB OR EARPHONES (PHONE ONES WORK) PLEASE PURCHASE THESE FROM VAN SCHAIK BOOK STORE IN BUILDING 6. AN 8GB USB IS SUFFICIENT SIZE.

THIS IS SO YOU CAN SAVE YOUR WORK ON THE USB AND

WATCH THE MIC VIDEOS IN THE COMPUTER LABS WITHOUT DISTURBING OTHERS.

Assignment One - guidelines

To describe yourself you can include the following:

- a) How do you identify yourself? e.g. what are your names, praise names, family associations, clan associations, totem associations(e.g. *izibongo, isiduko, izithakhazelo, liboko* etc)
Note - if you don't have a praise name or totem, what do you think would be appropriate for who you think you are?
- b) Your family places of origin, cultural/language and ethnic identities etc.
- c) Your gender and how that influences who you are
- d) Who has influenced you most in your life in a positive way? What are the qualities they have that you value the most or aspire to?
- e) How has your own family/cultural history influenced the way you see yourself and others?
- f) What do you think your strengths are?
- g) What do you think your weaknesses are?
- h) Consider the issues of diversity in our contemporary world. What do you think you can learn from others and what do you think you can teach them?
- i) What are your aspirations in life?

	2. Watch the videos listed below in Online Video Resources. Please bring earphones if you have them (your cell phone earphone should work for this). Those students who do not have ear phones will need to purchase from stock available at Van Schaik book store in Building 6.
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Wally Serote discussion on African Identity https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6GVhS9-qa4 2. Decolonising identity – Part 1 – Onyeka Nubia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFUPlq8KNuo
ELECTRONIC ARTICLES AND PDF RESOURCES	1. Guma, M. 2001. 'The cultural meaning of names among the Basotho of Southern Africa: A Historical and Linguistic Analysis', <i>Nordic Journal of African Studies</i>, 10 (3): 265-279. (pdf legal) 2. Ngubane, S. 2013. 'The socio-cultural and linguistic implications of Zulu names', <i>South African Journal of African Languages</i>, 33 (2): 165-172.
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Cope. T. 1968. <i>Izibongo: Zulu Praise-Poems</i>. Oxford: Clarendon Press

TERM - ONE WEEK - TWO 17-23/02/2020	THEME: Identities & Origins – Getting to know ourselves
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	1. Introducing concepts and terms: Identity, Heritage and History 2. How are identities shaped? 3. What is in a name? The use and function of praise names in African systems of self- identification. (see readings in previous week slot)
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	- How to log in to the UMP network - How to use campus computers, emails (Outlook) and Moodle - https://myump.ump.ac.za/login/index.php - Use of MS Word and uploading written assignments (Assignment One). - Troubleshooting login problems with IT assistance - Select at least 1 reading from the previous week's ELECTRONIC ARTICLES AND PDF RESOURCES on African naming systems, and read it in preparation for next week's computer assignment. - Watch the videos listed below in Online Video Resources

PREPARATION FOR WEEK THREE	
Identities –Ubuntu & African Humanism	
PREPARATION TASK (Assignment Two - Essay Option One)	With reference to a selection of the videos and electronic resource readings below consider the following questions: 1. How do you understand the central African philosophy of Ubuntu? 2. In what ways did the readings you chose shed light on your understandings on Ubuntu philosophy? 3. Consider the notion of African Humanism as conceived by Es'kia Mphahlele. How does it compare to Ubuntu? 4. What role do the ancestors and spirituality play in the African philosophy of Ubuntu?
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Who we are – Desmond Tutu on Ubuntu https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wZtfqZ271w 2. The Life and Times of Eskia Mphahlele (Part 1): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fej-fOBf5Q8
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. Eliastrom, J.L. 2015. 'Exploring Ubuntu discourse in South Africa: Loss, liminality and hope', <i>Verbum et Ecclesia</i>, 36 (2): 8 pages (ebSCO link) http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=8&sid=06027de8-381d-46d1-a9d7-e58358a07615%40sessionmgr103 2. Letseka, M. 2012. 'In defense of Ubuntu', <i>Studies in Philosophy and Education</i>.31: 47-60. Html link: https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11217-011-9267-2 3. Mnyaka, M. & Mothlabi, M. 2005. 'The African concept of Ubuntu/Botho and its social-moral significance', <i>Black Theology: An International Journal</i>, 3 (2): 215-237. (ebSCO pdf). 4. Samin, R. 1995. 'Interview: Richard Samin with Es'kia Mphahlele', <i>Research in African Literatures</i>, 28 (4): 182-
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Mphahlele, E. 2002. "Notes Towards an Introduction to African Humanism: A Personal Inquiry." In Mphahlele, E. <i>Es'kia</i>; pp 134-141. Cape Town: Kwela Books. 2. Mphahlele, E. 2014. <i>Afrika, My Music</i>. Cape Town: Kwela Books. 3. Nabudere, D. 2011. <i>Afrikology, Philosophy and Wholeness: An Epistemology</i>. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa. 4. Shutte, A. 2001. <i>Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa</i>. Cape Town: Cluster Publications.

TERM - ONE	THEME: Identities –Ubuntu & African Humanism
WEEK - THREE	
24/02 – 01/03/2020	

Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	- Ubuntu and African Humanism
COMPUTER LAB PRACS: - Orientation - How to upload an assignment	- Writing up Assignments on MS Word and how to upload them onto Moodle (cont). - NB: Please bring your assignments to class with a USB (flash) stick - Troubleshooting login problems with IT assistance (continued) - Watch the videos listed below in Online Video Resources
PREPARATION FOR WEEK FOUR	
Ways of Knowing – Knowledge and Wisdom	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment Two (Essay Option 2)	With reference to a selection of the videos and readings below: 1. Consider how you have come to know things in your life. 2. In your experience what are the different ways in which knowledge is obtained and conveyed, and which is the most effective and meaningful? 3. What do you think is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? 4. What is the relevance of indigenous knowledge in contemporary society? 5. What role do the ancestors and spirituality play in the construction of African indigenous knowledge systems?
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. To remember Africa's greatness – Mmatshilo Motsei https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROCvBf2PErI 2. Unleashing African potential from an African youth perspective: Taleni Shimhopeleni https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBp0gXN7490
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. Omolewa, M. 2007. 'Traditional African modes of education: Their relevance in the modern world', <i>International Review of Education</i>, 53: 593-612. 2. Govender, N., Mudely, R., & James, A. 2013. 'Indigenous Knowledge of custodians of Zulu culture – implications for multilogical dialogue in the Academy', <i>Alternation</i>, 20 (1):154-177. (see pdf below) 3. Semali, L. 1999. 'Community as classroom: dilemmas of valuing African indigenous literacy in education', <i>International Review of Education</i>, 45 (3/4): 305-319.
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Asante, M. & Abarry, A.S. (eds). 1996. <i>African Intellectual Heritage</i>. African American Series. Temple University Press. 2. Asante, M. 1990. <i>Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge</i>. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

	3. Dei, G.J.S., Hall, B., Goldin-Rosenberg, D. (eds) 2000. <i>Indigenous Knowledge in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of our World</i>. Toronto: Toronto University Press. 4. Ngulube, P. 2017. <i>Handbook of Research on Theoretical Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Developing Countries</i>. Hershey, PA, USA: IGI Global Information Science Reference.
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TERM - ONE WEEK - FOUR 02/03 – 8/03/2020	THEME: Ways of Knowing – Knowledge and Wisdom
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	Guest lecture by Mmatshilo Motsei
COMPUTER LAB PRACS: CLME QUIZ ASSIGNMENT 1	- Read presentation on plagiarism, how to avoid it and how to reference your assignments correctly. - Moodle quiz on plagiarism and referencing
PREPARATION FOR WEEK FIVE	
African Artistic & Expressive Forms: Proverbs/Idioms, Storytelling, & Poetry	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment 2 (Essay Option 3)	With reference to a selection of the videos and readings below address the following questions in your essay: 1. Find and write down 5 proverbs/idioms OR 2 poems that resonate with you. Explain the lessons that they teach you. 2. How has storytelling and/or poetry influenced your life and guided your actions and relationships? 3. What is the role of praise poetry in African social expression? 4. Discuss how the philosophy of Ubuntu is expressed through these oral forms and performances. 5. Discuss the importance of the ancestors and spirituality in African oral expressive forms.
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Visionaries' lounge - Gcina Mhlophe https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xU2G0cQQ34 2. Voices of Africa: Episode 1 – In the Company of Words: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpfcX93x5c&t=12s

	3. Voices of Africa: Episode 3 – Poets Pay Tribute https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lg8V-O50iTI 4. Voices of Africa: Episode 4 – Praise Poets Speak https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgntPu_82CA 5. Voices of Africa: Episode 5 – Woman, Womb, World https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iAKiyc15cfM 6. Voices of Africa: Episode 6 – Iziko – Traditional Wisdom https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6iswtpMRTE 7. Voices of Africa: Episode 7 – Beauty of our Land https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAfNT-pDeJ0&t=96s
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. Avoseh, M.B. 2012. 'Proverbs as theoretical frameworks for lifelong learning in Indigenous African education', <i>Adult Education Quarterly</i>, 63 (3): 236-250. (ebSCO pdf). 2. Kquofi, S. & Amate, P. 2013. 'The significance of African philosophy', <i>New African</i>: 72-74, (ebSCO pdf) 3. Kresse, K. 1998. 'Izibongo – the political art of praising: poetical socio-regulative discourse in Zulu society', <i>Journal of African Cultural Studies</i>, 11 (2): 171-196.
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Cope, T. 1968. <i>Izibongo: Zulu Praise-Poems</i>. Oxford: Clarendon Press 2. Kunene, M. 1982. <i>The Ancestors and the Sacred Mountain</i>. London: Heinemann. 3. Kgotsile, K. 1971. <i>My Name is Afrika</i>. New York: Doubleday. 4. Kgotsile, K. 2002. <i>If I Could Sing: Selected Poems</i>. Roggebaai, South Africa: Kwela Books 5. Finnegan, R. 2007. <i>The Oral and Beyond: Doing Things with Words in Africa</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 6. Motau, M. 2011. <i>Umthombo WeThemba</i>. Pretoria: Unisa Press. 7. Ntuli, P. 2014. <i>The Poetry</i>. Pretoria: Unisa Press. 8. Serote, W. 2004. <i>History is the Home Address</i>. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

TERM - ONE	THEME: African Artistic & Expressive Forms: Proverbs, Storytelling, & Poetry
WEEK - FIVE	
09/03 – 15/03/2020	
Activity	Topics to be addressed

LECTURE:	Indigenous Knowledge: Ways of Knowing and transmitting knowledge in African societies ?? invited guest speaker Pule
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	- Computer literacy support continued - Watch the videos listed below in Online Video Resources
PREPARATION FOR WEEK SIX African Artistic & Expressive Forms: Art, Music, Dance & Ritual	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment 2 (Essay Option 4)	With reference to a selection of the videos and readings below address the following questions in your essay: 1. Which video from the selection below appealed to you the most and explain why. 2. Discuss how African identity and knowledge is expressed through the artistic forms used. 3. What can you add to these based on your own experience and knowledge? 4. Select one of the journal readings and discuss its main findings. 5. Discuss the role the philosophy of Ubuntu and African spirituality plays in African ritual, art, music and dance forms
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Omang? – Ummemo (The invitation) - Swazi https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1K1H3_ZLPw 2. Omang? – Koma - Pulana https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtlnChnK9Q8 3. Omang? – Digkopa (female coming of age) Pedi https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nz-JTpD0ag 4. Omang? – Ndebele Celebration (umnyanya wokubekwa kewKosi) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E10koEILLT8 5. Omang? – Shangaan Art https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2TgnjtDXdNY 6. Omang? – Lake Fundudzi – Dance & Spirituality https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHzmMRoW1G4 7. Omang? – The Lemba Jews Sweetwaters Reunion https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bRZhykpAnc&t=262s 8. Omang? – Zulu Courtship – ukuqoma kwe Ntombi. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgAT1uBxB8Y

	9. Omang? – Xhosa Sangoma https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GTwDknanoU
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	Music: 1. Coplan, D.B. & Jules-Rosette, B. 2005. 'Nkosi sikel'iAfrika and the liberation of the Spirit of South Africa', <i>African Studies</i>, 64 (2): 285-308. 2. Coplan, D.B. 2002. 'Sounds of the "Third Way" – Zulu Maskanda, South African popular traditional music', <i>Playing with Identities in Contemporary Music in Africa</i>, 104-116. 3. Impey, A. 2011. 'Songs of the in-between: remembering in the land that memory forgot', In Peddie, Ian, (ed.) <i>Popular Music and Human Rights</i>, Volume II: World Music, Farnham: Ashgate Press. 4. Masuku, N. 2012. 'Songs and folktales as conduits for social change in Zulu culture: A perspective of Umkhwekazi Namasi', <i>Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa</i>, 9 (1): 90-98. Ebsco link. Dance: 1. Niehaus, I. & Stadler, J. 2004. 'Muchongolo dance contests: deep play in the South African Lowveld', <i>Ethnology</i>, 43 (4): 363-80. Ebsco link. Art & Craft: 1. Mathuifi, S. 2016. 'In 3D: The divinatory dimensions of Pitika Ntuli's art'. <i>Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems</i>, Vol 15 (3): 285-302. 2. Nettleton, A. 2014. 'Women, beadwork and bodies: The making and marking of migrant liminality in South Africa, 1850-1950.' <i>African Studies</i>, 73 (3): 341-364.ebsco link 3. Ntuli, P. 2009. 'Indigenous African art and healing: Forgotten memories, planting memories of tomorrow', <i>Indilinga: African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems</i>, 8 (2): 138-146.
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Nettleton, A. & Hammond-Tooke, W.A. 1989. <i>African Art in Southern Africa: From Tradition to Township</i>. Ad Donker. 2. Nettleton, A. 2016. <i>Beadwork, Art and the Body: Dilo Tse Dintsi/Abundance</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 3. Kirby, P. 2013 (3rd ed). <i>The Musical Instruments of the Indigenous People of South Africa</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 4. Leibhammer, N. 2007. <i>Dunga Manzi: Stirring Waters</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

TERM - ONE WEEK - SIX 16/03 – 22/03/2020	THEME: African Artistic & Expressive Forms: Art, Music, Dance & Ritual
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Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	Class group activity – to be announced
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	- Uploading of Assignment 1 essay (Please bring your essay on a usb stick) - How to upload onto Turnitin – plagiarism check - Watch the videos listed below in Online Video Resources
PREPARATION FOR WEEK SEVEN	
African Literature	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment 2 (Essay Option 5)	-Identify a book written by an African writer you enjoy and explain why it inspires you. -Describe the plot or the main themes of the book - Discuss what the book reveals about life in Africa (past or present) with respect to any of the following: history, cultural heritage, religious beliefs and practices, philosophy, social relations, or politics/economics.
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. The Life and Times of ESKIA Mpahlele (Part 1): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fej-fOBf5Q8 2. The Life and Times of ESKIA Mpahlele (Part 2): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iEKCPV3t1o 3. Serote on the role of literature in the struggle for liberation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTjvSEPHdLY 4. Honouring Chinua Achebe- Library of Congress (LOC): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5OAJnG6rKo 5. Planting African Memory: The Role of a Scholar, Ngugi wa Thiong'o: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz87K9l3y2s
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Gikandi, S. 2002. <i>Encyclopaedia of African Literature</i>. London: Routledge. 2. Gikandi, S. 2009. <i>Ngugi wa Thiong'o</i>. Cambridge Studies in African and Caribbean Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

	3. Peterson, B., Willan, B, & Remmington, J. 2016. <i>Sol Plaatjie's Native Life in South Africa</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 4. Steibel, L., & Chapman, M. 2016. <i>Writing Home: Lewis Nkosi on South African Writing</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press 5. wa Thiong'o, N. (1986). <i>Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature</i>. London: James Currey Ltd. 6. Willan, B. 2016. <i>Sol Plaatjie: Selected Readings</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
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TERM - ONE WEEK - SEVEN 23/03 – 29/03/2020	THEME: African Literature
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	What can African Literature teach us? Introduction to 'Reading across the Diaspora' section of the library
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	Essay preparation and submission
PREPARATION FOR WEEK EIGHT	
PREPARATION TASK	1. Next term we will be examining our origins from a more globalized (Eurocentric) knowledge framework. To complete this term's theme on African identities, knowledge/wisdom and expressive/artistic forms read Mazisi Kunene's epic poem 'Anthem of the Decades' (1981) - a powerful poetic rendition of the Zulu myth of origin. Consider the deeper meanings and wisdoms that are inherent in this poem. See pdf attached – Kunene, M. (1981) 2. For more on Prof Mazisi Kunene read: http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/mazisi-raymond-kunene 3. During the vacation try to find out from knowledgeable elders your own culture's myth of origin and document this to share with your group next term.

TERM - ONE WEEK - EIGHT 23/03 – 29/03/2020	THEME: Review of term topics and Preparation
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	Review and discussion topics covered What can the elder's teach us? Discussion on how to 'Let the Elder's Speak' project
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	No Computer practicals this week
END OF TERM – VACATION 2-14 APRIL 2020	

TERM TWO

Code: MIC 100

THEME: EXPLORING AFRICAN ORIGINS & CULTURAL HERITAGE

TEACHING FORMAT – WEEKLY CLASS CONTACT

- 1 x Lecture Period
- 1 x Computer Lab Moodle exercise practical (CLME): Venue: New Library computer labs – Learning Seminar room no 008 (downstairs) & 022 (upstairs). Same group allocation as Term One.

Please note that in Term 2 there will be only **2 compulsory** computer lab activity sessions (weeks 3 & 6), which will require the attendance register to be filled in. For the other weeks you are encouraged to use the laboratory times set aside for you to access reading and video resources, and write your assignments.

Assessment – Please refer to Term One above (pages 2-3)

Term 2 Fieldtrips: Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail FieldTrips to Bulembu borderpost

This term we will start taking groups of 40-50 students on the Geotrail on Saturdays leaving campus at 08h00 and returning at approx. 16h00. We are hoping to start the 1st trip on Saturday 9th May. Further announcements will be made in class.

TERM - TWO WEEK - ONE 15-19 April 2020	THEME: Exploring African Origins
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	Video See: The Story of Earth and Life (the 1st 50 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57merteLsBc :
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practicals this week
PREPARATION FOR WEEK TWO	
Mpumalanga - Geological History and Origins of Life	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment Two (Essay option 6)	Watch the following videos and read de Witt (2007). Explore more in the other optional resources provided below. 1. Why is Mpumalanga regarded as one of the most significant geological regions in the world? 2. What evidence is used to support the claim that Mpumalanga is the 'Cradle of Life'? 3. Present a short review of the relevance of the UNESCO Barberton Makhonjwa Mountains World Heritage Site for one of the following areas of interest (please select according to your chosen field of study): a) Development potential of the region; b) Conservation and Natural Resource Management of the site; c) Hospitality and Tourism potential for the region
ELECTRONIC ARTICLES AND PDF RESOURCES	1. Ferrar T. & Heubeck, C. nd. Barberton-Mahonjwa: Geotrail Geosites and Viewpoints. (pdf) 2. Oosthuizen, D. 28/08/2017. 'Insight is given into early life on earth' http://www.mountainlands.co.za/insight-given-early-life-earth/
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. The Story of Earth and Life (the 1st 50 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57merteLsBc 2. Barberton Makhonjwa Geotrail - Introduction https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWKOOMZ1Mi0 3. A Geological Excursion to South Africa and Swaziland: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBlc5Sjn108 4. Barberton embraces the origin of life (CBNC Africa) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JuZx_x8X8Pg&t=7s

	5. My Room at the Centre of the Universe https://vimeo.com/46345902
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. De Witt, M. 2007. 'A History deep in Time'. Chapt 1 in Delius, P. (ed.) <i>Mpumalanga: History and Heritage</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. (pdf attached) 2. Ferrar, T. & Heubeck, C. 2013. <i>Barberton-Makhonjwa Geotrail: Geosites and View Points</i>. Hamilton-Finch for Batobic: Nelspruit. McCarthy, T. & Rubidge, B. (eds.) 2005. <i>The Story of Earth and Life: A Southern African Perspective on a 4.6-Billion-Year Journey</i>. Cape Town: Struik Publishers.

TERM - TWO WEEK - TWO 20-26 April 2020	THEME: : Mpumalanga - Geological History and Origins of Life
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	Guest lecture on Barberton-Makhonjwa Geotrail and World Heritage Site
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practicals this week
PREPARATION FOR WEEK THREE Human Origins in Africa and their spread 'Out of Africa'	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment Two (Essay Option 7)	1. What is the fossil and genetic evidence for the emergence of early hominids and humans (<i>Homo sapiens</i>) in Africa? 2. Why has <i>Homo sapiens</i> been such a successful species in evolutionary terms?
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Evolution of Modern Humans Documentary 2017 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkX-hLiU_r8 2. DNA Genesis- The Children of Adam (National Geographic) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XWaRZf1A-Y 3. Homo Naledi discovery https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiLurilureE

	Optional: 4. The Story of Earth and Life (the last 40 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57mertelsBc
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. Stringer, C. 'Rethinking "Out of Africa"', <i>Edge</i> 11.12.11 (option to watch lecture video insert on this link) 2. Shreeve, J. 2015. 'This face changes the human story: but how?' <i>National Geographic</i>, Sept 10.
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Bonner, P., Esterhuysen, A. & Jenkins, T. 2007. A Search for Origins: Science, History and South Africa's 'Cradle of Humankind'. Chapters 3 & 4. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press. 2. Giliomee, H. & Mbenga, B. 2007. New History of South Africa. Cape Town: Tafelberg. Soodyall, H. (ed). 2006. The Prehistory of Africa: Tracing the Lineage of Modern Man. Johannesburg & Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

TERM - TWO WEEK - THREE 27 April – 3 May2020 Public Holidays – Monday 27April Friday 1 May	THEME: Human Origins in Africa and their spread 'Out of Africa'
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	- Fossil and molecular evidence of human origins in Africa. What is the evidence from southern Africa?
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practicals this week
PREPARATION FOR WEEK FOUR Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (1) -Middle to Late Stone Age: The Emergence of Culture	

PREPARATION TASK Assignment Two Essay Option 8	Watch the following videos and read Esterhuysen & Smith, chapter 2 in Delius (2007), plus at least 2 other readings 1. What is the material/archaeological evidence for the emergence of culture in Africa? 2. What can rock art tell us about the lives of southern African early inhabitants?
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. Early evidence of San material culture (Border cave evidence) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIClywV2Brk 2. The Origin of Us – Lyn Wadley: South African Archaeological Evidence Middle Stone Age (CARTA) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6HUU3NxIts
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. D'errico, F. et al. 2012. 'Early evidence of San material culture represented by organic artefacts from Border Cave, South Africa.' <i>PNAS</i>, 109 (33): 13214-13219. Ebsco link 2. Hampson, J., Challis, W., Blundell, G. & de Rosner, C. 2002. 'The rock art of Bongani Mountain Lodge and its environs, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa: An introduction to problems of southern African rock-art regions', <i>South African Archaeological Bulletin</i>, 57 (175): 15-30: 15-32. 3. Ndlovu N. 2016. The management of heritage resources in the Maloti-Drakensberg Park: Refelected on the benefits of World Heritage status. <i>Southern African Humanities</i>, 28: 103-117. 4. Solomon, A. 2005. Rock art in southern Africa', <i>Scientific American, Special Edition</i>, 15 (1): 5. Bradshaw Foundation - The Rock Art Archive of South Africa News articles: 1. Anon 2011. World's languages traced back to a single African mother tongue: scientists. <i>Global Post</i>, April 15. https://www.pri.org/stories/2011-04-15/worlds-languages-traced-back-single-african-mother-tongue-scientists 2. Sample, I. 2018. Earliest known drawing found on rock in South African cave. <i>The Guardian</i> 12 Sept. The Andrew W Mellon Foundation In South Africa – blog Dec 2018, 'Discovering the world's oldest drawing'
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Blundell, G. (ed). 2006. <i>Origins: The Story of the Emergence of Humans and Humanity in Africa</i>. Cape Town: Double Storey. 2. Esterhuysen, A. & Smith, J. 'Stories in Stone' In Delius, P. (ed.) <i>Mpumalanga: History and Heritage</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. 3. Giliomee, H. & Mbenga, B. 2007. <i>New History of South Africa</i>. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 4. Lewis-Williams, D. & Challis, S. 2011. <i>Deciphering Ancient Minds: The Mystery of San Bushman Rock Art</i>. London: Thames & Hudson.

	5. Mitchell, P. 2002. <i>The Archaeology of southern Africa</i>. Cape Town: Cambridge University Press. 6. Smith, B.W. & Zubeita, I.F. 2007. 'The power of ancient art' In Delius, P. (ed.) <i>Mpumalanga: History and Heritage</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
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TERM - TWO WEEK - FOUR 4 – 10 May 2020	THEME: Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (1) -Middle to Late Stone Age: The Emergence of Culture
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	To be announced
COMPUTER LAB PRACS: CLME Quiz 2	Compulsory Computer Lab attendance: CLME QUIZ 2– Open book comprehension quiz exercise - Chapter One: Delius, P. & Hay, 2009. <i>Mpumalanga: An Illustrated History</i>. Chapter 1 'Early inhabitants' (pdf download Mpumalanga Provincial Government website – see link below on Moodle)
PREPARATION FOR WEEK FIVE	
Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (2) – Iron Age:	
The Stone-walled Settlements and Material Culture	
PREPARATION TASK Assignment Two Essay Option 9	1. What has the study of the Mpumalanga escarpment stone-walled settlements, the material artefacts found in the area (pottery and iron objects), and the rock engravings told us about the groups that lived there? What evidence exists for mining activities and metallurgical skills in the Mpumalanga/Limpopo regions?
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	Video 1: Smelting Iron in Africa https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuCnZClWwpQ
	1. Delius, P. & Hay, 2009. <i>Mpumalanga: An Illustrated History</i>. Chapter 1 'Early inhabitants' (pdf download Mpumalanga Provincial Government website – see link below)

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	2. Delius, P., Maggs. T. & Schoeman, M. 2012. 'Bokoni: Old Structures, New Paradigms? Rethinking Pre-colonial Society from the Perspective of the Stone-Walled Sites in Mpumalanga', <i>Journal of Southern African Studies</i>, Volume 38, Number 2: 399-414. Ebsco link: 3. Esterhuysen, A. & Smith, J. 2007. "The archaeology of Mpumalanga', Chapt 2, In Delius, P. (ed.) <i>Mpumalanga: History and Heritage</i>. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. (pdf) 4. Pikirayi, I. & Lindahl, A. 2013. 'Ceramics, ethnohistory, and ethnography: locating meaning in southern African Iron Age ceramic assemblages', <i>African Archaeological Review</i>, 30: 455-473. Ebsco link: On mining and metallurgy: 1. Friede, H.M. 1980. 'Iron Age mining in the Transvaal', <i>Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy</i>, April ed.156-165. (google scholar access - Sabinet) 2. Hammel, A., White, C., Pfeiffer, S. & Miller, D. 2000. 'Pre-colonial mining in South Africa', <i>The Journal of the Southern African Institute of Mining and Metallurgy</i>, 49-56. (google scholar access- Sabinet). 3. Miller, D., Killick, D., & van der Merwe, N. 2001. 'Metal working in the northern Lowveld, South Africa, A.D. 1000-1890.' <i>Journal of Field Archaeology</i>, 28 (3/4): 401-417. 7. Moffat, A. 22-28 August 2014. 'Iron age mining links ancient SA to the world', Mail & Guardian: https://mg.co.za/article/2014-08-15-iron-age-mining-links-ancient-sa-to-the-world
RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	1. Delius, P., Maggs, T., & Schoeman, A. 2014. <i>Forgotten World: The Stone-walled Settlements of the Mpumalanga Escarpment</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 2. Delius, P. & Schoeman, M.H. 2008. 'Revisiting Bokoni: populating the stone ruins of the Mpumalanga escarpment'. In Swanepoel, N., Esterhuysen, A., & Bonner, P. (Eds.) 2008. <i>Five Hundred Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. 3. Giliomee, H. & Mbenga, B. 2007. <i>New History of South Africa</i>. Cape Town: Tafelberg. 4. Maggs, T. 2008. "The Mpumalanga escarpment settlements: some answers, many questions". In Swanepoel, N., Esterhuysen, A., & Bonner, P. (Eds.) 2008. <i>Five Hundred Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects</i>. Johannesburg: Wits University Press. On Mining and Metallurgy:

	1. Chirikure, S. 2010. <i>Indigenous Mining and Metallurgy in Africa</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0521740197 2. Chirikure, S. 2015. <i>Metals in Society: Indigenous African Metallurgy in a Global Perspective</i>. New York: Springer.
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TERM - TWO WEEK - FIVE 11– 17 May 2020	THEME: Early Inhabitants of Southern Africa (2) – Iron Age: The Stone-walled Settlements and Material Culture
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	1. Video to be shown in class: Forgotten World: The Stone-walled Settlements of the Mpumalanga Escarpment.
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practicals this week.
PREPARATION FOR WEEK SIX Discussion for Vacation Research ‘Let the Elder’s speak’	
PREPARATION TASK	Reminder: You are expected to use the June/July Vacation to prepare and do research for your ‘Let the Elder’s speak!’ project as described below from the course outline: Component Three (=30% of IP mark): Let the elders speak! Project The purpose of this task is to encourage you to do self-initiated research on a chosen topic of your preference relating to subjects we cover in this course i.e. on a socio-cultural, IKS or historical related issue. These can range from local history, music and dance groups, other indigenous knowledge forms e.g. medicinal knowledge, farming techniques, animal husbandry, rituals and ceremonies, mining or related technological skills (e.g. smelting), art forms, poetry, ceramics and other crafts etc.

	• Step One: Select a theme you find interesting that relates to your history or heritage (or an IKS topic) • Step Two: During the July vacation please identify elders or knowledgeable people in your home area who have particular skills and/or know about the social history of the area/province they reside, their origins, their cultural practices and identities. • Step Three: Please ask your informants their permission to record and document some of their insights and stories relating to these. • Step Four: With their informed consent you may use photographs, short digital video and/or audio recordings, as well as written text (no more than 2000 words) in your presentation. Please note that if you use video footage or audio recordings they must be in a compatible digital format and in short clips (no more than 10 mins in length or less than 120MB so they can be uploaded onto Moodle). You are welcome to just provide written text if you prefer (no more than 2000 words). If your video footage is not in English please provide a translation either in sub-titles or as accompanying text. Please note that more guidance and information on editing videos will be provided by Mr Mona in the 3rd term. • Step Five: You will present your findings in your Individual portfolios for the last week of Term 4. Thus follow-up research can be done in the September vacation at the end of the third term if you wish.
ONLINE VIDEO RESOURCES:	1. How to conduct a qualitative research interview: (add link) 2. How to do a research interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t-hYjAKww 3. 6 tips for designing a semi-structured interview https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z8XV1S7548 4. Ethnographic interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XX-hqEt3nSs
ELECTRONIC RESOURCES AND PDFs	1. Turner, D. 2010. Qualitative interview design: a practical guide for novice investigators. The Qualitative Report 15 (3): 754-763 https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol15/iss3/19/

RESOURCES: LIBRARY TEXTS (OPTIONAL)	

TERM - TWO WEEK - SIX 18-22 May 2019	THEME: How to conduct an Ethnographic Interview
Activity	Topics to be addressed
LECTURE:	
COMPUTER LAB PRACS:	There will be no computer practicals this week.

Appendix 6: Sample of Self-description Assignment



**UNIVERSITY OF
MPUMALANGA**

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET

STUDENT SURNAME, NAME: STUDENT INITIALS:	Removed for anonymity
STUDENT NUMBER:	Removed for anonymity
COURSE: (e.g. Dev Studs, Dip Con or CST 101)	CST 101
ASSIGNMENT NUMBER:	1

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

1. I know that plagiarism means taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one's own. I know that plagiarism not only includes verbatim copying, but also the extensive use of another person's ideas without proper acknowledgement (which includes the proper use of quotation marks). I know that plagiarism covers this sort of use of material found in textual sources and from the Internet.
2. I acknowledge and understand that plagiarism is wrong.
3. I understand that my research and my writing must be accurately referenced. I have followed the rules and conventions concerning referencing, citation and the use of quotations as set out in the handbooks.
4. This assignment is my own work, or my group's own unique group assignment. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment, or part of it, is wrong, and that submitting identical work to others constitutes a form of plagiarism.
5. I have not allowed, nor will I in the future allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as their own work.
6. I agree to allow my work to be submitted to a plagiarism checking/ text matching Internet site.

Signed

Date 14/03/2020

If this is an electronic attachment and not submitted by hand, attaching this page to my assignment and typing my name and date in the above spaces means I have agreed to the declaration above.

Ndlovu

Gatsheni

Boya benyathi, obusonga busombuluka

Mpongo kaZingelwayo

Nina bakwaNdlovuzidl' ekhaya, ngokuswela abelusi

Zase zeluswa intombi uDemazane

Nina bakwaKhumbul' amagwala

Nina bakwaDemazane, Ntombazana

Nina bakwaS'hlangu sihle

Mthiyane

Ngokuthiya amadoda emazibukweni

Nina bakwaMdubusi

Igama lami xxx [name removed for anonymity], intokazi enhle yakwaNdlovu. Intombi yomuZulu ezigqajayo kakhulu ngolimi lwayo kanye nemvelaphi yayo. I turn 20 on the 12th of April. I was born in a small town in KwaZulu Natal called Vryheid at Vryheid Hospital. Intombi eyangithwala izinyanga eziyisishiyagalolunye igama [parent's name removed for anonymity]. Owabeseshadela kwaGumede, oQwabe.

I began school at the age of 5 at eNkanyezi Pre-School. Whilst at that school I felt very much at home, there was something very homely about the environment. I felt a sense of belonging, I don't know, it could have been due to the fact that I was the only child at home. Moreover it could have been the fact they took our culture very seriously because at the end of each term we would have what we called "Traditional Friday's" whereby we would wear our traditional attires.

We would have reed dances as well, I was really good ngokusina kanye nokushaya indlamu. I don't know what happened during the years ngoba manje sengiyakuvilaphela nje. I remember my teacher uMam Rose Xulu would always say to us "Konke enginifundisa khona zingane zami anokubamba, kuyonisiza ukuthi nizazi ukuthi ningobani empilweni. Imvelaphi yomuntu iyona into ebaluleke kunakho konke empilweni yomuntu." Till this day I remember those words like it was just yesterday that I had heard them, they have carried and guided me in this journey of life. Yonke into engiyenzayo empilweni ngiqale ngicabange ukuthi ekhaya bangaziqhenya yini ngawo, if the answer is no then I don't even entertain it.

The year after that I went to another pre-school, Nardini Convent School. At the age of 7 I began my Grade 1 still at Nardini right up until my 7th Grade. My first two years

of high school were at Cornerstone College in Pretoria Silverton and the remainder of those five years were at St Nicholas Diocesan School in Pietermaritzburg. Growing up I have always been asked by a lot of people around me ukuthi igama lami lichaza ukuthini. My name, [removed for anonymity] is short for the saying “[removed for anonymity]” which simply means “[removed for anonymity]”. I always get compliments that it’s a beautiful name and I get asked who gave it to me, to which I very proudly reply “My mother did”.

My grandmother once told me that when my mother was pregnant she had quite a difficult pregnancy. There were a lot of complications during her birthing process that they thought I wasn’t going to make it. uSomandla emuhle ngasosonke isikhathi, wabanaye, every step of the way and she delivered a healthy baby girl. Which was how my name came to be, babebonga uNkulunkulu ngokungisindisa kwakhe.

In my culture a persons name is like a brand of who that person is, it’s a definition of who you are. It’s one of the traditions our heritage expects from us, to honor and live up to our names. In my case, I know that my family expects nothing but the best from me, a lot of pressure yes but I plan on making oGatsheni proud.

In Zulu we have a traditional ceremony called Umemulo. it’s basically a way of celebrating ubuntombi bomuntu wesifazane. The thing with Umemulo though is that it differs with families. Like for example thina ekhaya asibona abantu abakhonza amadlozi, yes we acknowledge them but asiwakhozi. We consult ancestors makuzoba nomsebenzi wesintu, so therefore umemulo akuyona into ebaluleke kangako. Whereas other families see it as a must to have Umemulo.

Personally I would love to have Umemulo next year, for me this will be a way of saying “Thank you”. A thank you to my family and a way of showing gratitude that all the traditions and values they instilled within me from when I was a little girl I have carried with pride and will continue to do so.

In conclusion, the traditions that were instilled in me as a young girl have moulded me into the person I am today. To always remember where I come from and never loose my roots.