



**UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI/UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE
FACULTY EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

REPORT

A cross-cultural study of how Black university students construct and experience race and colorism and whether that impacts their mental health and educational outcomes

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University of Missouri Host:
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INTRODUCTION OF MU AND UWC COLLABORATORS

Towards the end of my first trip to Cape Town in 2022 to conduct my UMSAEP awarded research project on colorism in South Africa (see detailed UMSAEP Report by Dr. Antoinette M. Landor), I was introduced to Dr. Trevor Makhetha, Lecturer in the Department of Sociology at UWC. Given our similar research interests, we had engaging conversations about research and established a new collaboration. His hospitality was critical to my overall experience in South Africa. In addition to conducting my research project, I was also really interested in understanding South African culture as well as visiting some of the South African townships that research participants talked about during focus group interviews. Trevor (and his family) not only welcomed me in their home, but they also gave me a guided tour of Cape Town providing important historical facts about Apartheid and its present-day consequences. I had the opportunity to see Khayelitsha, the largest township in Cape Town, and other townships. Once my research team and I returned to the U.S., Dr. Makhetha and I began discussing a potential collaboration that would enable him to visit the University of Missouri (MU). Subsequently, I wrote a UMSAEP proposal and received funding.

NOTABLE VISIT ACTIVITIES

During Dr. Makhetha's visit to MU in May 2023, I first scheduled him to go on a formal 90-minute campus tour with MU Visitor Relations to learn about the history of MU and see important campus sites. Next, instead of collecting data, Dr. Makhetha wanted to use the visit to complete writing goals and critically engage with me and my research team as well as the local community about issues of race/colorism and how they impact mental health and educational outcomes. I provided a physical workspace (along with a computer and free printing) on campus and full access to the office building for Dr. Makhetha to complete writing tasks and reflect on his experiences while at MU. Dr. Makhetha was also able to give a guest lecture to my undergraduate class, attend weekly research meetings with my research lab that included undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students, meet with scholars across campus and local community members, meet with me one-on-one for mentorship and professional development, and become immersed in the campus and local community culture.



*Dr. Landor and her Research Team with Dr. Makhetha dining at a downtown, Black-owned Restaurant



*Dr. Landor and Dr. Makhetha attending MU's Masters Graduation Ceremony for Research Team Members



*Dr. Makhetha Guest Lecturing in Dr. Landor's undergraduate course

Below is Dr. Makhetha's experience from his UMSEAP research visit to MU in May 2023.

TREVOR MAKHETHA UMSEAP RESEARCH VISIT 2022-2023 REPORT

My UMSEAP research visit from 1 – 30 May 2023 was a journey of cultural exchange and critical intellectual reflection. Although the original objective to collect qualitative data with students did not materialise, my time abroad provided a much-needed opportunity to complete writing commitments and engage in meaningful intellectual dialogue with Prof Landor, her students, and other stakeholders at the University of Missouri. These engagements have and will continue to shape my work on how young people construct social identities and navigate racial/ethnic/cultural differences in educational contexts.

NOTABLE ENGAGEMENTS ON CAMPUS

One of the most enriching aspects of my UMSEAP research visit was the opportunity to engage with the vibrant academic community at the University of Missouri. These engagements include delivering a guest lecture to an undergraduate class, weekly research meetings with Prof Landor and her postgraduate students, and attending various social events. Engaging with academics and researchers at these social events was intellectually stimulating and ignited new perspectives and potential avenues for future research collaboration. Furthermore, the enthusiasm and insightful conversations with locals highlighted a keen interest in understanding the complexities of the continued salience of race in 'post-colonial

societies such as the United States and South Africa. These conversations are ongoing and show much promise.

NOTABLE EXCURSIONS AND EVENTS OFF-CAMPUS

I explored the university campus and met a variety of people all with slightly different, yet interesting relationships with ‘Mizzou’ and Columbia. These conversations provided deep insights into the lived realities, fears, perceptions, and aspirations of this group of Americans. A personal highlight for me was participating in two events at the Gaines/ Oldham Black Culture Centre. And a visit to the Second Missionary Baptist Church provided nourishment for the soul. These encounters punctuated my experience in interesting ways. Likewise, my observations of, and might I say participation in ‘Reading Day’ activities provided comic relief and served as a conversation starter throughout my stay. Columbia is a town with a rich history and walking downtown brought to life many of the stories and historical facts I learnt from lively and insightful tour guides I met during my stay.

NOTABLE RESEARCH OUTPUTS

Rabe, M. E, Makhetha, T., Obuaku-Igwe, C., and Spicer, C. (2024). Problem-based Learning in the discipline of Sociology: Implications for Curriculum Design, Renewal, and Pedagogy. In Ralarala et al (Eds). *Unlocking the chains of knowledge: Understanding the challenges, remaking pedagogies and curriculum renewal*. African Sun Media: Stellenbosch.

Makhetha, T. (2024). Ubuntu Ethics: Re-humanising social research with socially and economically marginalised Youth in South Africa. *African Journal of Social Work*.

Makhetha, T (2024). Who is dropping out of school and Why? Reflections from the Northern Cape province. *South African Journal of Education*.

NOTABLE CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE AND OUTPUTS

Reimagining Sociology of Education in South Africa: Towards a Radical Praxis. Presented at the XX ISA World Congress of Sociology, Melbourne, Australia, June 25-July 1, 2023.

Audiensconsciousness: Meaning Making in the Northern Cape. Presented at the Dit is ‘n Noord Kaap Ding (DINK) conference, held at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, South Africa, 9-11 October 2023.

NOTABLE IMPACTS ON STUDENT SUPERVISION, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND RESEARCH GRANTS APPLIED FOR

My research also influenced my approach to ongoing research and student supervision. Upon my return, and inspired by various engagements, I recruited two masters level students to collect data that builds on and extends current scholarship on race, racism, colourism, skin tone bias, and prejudice. The research also inspired the conceptualisation of a multi-country study exploring how first-generation black students navigate the transition between high schools and university. A National Research Foundation (South Africa’s premier research funding instrument) grant application was made to fund this multi-country study. The outcomes of this funding application will be made in the coming months.

I thank the UMSAEP programme for making this research visit a possibility. It impacted in various ways and encouraged emerging and established academics to explore such opportunities.