Globalisation and Higher Education branding at three Western Cape universities in South Africa: A multi-semiotic analysis

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Globalisation and Higher Education branding at three Western Cape universities in South Africa: A multi-semiotic analysis

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Resemiotisation
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Brand consumption
Semiotic remediation
ABSTRACT

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Lynn Mafofo

PhD Thesis, Department of Linguistics, University of the Western Cape

This study investigates how the three selected Western Cape Province (WCP) institutions of higher education position their brand imageries and awareness in a localised global way. It explores the branding discourses and strategies used by three WCP universities namely: University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Cape Town (UCT), and Stellenbosch University (SU). The study applies the qualitative-interpretative approach with multiple methods such as interviews, observation, and document analysis to collect the data. Using the framework of Critical multisemiotic discourse analysis (CMDA), which combines CDA, and multimodality, the researcher analyses how the universities construct and position unique brands to the world and how the students as stakeholders consume these brands. The study also explores how the universities deploy, manipulate, and circulate linguistic, visual and extra-visual semiosis across multiple modalities to create attractive brand imageries. The CMDA framework illuminates the ways in which language and other semiotics are used to construct social reality and ideologies, and negotiate meanings in the universities’ branding practices.

The study findings show that the universities are using different types of modalities to relay their institutional brand promotional messages to reach their target audience. These modalities include print media, word of mouth testimonials, alumni, social chatrooms such as Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and semiotic landscape to mention a few. Open days and orientation days are also used to showcase the brands and these events are resemiotised in different media and even posted on the universities websites so as to reach a wide audience from all over the world. In this case, the study demonstrates how the universities are able to promote their brands to their South African communities within their physical vicinity and reach the regional and international community online. This includes showing how some of
the modes such as selected architecture and scenery, mission statements, branded goods, logos, historical artefacts together with particular semiotic materials and discourses are recirculated by means of being deterritorialised from the different contexts and reterritorialised into the universitiescapes, to accentuate and sell the brands and create attractive brandscapes.

Moreover, the study particularly demonstrates that the demise of apartheid and segregated universities in South Africa has prompted the universities to redefine, rebrand and realign themselves to the local, regional and international communities. This has necessitated new repositioning strategies in the post-apartheid South African universities under study. The universities have appropriated materialities of globalisation, commodified heritage and aesthetics of both their academic and social life as branding materials. The universities have adopted the social transformation agenda that tries to eliminate segregation in higher education institution. They all champion inclusive higher education that promotes internationalisation through quality education.

Given their historical background, the seemingly effective drive towards transformation through redressing and internationalisation processes still mirrors apartheid inequalities among the HBUs and HWUs. These processes filter into these academic contexts differently. The relentless drive to commercialisation in the market economy from an unequal footing, places the HBUs in a weaker position, where they are always trying to catch up. In addition, the study demonstrates that the universities have adopted the culture of consumerism and the market economy that perpetuates an excessively materialistic and exploitative view of living. The traditional identities of universities, as sites of higher education, have been replaced by corporate-like brand identities, which ensure that they are well known for what they have, they do and lastly what they are. The ideological shift in brand identity is displayed in the imagery of the mission statements, logos, branded goods, buildings, historical artefacts, students, sports and academic resources, all of which are remediated in documentaries, social media, YouTube, television advertisements and other media. This ideological shift and a focus on brand identities, as icons of consumption, have resulted in practices that create unequal subject positions among the universities both at a local and international level, as it widens the competition gap between the HBUs and the HWUs.
Through evaluating the students’ brand perceptions and analysis of the brand materials, the study further highlights the undeniable problems in these universities’ branding processes, such as the discrepancy of effective branding trajectories that adequately support the historically disadvantaged institutions to be on the same competitive ground with the historically white universities. The forces of globalisation, technologisation and commodification do not make it easier either as these inherited inequalities on development, cause massive differences in wealth among the universities and citizens accessing resources in these universities. The analysis in this study clearly demonstrates how the universities are able to appropriate multiple semiosis and discourses between the reproduction of the racial social order through subtle traces of resistance or through trying to hold on to the past and branding themselves as inclusive university brands both at a national and a global level.

This study brings to the fore that institutional branding is not simply a matter of explicit lexical self-description and attribution, but also pertains to an organisation’s use of semiotic features and patterns, such as particular metaphors or types of modalities. The study therefore contributes to the debates on post-apartheid socio-economic transformation in South African universities, and hints that pretending that the inherited inequality in these universities will correct itself, is futile as it is evident that cultural dialogue and communication based on equity, are necessary in order to avoid widening the gap between the contexts of higher learning in South Africa. Even in light of the latest ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ and ‘Fees Must Fall’ campaigns, this study provides information that can positively influence perspectives on access to higher education in South Africa.

Against the backdrop of globalisation and internationalisation on these universities, the study recommends that the universities and stakeholders work and rethink new ways of university branding and collaboration that facilitate positive growth. The study thus undoubtedly contributes to the field of language and communication particularly in understanding the concepts of institutional brand identity and consumption as practices, which can be actively changed and negotiated for authentic transformation that is beneficial to both the institution and its stakeholders. This implies that institutional brand identity should not only put emphasis on the business world but on the social world as well how people interpret meanings in their lives. Ultimately, the study calls for an understanding and incorporation of the relatively new concepts of institutional branding and brand identity consumption in
modernity practices where communication is characterised by many meaning-making semiotics other than the verbal aspects of human interaction.
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis for the topic *Globalisation and Higher Education branding at three Western Cape universities in South Africa: A multi-semiotic analysis* is my own original work, that it has not been submitted before, for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Lynn Mafoko

Signed: ___________________________  Date 10/12/ 2015
I dedicate this thesis to GOD Who made it possible for me to write this thesis.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<td>CMDA</td>
<td>Critical Multisemiotic Discourse Analysis</td>
</tr>
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<td>HBUs</td>
<td>Historically Black Universities</td>
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<td>HEIs</td>
<td>Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<td>HWUs</td>
<td>Historically White Universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>LL</td>
<td>Linguistics Landscape</td>
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<td>KII</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
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<td>MDA</td>
<td>Multimodal Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCHE</td>
<td>National Commission on Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFL</td>
<td>Systemic Functional Linguistics</td>
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<td>SL</td>
<td>Semiotic Landscape</td>
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<tr>
<td>SU</td>
<td>Stellenbosch University</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCT</td>
<td>University of Cape Town</td>
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<td>UWC</td>
<td>University of the Western Cape</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCP</td>
<td>Western Cape Province</td>
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<td>WWW</td>
<td>World Wide Web</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION SITUATING THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

Due to the globalisation and technologisation forces, it is now common to see marketplaces flooded with different types of branded goods from different countries. Consumers and retailers are also freely moving beyond borders to buy and sell these branded goods. Massive advancement in manufacturing distribution and communications has resulted in an ever-growing variety of goods and services. Businesses are becoming more competitive and come up with advertising strategies that are both local and global in nature. It has now become the norm that each new product or service comes with a wave of marketing and advertising techniques that are more suitable for a particular context. This new marketing survival strategy poses challenges for companies to differentiate their products from those of rival companies. Therefore, instead of trying to enhance the advertising of their individual products, the companies have realised that the only key to success is to market their brands more than the products. This shows that companies have realised that a strong brand name is the best opportunity for rapid growth.

These realities of globalisation pressures on a local, regional and global scale are also exer廷g demands on non-profit organisations such as universities to develop deep-rooted entrepreneurial cultures that are international in scope (Melewar and Akel, 2005). Moreover, the development in multimedia and information technology has also been critical in making available novel modalities in which universities can market themselves (Florida, 2001). Thus, the growing competition among universities is now compelling academic marketing offices to seek unique ways to differentiate their programs from others in a bid to attract both local and foreign stakeholders (Friedman, 2005). That is, instead of simply positioning themselves as national universities, they are competitively branding themselves as global universities (Panwar, 1997). Commercialisation of knowledge is now seen as the primary work of the universities in the globalised and transformational world. Thus, branding unique identities is now an integral part of universities’ business discourse which enables them to compete favourably in the global economy. This branding is largely driven by the “worldwide market search for students and the ceaseless search for research funding and
prestige,” (Deem et al., 2008:84). In branding themselves as ‘global’ institutions, universities subscribe to their stakeholders' global identities as well. They are able to achieve this by seeking ways to further connect their students and other stakeholders in a strategic infrastructure where ideas flow, new initiatives blossom, flexibility abounds and global reputations expand (Friedman, 2005). For instance, in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, every campus is historically different, and depending on the democratic, localised environment they are in, they have a mandate to show their customers their strengths so as to remain competitive in the academia. In this case, it becomes important to let the world know that they have a purpose and a vision concerning what they are and what they seek to become in order to survive and prosper in the era of massive globalisation and internationalisation.

Previous studies, which focused on Western and Eastern universities, have shown the growing significance of branding in universities for their growth and survival. For instance, university competitiveness, ranking and international benchmarking are critical to European and Asian universities branding themselves as ‘world-class’ or ‘global’ universities (cf. Altbach and Knight, 2007; Kinnell and MacDougall, 1997:53; Mok, 2007). Moreover, Fairclough (1993), Wernick (1991), Mautner (2005) and Osman (2006) have shown that modern universities have used branding discourses to portray themselves as innovative and entrepreneurial institutions. Universities are thus seemingly propelled to function as business units (Fairclough, 1993), not only in terms of attracting prospective students and staff but also in generating revenue for themselves through research.

Since no institution is an island, in the South African context, universities cannot afford to remain isolated. As such, they are reaching out to their stakeholders through creating partnerships and alliances as a critical component of international education development with a global focus. Therefore, the value of university partnerships with local, regional, national and international communities, are now part of the main agenda of the leaders in these higher education institutions. Branding of the university in the international arena is a goal that most of the higher educational institutions are now aiming for (Jevons, 2006). It is an integral part of the marketing strategy and the creation of a corporate identity and reputation. In the current global economy, branding efforts are no longer only limited to traditional ‘consumer’ products as firms in various service industries have also been trying to utilise branding strategies to build stronger brands. In this regard, even higher educational
institutions have realised the value of branding and the need to build stronger and more sustainable brands. Branding has thus become a strategic issue for universities in order for them to develop appreciably differentiated brands to communicate their strengths (Jevons, 2006). Therefore, in order to develop strong university brands, the brand administrators at universities need to continuously update their branding efforts.

Considering that these globalisation pressures influence different contexts differently, it should be noted that different communities of speakers and those from different historical backgrounds vary in form and status. Although they are mutually competing, they are culturally differentiated and do not function equally statuswise in relationship to the current dominant trend of universalisation of discourse analysis (cf. Shi-Xu, 2005). According to Carens, (2000) it is quite evident that discourse is not only a representation of reality and oneself. In fact, it can also be used as also a weapon and an action to influence other players. As such, discourse is intimately related to power and identity. In other words, it seems that all cultural groups and organisations use discourse to represent themselves, to defend their interests and to advance their plans of action with or against other parties. Therefore, it is important to note that discourse is not always universally applicable to different cultures because of the different experiences and concepts of language and intentions of communication (cf. Shi-Xu, 2007).

Thus, this study investigates the branding discourses and strategies used by three South African Western Cape Province universities, namely: University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Cape Town (UCT), and Stellenbosch University (SU). The study applies the qualitative-interpretative approach. It also uses multiple methods such as observation, document analysis and interviews to collect the data. Using the interdisciplinary Critical multisemiotic discourse analysis (CMDA), the researcher analyses how the universities construct and position unique brands to the world, and how the students consume these brands. The theoretical framework of CMDA is composed of two main theories. The first one is the multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), with its extensions such as semiotic remediation, resemiotisation and geosemiotics. The second framework is called critical discourse analysis (CDA). The study also explores how the universities deploy, manipulate, and circulate linguistic, visual and extra-visual semiosis across the multiple modalities to create brand imageries. To make sense of the data collected, the CMDA framework illuminates the ways in which language and other semiotics are used to construct
social reality and negotiate meanings in the branding practices. Using this multi-semiotic approach, the study also intends to show how the three universities deploy local and global semiosis to create unique brands and ensure that they are simultaneously globally competitive and locally relevant.

1.1 The historical apartheid trajectory in the SA universities

Historically, South African universities were part of the apartheid material world as they formed part of the segregated spatial semiotics. Universities were designed to play their part in the grand apartheid scheme of separate education among the different racial groups. This means there were White, African, Coloured and Indian universities. Since the white race was regarded as supreme whilst the non-white racial groups were regarded as inferior during this period, the white designated universities had a larger budget than ‘black’ universities for Coloureds, Indians and Africans. The black universities had to be content with gross limitations in resources, educational opportunities and access to research support (Moodie, 1994). Moreover, black and white universities differed significantly in terms of student demographics and curriculum offerings. Whereas white universities had a curriculum comparable to the best in the world, black universities were instituted to produce the administrative corps for the Bantustans and partly to serve the regime. Although the previous government was successful in establishing a differentiated higher education, the unintended consequence was that the black universities created conditions that led to the emergence of student resistances (Reddy, 2004).

One of the marked resistances against the oppressive regime was that of black students uprising against the introduction of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in the Bantu education in 1976. Unexpectedly and gradually this helped in creating and sustaining the internal resistance movement that later fought and resulted in the collapse of the apartheid regime. The striking feature of higher education in South Africa is that its provision evolved and reproduced itself along racial and ethnic lines, prompted in large measure by deliberate state policy. It is therefore not surprising that the emergence, roles, and cultures of universities and education in contemporary South Africa relate quite directly to the history of unequal relations of power perpetuated during the colonial and apartheid rule (Wolpe, 1995; Nkomo, 1990; Badat, 1999). Since the apartheid higher education system was racially and ethnically differentiated and diversified, the historically white universities (HWUs) were
largely advantaged whilst the historically black universities (HBUs) were largely disadvantaged. This kind of differentiation remains a difficult, contentious, and challenging policy issue for a number of reasons (cf. Badat, 2009).

The apartheid government created three universities in the Western Cape Province to cater for particular racial groups. The three main universities as mentioned above are UWC, UCT and SU. As has already been mentioned, this research is interested in these three universities situated in the Western Cape Province and the paragraphs below present their brief historical backgrounds.

1.1.1 Historical background of UWC, UCT and SU

As mentioned above, the educational policy during apartheid was based on an opportunity hierarchy for the different racial groups. Therefore, UWC was one of the “bush universities” instituted in 1959 particularly for ‘Coloureds’ to offer clerical and manual labour to whites (Cooper and Subotsky, 2001). It was established and designed to provide education in particular restricted fields, which were “relative to occupations in the middle rather than the upper reaches of the stratification system” (Wolpe, 1995:183).

However, in arms with the other HBUs, UWC did not accept to operate within these imposed inequalities. In the 1970s, they mobilised their students and staff to fight against the unjust measures, which only privileged white students and staff in white universities (Cooper and Subotsky, 2001). During the 1980s, UWC published a mission statement in which it rejected the main elements of the regime-imposed definition of its role and replaced it by defining new objectives. The mission statement diverted from the apartheid ideology as it declared, despite the challenging constraints, to break away from the regime’s segregation system and apply itself to functions that foster the political, social and economic advancement of all the disadvantaged groups (Wolpe, 1995:283). Thus, UWC redefined its identity and refused to be a ‘Coloured only’ institution and embraced all racial groups, especially the underprivileged groups (Blacks and Indians). This put it in direct confrontation with the apartheid regime. It is not surprising then that some of the most sustained protests against the laws of apartheid were done on the areas around UWC and its grounds (Lalu and Murray, 2012).
On the other hand, the HWUs had their own complex alienations as “blacks” had restricted access to these institutions. They were founded to support global British and Afrikaner empires (Moodie, 1994). Thus, identification with an international academic culture and the white colonial ideologies was particularly important at these institutions, as was the backing from big South African businesses, which were entirely white owned. Afrikaner and British nationalisms were often points of pride for white universities. For instance, the then South African college for white people only, was founded in 1829 as a boys’ college and later evolved to the now University of Cape Town in 1918 on the basis of the Alfred Beit legacy and additional generous gifts from the mining tycoons namely Julius Wenher and Otto Beit. It also received support from the Cape Town society and noteworthy state grants (Cooper and Subotsky, 2001).

UCT catered mainly for the white British students, and English was the medium of instruction. Despite the apartheid laws, this university started to enrol the first small group of black students as early as the 1920s. However, the number of black students remained relatively low until the 1990s because of the rise of students in the black disadvantaged universities who began to protest against the regime’s impositions. As these protests spread countrywide, UCT started to read and welcome the signs of change in the country, thereby committing itself to a deliberate and strategised process of internal transformation (Moodie, 1994).

On the other hand, SU was first established as Victoria College in 1865, and was changed to its current name in 1918. It was opened as a result of the white Dutch and Afrikaner elite’s determination to establish their own university because of the nationalist conflict with the English (Gerhart, 1978). Therefore, the rising Afrikaner nationalism and sentimentalists helped to raise funds to enable the college to become a fully-fledged university (Cooper and Subotsky, 2001). This university adopted Afrikaans as its medium of instruction.

Despite the conflicts between the British and Afrikaners, these two universities had more privileges compared to the black universities such as UWC and they articulated their identities and practices in line with the apartheid regime. Evidently, the apartheid era’s constraints impacted on the black universities more and it is important to look at what the processes of democratisation, globalisation and transformation have brought in the new South African higher educational contexts and how these differentiated universities have
come to grips with the change. Since all the three universities are situated in the Western Cape Province, it is of great importance to highlight a brief overview on this province for this research. As such, the following paragraphs highlight a few points on this province

1.1.2 Western Cape Province (WCP) overview and the geographic spaces of UCT, SU and UWC

Historically, the Western Cape Province was the home of the KhoiKhoi people before the San people also came to settle there. However, in 1651, Europeans came to settle in the Cape of Good Hope and the province became part of the supply destinations of Dutch East Company (cf. Bowden, 2006). This settlement brought slavery as the economic backbone of the province. The Slavery era ceased soon after the British recolonised the Cape Colony and this marked the historic turning point of the Western Cape Province as the slaves became partially independent in 1795 (cf. Bowden, 2006).

The Western Cape Province consists of many interesting historical facts and it is one of the famous tourist destinations housing landmarks such as the Table Mountain and the Robben Island (where Mandela and other freedom fighters were imprisoned during the colonial era). Figure 1 below shows the map for this province:
In 1910, the Western Cape Province became the legislative capital of South Africa. In 1945, industrialisation and development occurred in full scale in this province. This attracted many black workers from the well-known townships of Gugulethu and Nyanga and other African nations. Most of these areas are currently battling with over population and have informal settlements mushrooming around as people continue to migrate to this province in search for job opportunities. Nonetheless, the province boasts of four main universities namely, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Cape Town (UCT), Stellenbosch University (SU) and Cape Peninsular University of Technology (CPUT). The three universities focused on in this study were strategically located according to the policies of the apartheid regime raised in the preceding paragraphs. As there was severe racial segregation, the HWUs were located in better areas as compared to the HBU's. The map above shows some of the geospatial cities and towns where the universities are located.
UCT is situated in Cape Town, from which its name was drawn and which is also the second biggest city in South Africa. This city houses the seat of the national parliament and it is also the legislative capital of the country. It is famous for its waterfront, natural and beautiful setting in the Cape flora kingdom and landmarks such as Table Mountain, Table Bay among others. Cape Town was first developed by the Dutch East India Company and later became the European settlement in South Africa. At present it, has become the economic and cultural hub of the province. As the main city of the Western Cape Province, Cape Town is mostly described as two cities in one in the sense that there are visible differences between areas such as the upmarket Camps Bay the mainly white dominated area and the black dominated slums of the Cape Flats (cf. Bowden, 2006).

Unfortunately, even after the liberation struggle that freed the country from the apartheid regime, Cape Town is not without its challenges. One of its main challenges is the division or segregation among South Africa’s racial groups. This is clearly an apartheid legacy. A case in point is whereby the wealthy districts of Camps Bay and the Waterfront seem worlds apart from the highly impoverished living conditions of Cape Flats settlements such as Kayelitsha, Nyanga and Gugulethu. This sharp discrepancy is a clear evidence of the struggle for greater integration and many other challenges the city is currently experiencing (cf. Bowden, 2006). Considering its location, UCT has a greater responsibility to bring these two worlds together through education.

Cape Town, as a city, is surrounded by other small towns such as Bellville and Stellenbosch. University of the Western Cape is situated in Bellville, which is a city in the greater Cape Town metropolitan area. It was historically called ‘12 Mile Post’ and is located twenty kilometres away from Cape Town city centre. Bellville was originally founded as a railway station on the rail line from Cape Town to Stellenbosch and Strand. It is therefore situated in between Cape Town and Stellenbosch and was used as the welcoming and resting point for the settlers’ wagons. It houses the Cape Flats and Tygerberg nature reserve (http://www.savenues.com/attractionswc/bellville.php). It later developed and has a huge industrial area and surrounding suburbs. UWC is situated in this area that was seen as a perfect and secluded area for the non white racial groups. The area was underdeveloped as compared to the other locations of Cape, such as those in which UCT and SU are located as indicated below. Due to this underdevelopment, UWC was really placed in a bush (whereby it was secluded far
Stellenbosch University is situated in Stellenbosch town, which is about fifty kilometres east of Cape Town. Just like UCT, which was named after the surrounding town or city, SU is also named after Stellenbosch which is a town where the university is located. Stellenbosch town is the second oldest European settlement in the province [after Cape Town] and is described as one of the prettiest little towns in the whole of South Africa. It was one of the first valleys to be settled in during the colonial era. This town is perfectly located in a magnificent mountain valley and it is surrounded by attractive tourist natural landmarks such as the Parrot Mountain, Stellenbosch Mountain, Jonkershoek, Drakenstein, and Simonsberg and several nature reserves (http://tourismcapetown.co.za/leisure-travel/town/stellenbosch). These spectacular surroundings and some of the world’s most famous vineyards in Stellenbosch add to the region’s pleasant appearance. This town is also known for its rich farming area and forms part of Cape Winelands South Africa. Stellenbosch is characterised by domestic, business and farming architecture that show the Dutch Georgian and Victorian origins. This culture and heritage have remained intact two decades after the apartheid regime. The major portion of the area is utilised for agriculture (mainly wine production) (http://www.stellenbosch.gov.za/).

The locations of the universities are important in this study as they relate to the different racial categories that the apartheid government used to allocate both the societies and the universities. This brief historical geospatial background informs the study in many ways. For instance, it is important to look at how the universities are transforming and branding themselves within the democratic South Africa in the midst of the pressures of globalisation and marketisation.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Although the notion of branding has become the latest focus in higher education elsewhere, very little has been written about it in the African contexts. Moreover, although universities across the world may appeal to similar values and use similar hybrid discourses to ‘brand’ themselves, there are also local differences in these branding discourses. This is because globalisation processes flow across various spaces differently and this contributes to the
inequalities present in these spaces. Thus, the branding discourses of the universities located in different spaces across a globalising world could be said to be similar but not necessarily universal in form and function. For instance, all the universities’ discourses could be designed to show their stakeholders their strengths to survive, prosper and become competitive in this era of massive globalisation and internationalisation, but might draw on different histories, languages, (cultural) artefacts and symbols in their branding processes. In addition, recent writings on globalisation have theorised that globalisation is located in locality. Therefore, the notions of localisation over globalisation in the branding process of the South African universities have not been fully investigated. The demise of apartheid education means that universities can neither afford to remain isolated nor continue to be aligned to a particular race or local or national speech community. Additionally, forces of marketisation, globalisation and technologisation have conspired to influence branding strategists to move away from focusing on particular racial groups to a wider market. The question is how the universities manage to attract students from the national, regional and international borders into their once restricted contexts. It is worth noting that the universities’ prospective students are fully mobile and immersed in various digital worlds and the universities constantly need to find ways to grow, survive, and embrace changes to meet the needs of these students. Thus, the next question relates to the unique branding discourses universities use to attract these students and how the students, as clients, consume the brands.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

This study aims to investigate the kinds of branding strategies, and mobility of branding discourses and semiosis across the modalities used by the universities to attract their clients. Specifically, the study will be restricted to the following objectives:

i. To investigate the kinds of semiotics that are used by the universities to highlight their brand imagery and brand awareness
ii. To find out how multiple semiotics are deployed to create distinct meanings in the brand positioning process of the universities
iii. To examine how the different discourses and semiotics are circulated across a variety of modalities and contexts, to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process
iv. To scrutinize how the institutions’ historical, cultural, and social structures are maintained, reconstructed and repurposed through the branding process

v. To find out the sorts of brand identities the universities aim to portray in the imagery and brand awareness campaigns

vi. To uncover how the students, as ‘customers,’ consume the branding discourses within and across the three universities

vii. To investigate the way in which the notions of globalisation and internationalisation are localised to form strong, effective brands

1.4 Research questions

The research questions are:

i. Which kinds of semiotics are used by the universities to highlight their brand imagery and brand awareness?

ii. In what way are the multiple semiotics manipulated to create distinct meanings in the brand positioning process of the universities?

iii. How are the different semiotics circulated across a variety of modalities and contexts, to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process?

iv. How are the institutions’ historical, cultural, and social structures used to maintain, reconstruct and reshape distinctive brands?

v. What sorts of brand identities emerge from these imagery and brand awareness campaigns?

vi. How do the students, as ‘customers,’ consume the branding discourses and symbols within and across the three universities?

vii. What do answers to the above questions tell us about the notions of localisation, globalisation, and internationalisation in development of the three universities as strong, effective brands?

1.5 The significance of this study

The study contributes to the available literature on university branding by clearly indicating how the selected South African universities are branding themselves in the globalised world. Branding universities has become increasingly topical in this globalised world. This has
yielded different research topics in the academic field, including that of language and communication. The little available literature on the notion of university branding has particularly focused on universities in the Western and Eastern parts of the world. There is, therefore, still a sizeable gap in this field since the notion of university branding is new.

Another gap is also visible in the African context where there is very little research around the concept of university branding. As such, it is important to add to this literature body by looking at how African universities are branding themselves and the influence of values and brand positioning statements in education purchases in African universities. South African universities especially those in the Western Cape Province, make an interesting case study given their historical and political backgroung as provided above.

In the South African context, particularly in the Western Cape Province (WCP), the universities seem to succumb to branding strategies that differentiate themselves from each other through serving the needs of different segments with different offerings. Therefore, it becomes interesting to investigate the types of branding resources that are being used by the universities to highlight their brand imagery, brand positioning strategies, and understand how differences and similarities are perceived. Furthermore, since as customers from different racial groups, students, are now part of the discourse of marketisation and globalisation that is circulating in the universities’ contemporary environments, it becomes vital to establish a brand appraisal of these universities from the students’ perspective. In addition, despite the growing body of literature centered on investigating the impact of marketisation and globalisation language on universities’ discourses, there remains no definitive understanding as to what students say about their institutions and the kind of discourses they create around them. This study therefore sets out to add to this body of knowledge, but in quite a specific way. Rather than investigating broad factors influencing student choice as shown in the few studies focused on the universities in the western parts of the world, this study looks at how the students perceive their institutional brands and the material used to create these brands.

The South African new democratic government is increasingly exercising strategic influence upon higher education through earmarked or performance-based funding systems, reporting requirements and statutory and consultative bodies (Wolpe, 1995). Therefore, the present competitive efforts by the South African universities to protect their existing privilege and to
gain ground in the post-apartheid South Africa have, among other things, been charged with the task of ensuring quality and restructuring higher education from the race-based institutions to equal opportunity universities. With the permission of the government, the different institutions can now reorganise and redefine their roles within the new social order; each institution has its own specific history and characteristics.

The strategic issue for the institutions is how to transform themselves in the light of both the government and their own histories, as well as reconstruct new and differentiated brand identities for marketing purposes. With forces of democratisation, globalisation and marketing pressures, this research contributes to the field of language and communication on account of how the South African universities brand themselves and at the same time they keep up with the ethos of the new South African dispensation in a globalised world. The significance of the study, therefore, is to add to this body of knowledge by concentrating on the types of branding strategies and discourses used by some of the Western Cape universities in positioning their brands, highlighting their brand imagery and awareness on the African continent and even beyond.

Therefore, looking at the open door policy in the higher education democratic contexts, this research also makes a recognisable contribution as to what kind of discourses are brought in by the students with regard to the institutional brands and how they embrace or refute these brand identities in the democratic South Africa. The researcher hopes that the findings will be useful to the present government and the universities and that the branding and transformation process, especially in the academia is continuously, effectively and practically implemented.

1.6 Chapter outline

Chapter One: Background information situating the study, as shown above, carries the background information situating the study. This chapter contains the information that helps in contextualising the study in relationship with university branding and the historical and present background of the universities in the Western Cape Province. It has sub-sections such as introduction, historical trajectories of the universities under study, a review of their current situation in the post-apartheid and their demographic location. This also includes
statement of research problem, aim and objectives, research questions and significance of the study.

**Chapter Two: Globalisation, internationalisation and university branding**, looks at the main literature that informs this study. The literature is compiled from different authors, who contribute ideas about the globalisation phenomenon that try to explain the kind of research, discourses and ideas that are stemming out from the higher education contexts. This literature includes looking at the forces of globalisation, internationalisation, universities as marketing places, brand positioning in academia, brand options, imagery and consumption.

**Chapter Three: Semiotic landscape, texts and critical multisemiotic framework**, provides a review of literature that situate the study into the language and communication field and looks at related topics that help inform this study. The literature includes looking at the notions of semiotic landscape and universities brandscapes material, discourse as a text, and the following notions of discursive practice: ideologies, interdiscursivity, intertextuality and dialogicality of texts. This includes looking at the CMDA as the interdisciplinary theoretical framework, modified by the study, to interpret the data. This theory includes two main frameworks namely: MDA with its extensions and CDA.

**Chapter Four: Towards a qualitative-interpretive approach** presents the research methodology, which includes an elaboration of the qualitative-interpretive approach and working with discourse. It also covers issues on the sampling and data collection techniques, data analysis and the ethnical statement. In addition, this chapter provides vivid explanations and justifications on the various data collection methods, sample and research sites used for this study. The ethics of the research are also presented.

**Chapter Five: Resemiotising corporate brands at three South African universities** shows the types of resources, metaphors and modalities used in the branding process and how they are creatively circulated across different modalities to make distinct brand meanings. This includes looking at the types of branding strategies and discourses that are used to highlight unique and competitive brand imagery and brand awareness. Using notions of interdiscursivity, intertextuality, resemiotisation, geosemiotics and semiotic remediation, the chapter shows how these three universities multimodally maintain, deconstruct and
reconstruct anew the institutional historical, cultural and social structures in the branding process.

**Chapter Six: Creation of institutional brandscapes at UCT, SU, and UWC** looks at the semiotic landscape and resemiotisation and re-presentations of semiosis at the three universities. It shows how differently the resources are emplaced and carried out in different semiotic modes to capitalise on brand meaning making across both physical and online scapes. This includes revealing how the universities have recreated their semiotic landscapes as university brandscapes through repurposing and recirculating certain images and linguistic forms in their branding process. Such reworking of discourses and semiosis, shows manipulation of multiple kinds of signs, words and images across modalities in the post apartheid South African academic contexts.

**Chapter Seven: Semiotic remediation and brand remoulding at UWC** presents an analysis of UWC’s main brand video posted on different sites, such as websites’ homepages, social sites and You Tube. Through exploring the semiotics used to accentuate the UWC brand, the chapter shows how the kind of metaphors that are associated to UWC, as a brand, and how they are refashioned to build an attractive brand through telling a UWC experience and selling the university at the same time. It shows how UWC has managed to rework on discourses and manipulate semiosis in the branding video using semiotic remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) and other analytical tools.

**Chapter Eight: Semiotic remediation and brand digitalisation at SU** presents the kind of semiotic chains that have been used to accentuate the brand of SU in the branding video found on the university website links and You Tube. In similarity to UWC, as analysed above, this chapter also uses semiotic remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) to how the SU brand team has also repurposed the main themes highlighted in the mission statements, the logos, images, recreated architectural images among others to portray an admirable brand.

**Chapter Nine: Semiotic remediation and brand digitalisation at UCT** presents analysis of the UCT video and shows how UCT, through semioticisation and remediation has managed to package its branding material to build a world-class brand. In similarity to Chapters Seven and Eight, this chapter shows how the rapid development of multiple semiotic resources, and new digital media, in contradiction or correspondence with the
traditional media, is invoking the twin logics of, These twin logics [immediacy and hypermediacy] are looked at being symbiotic relationship, that of remaking themselves and each other (Bolter and Grusin, 1999).

**Chapter Ten: Students’ institutional brand consumption** focuses on the three universities’ students’ brand evaluations data, and shows how the students perceive their universities as academic brands. Therefore, using the elements of CDA as part of the broader critical multisemiotic discourse analysis, this chapter presents the ideological complexes that come to be structured and restructured, articulated and rearticulated within the institution for both construction and consumption of the brand.

**Chapter Eleven: Conclusions and recommendations,** consists of an analytical summary of the study with regards to the research objectives and ends with the implications of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

GLOBALISATION, INTERNATIONALISATION AND UNIVERSITY BRANDING

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter looks at the main literature that informs this study. The literature focuses on issues of globalisation phenomenon that try to explain the kind of research, discourses and ideas that are stemming from the higher education contexts. This literature also considers the forces of globalisation, internationalisation, universities as marketing places, brand positioning in academia, brand options, imagery and consumption.

2.1 Globalisation as a discoursal phenomenon

Fundamentally, the word ‘globalisation’ refers to ‘all those processes in which different people of the world are incorporated into a single world society, namely global society’ (Albrow, 1990:7). Nevertheless, due to its diverse nature and its wide applicability, which ranges from the economic, to the technological, to the socio-cultural and political, the term ‘globalisation’ has taken on an ambiguous character. For instance, Giddens (1987) perceives globalisation in terms of the world capitalist economy, the global information system, and the nation state system. On the other hand, Barber (1995) characterises it in terms of a homogeneous global network based on a market imperative. Other scholars have focused more on the dynamic socio-cultural landscapes: ‘ethnos-capes’, and ‘techno-capes’, ‘ideoscapes,’ among others, and the mobility and spread of people, cultures, technology and ideologies that globalisation has produced (Appadurai, 1990). According to Kumaravadivelu (2008: 31-2), “globalisation refers to a dominant and driving force that is shaping a new form of interconnections and flows among nations, economies, and peoples.” As such, it results in the transformation of contemporary social life in all its economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological, and individual dimensions. Furthermore, Giddens (1994) and Waters (2001) state that globalisation is commonly used as a short hand to describe the spread of connectedness of production, communication and technologies around the world. It has also been used to refer to the effort of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and others to create a global free market for goods and services.
In commenting on the concept of globalisation, Heller (2003: 473), on the other hand, asserts that:

The globalised new economy is bound up with transformations of language and identity in many different ways. This includes the emerging tensions between state based and corporate identities and language practices between local, national and supra-national identities and language practices and between hybridity and uniformity.

Like Heller (2003), Blommaert (2003) highlights the negatives of globalisation. He draws on the inequalities resulting from the flow of styles, genres and codes across the places of global inequality:

This world system as Immanuel Wallerstein has extensively argued, is a system built on inequality, on particular, asymmetric divisions of labour between ‘core regions and peripheries’, with semi-peripheries in between… Inequality not uniformity, organises the flows and the particular nature of such flows across the globe, they travel across, structurally different spaces and will consequently be picked up in different places (Blommaert, 2003:612)

Based on all the above mentioned assertions, it is not surprising that the term ‘globalisation’ has been regarded as a polymorphous buzzword used by different people in different contexts meaning different things (Croucher, 2004). Nevertheless, most people would agree that the different meanings and significances of globalisation converge on the notion of flow and mobility: mobile capital, mobile people and mobile cultures. With innovations in communication technology and the digitalisation of data, the flow and exchange of ideas and cultures is exceptional. This in turn, impacts on academia (which is of the main interest in this study) in significant ways. The three universities under study were historically shaped and it becomes important to find the kind of strategies and materials they are using to showcase their brands. This includes looking at how the students interpret these global forces within their academic territories’ brands.

In addition, globalisation, which is partly responsible for the expansion of higher education and greater social diversity in all aspects of university life, has substantial influence on academic practices of research enquiry and collaboration (Thaver and Mahlck, 2008). This impact is evident in the fashionable competition amongst academics for funding and research assistance. This includes the differential access to and different degrees of
socialisation into academic practices and academic cultural contestations over what constitutes valid research, and perceived unequal applications of criteria for the evaluation of research. This includes the external pressures to collaborate more and work in teams, both nationally and internationally. In South Africa, there is also pressure for academic ratings by the National Research Fund (NRF) and to publish in accredited journals, which in turn become points of marketisation. As such, by choosing to also look at the students’ discourses around the university brand articulation as social discourses, the researcher is likely to reveal discourses in contestation due to the usage of language of marketisation and globalisation by these universities.

Globalisation has also “been one of the most significant and rapid changes in the recent decades” in the world (Tsui, 1996:1353). This particular change is also affecting higher education such as universities, which are now, to a greater extent, competing with their services on an international arena (Melewar and Akel, 2005). Therefore, education has become a service that can be marketed to customers worldwide. Universities used to exist in a rather protective world. For instance, historically, the education system in South Africa used to work as a cartel in the sense that the universities were designed for particular groups (see Chapter One above). As a result, they were not necessarily competing, and in any case, there were even less places at the universities than there are today hence demand was higher than supply. As mentioned above these universities were designed for particular racial groups, they had a rather rigid approach towards student recruitment. Marketing in this situation was regarded as an unnecessary cost as long as student demand was higher than the available places at the universities (cf. Mafofo, 2010). This is in agreement with what Freeman and Thomas (2005) claim about the need for branding to be seen as paramount in a market that is oversupplied. As a result of globalisation, these universities find themselves in a new democratic environment whereby all the groups in South Africa are now free to choose the academic institutions they prefer. In addition, the government funding is now encompassing to help many disadvantaged learners to pay their fees. Consequently, there is obviously stiff competition among these traditional universities, hence the focus of this research to find out how they position their brands and how students interpret them.

As can be seen so far, globalisation is a vast discoursal phenomenon which has various dimensions. It includes economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. These dimensions bring in definitions that focus on interrelations, interconnections, flows and
networks, as these are the processes that ultimately affect the role and nature of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the present globalised world. Such definitions include globalisation as “a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions ... generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power” (Held et al., 1999: 16). This includes globalisation as “complex connectivity ... the rapidly developing and ever-descending network of interconnections and interdependencies that characterise modern social life” (Tomlinson, 1999:2).

These “flows”, “networks”, “interconnections” and “interdependencies” take on numerous forms such as the flows of commodity, money, people, images and languages across physical local and international boundaries through trading and global governmental institutions interactions around the world. As such, for the purposes of this study, the researcher adopts the definition of globalisation as the “intensification of worldwide relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 1990:64) through the ‘global flows’ of “ideas and ideologies, people and goods, images and messages, technologies and techniques” (Appadurai 2001:5), including discourses. This enables and compels the researcher to look at the kind of semiotic resources, discourses and strategies that the universities are currently drawing on in transforming themselves as academic brands.

Furthermore, Thaver and Mahlck (2008) describe the concept of diversity, which is also as a result of globalisation in South Africa, as referring to the ways in which institutions approach the management of the social groups, which are not part of the mainstream society. This process raises issues of equality and equity, especially in a democratic country such as South Africa. As such, higher education institutions, particularly universities focused on in this study, are seemingly beginning to be shaped by these issues and discourses of diversity in ways which currently seem to coincide with the intrusion of market forces.

Following the above argument, Mohanty (2006) also mentions that one consequence of the restructuring of universities under the guidance of the internationally dominant neo-liberal economic ideology is that any apparent commitment to achieving greater equality in terms of gender, race or class, is eclipsed by an even stronger dedication to market values. Thus, the combined effect of this as Mohanty (2006:185) puts it, is that equality and by implication,
diversity practices are starting to be associated with the assimilation of different groups, hence their integration into the status quo, rather than with a struggle for “equality that takes cognisance of historical injustices and seeks the transformation of the present.” According to Human, (1996) the convergence of the discourse of diversity with the ideology of marketisation is manifest at the level of work-based practices in the private sectors. As a result, diversity is being framed through economic lenses. To support this, De Los Reyes (2000) and Mohanty (2006) acknowledge that higher education institutions as observed in the research practices, are also feeling the dual impact of diversity and marketisation.

2.2 Globalisation versus internationalisation

Globalisation is not a single phenomenon as it is inferred from various phenomena which are multi-dimensional (Tsuruta, 2003). In higher education, it can positively help facilitate the exchange and collaboration between universities as well as the interdependent development of academic communities for the greater good of all and increased competition between universities (Tsuruta, 2003). However, it also has negative consequences such as increasing inequity and marginalisation due to socio-economic disparity, the 'digital divide,' and uneven access to higher education, especially in third world countries such as South Africa. Thus, the concept of globalisation contains a number of intertwined but irreconcilable dynamics such as competition and cooperation, convergence and divergence, homogenisation and heterogenisation, generalisation and particularisation (Tsuruta, 2003).

In similarity to globalisation, internationalisation is also multifaceted and has been interpreted in various ways as a means, activity, programme, indicator, mission, ideology, goal, and process (Tsuruta, 2003). Nevertheless, Knight (1994) defines the internationalisation of higher education as the process of integrating an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution. It is, thus, considered as a process in response to globalisation and includes both international and local elements. Internationalisation of higher education is thus an acculturative process through which the educational provision of a higher education system becomes more refined, enriched and broadly applicable to students from all backgrounds and countries (Tsuruta, 2003).
This concept is however often used interchangeably with globalisation. Although these two terms are closely related, they are different in nature. Scott (1999:124) affirms that “globalisation should not be confused with or simply regarded as a higher form of internationalisation which reflects a world order where nation states play a central role.” Globalisation is therefore broadly regarded as a forceful change in the economic, social, political and cultural environment brought about by global competition, such as the integration of markets and the increase of communication networks and human, services, and goods mobility. On the other hand, internationalisation is commonly understood as the sum of all those activities which aim to expand their reach over national borders (Van Damme, 1999). Thus, “globalisation is the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas” (Knight, 1997:6) across borders whereas internationalisation of higher education is one of the ways a country responds to the impact of globalisation whilst respecting the individuality of the nation.

It is obvious therefore, that both internationalisation and globalisation in education cannot be discussed separately from national development. For example, ever since South African universities opened their doors to their local, regional, and international stakeholders, they are likely to have been greatly influenced by them. Therefore, even with the emergence of nation states, there seem to be tension between international and national goals and interests in education. These goals have been more hybrid as can be seen in the coinage of words such as global and local to 'glocalisation' (Tsuruta, 2003). Looking at how South African universities brand themselves becomes important to see whether they are also using both notions to enhance their brands.

According to Elkin et al. (2008) internationalisation has become a strategic focus for many universities worldwide as universities throughout the world have sought a more international focus. As a result, international linkages have become an important source of institutional status, pride and of economic returns (Elkin et al., 2008). Most universities in the West have claimed they are world-class institutions offering international education through their promotional discourses (Mestenhauser, 1998). Knight (2004) suggests that while internationalisation is changing higher education, globalisation is changing internationalisation. Thus, different motives for internationalisation include political influence, economic or academic advantage, and social-cultural relationships (Knight, 2004).
These different reasons for adopting an internationalisation strategy are however inevitably linked to changes in the international environment.

Nicolescu et al. (2009) distinguished three dimensions of the internationalisation activity of higher education. The first one is on the level of educational processes, and it looks at the student mobility, curricular development, and pedagogical modernisation, and development of programs with double degree or delocalisation of degrees as given abroad. The second is on level of research activities: mobility of teachers and researchers, participation in European and extra-community thematic networks, staff recruitment at international level. Lastly, the third level is on the relationships with society, such as development of public-private partnerships, participation in national and European funding programs. Qiang (2003) asserts that this decision of university internationalisation helps in the attraction of foreign students for educational or research programs. This positively brings in the evolution of the labour market, by providing the much needed diverse graduates suited to the needs of the new economy in terms of social and multicultural competencies; specialisation of the scientific research and creation and circulation of the newest information surpassing the geographical barriers (Nicolescu et al., 2009).

Based on the above, it is evident that a little has been published about whether universities in the African contexts are also influenced by such changes. This is considering the fact that due to the effects of as due to the effects of colonisation, they still have a lot to recover from. Therefore, there is still a sizeable gap of this phenomenon in the African contexts, and this study aims to contribute to the literature by concentrating on the South African universities’ branding discourses in which internationalisation will also be analysed.

2.3 Place branding: a case of universities as marketing places

Place branding techniques has become popular due to the role of human activity and the engines of economic growth in the world today (Ratcliffe and Krawczyk, 2004). Looking at the traditional branding, Kotler et al. (1999; 2002) discussed several main issues of place marketing and proposed a theoretical framework for place marketing. This stems from the evidence of city authorities’ need to market places, and subsequently cities, in a similar manner to that of companies marketing products and services (Kotler et al., 2002). This place marketing can have sub-parts such as city marketing and tourist destination marketing.
This research extends the place marketing to the academic related institutional marketing with more focus on university marketing (which is the focus area in this study).

Looking at places in this kind of economic positioning, branding is an optimal starting point for place marketing (Popescu and Corbos, 2011) although it is a more complex process than product and service branding (Hankinson, 2001; Kotler and Gertner, 2002). Rainisto (2001) adds that building the brand identity of a particular place brings attraction to a place; and this brand identity can create a positive relationship between the brand and its consumers. Therefore, the key to successful branding is to create a relationship between the brand and the consumer so that the functions and values of the brand cater for the consumer’s needs (Hankinson and Cowking, 1993).

Popescu (2012) investigated both the cities’ and universities’ branding strategies. The main aim of the research was to explore the city branding strategies of the selected cities and look at similarities and differences between branding strategies applicable to cities and universities. The results showed that, just as globalisation has allowed cities to compete with other cities from all over the world to attract resources: human, financial, and infrastructure resources, it has also impacted on the educational sector. Higher education institutions are now competing on the international arena to attract the best stakeholders. Popescu (2012) asserts that strong university brands have developed over the years, and are currently capitalised by applying branding techniques to universities. Popescu (2012) adds that strong university brands ensure a higher degree of internationalisation, outcome desired by university managers in the current context of globalisation of markets. Against this backdrop, Popescu (2012) argues that as the city grows economically and through place branding, the university within that location also grows and the same happens to the city as the university grows or becomes well-known through branding strategies.

Education is one of the dominant promises cities usually make as it is very important for people’s individual success in life. In other words, it is mainly regarded as the foundation of the society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability (Popescu, 2012). Universities, being the institutions of higher education, have therefore major roles within cities, countries and the world at large in the development of the community. They are places where new ideas are developed and debated, and social and policy
entrepreneurship is fostered. They positively impact on economic growth through their primary mission to contribute to the development of human capital through teaching.

Against this backdrop, universities are described by Ward (1998) as invariably key forces in the post-industrial society, as they cultivate plentiful and appropriately qualified students who can contribute significantly to a place, not only in economic terms, but also educationally, culturally and socially. Florida (2002; 2005), on the other hand, describes universities as talent magnets, which help in fuelling local economies through the attraction and creation of both academic faculties and students. As such, “universities are increasingly recognised as playing a key role in regional development, a role [which is] likely to increase given the development of a knowledge intensive” (Charles, 2006:117) economy and society.

Moreover, Pearce (2004) asserts that, historically speaking education is to some extent, committed to the development of social economy. Consequently, because of globalisation and marketisation ideas concerning the world economy and consumer culture, education is regarded to fulfil certain functions in order to make the students suitable to the societal requirements. Landry (2000:133) also adds that universities are key elements in the “creative milieu”, which is defined as a place either a cluster of buildings, a part of a city, a city as a whole or a region that contains the necessary preconditions, in terms of “hard and soft infrastructure” to generate a flow of ideas and inventions. Florida (2002:292) describes the role of the university as “multifaceted”, and identifies three interconnected roles that reflect “technology, talent and tolerance.” In this interconnectedness, universities help to establish the broader quality of place of the communities in which they are located, and this underpins and encourages the flow of ideas between individuals, stakeholders in particular in this case and institutions. Indeed the emphasis on the human capital of a place is a long-standing element of place marketing activity.

As a result of these roles, higher education marketplace is experiencing a period of change (Florida, 2002). Communication techniques continue to evolve and there is increasing evidence of institutions introducing marketing strategies which make much greater use of an ever-growing range of technological options, such as click internet advertising, social networking sites, and texting (Friedman, 2005).
2.4 University branding activities

A review of the literature reveals very few papers (Gatfield et al., 1999; Gray et al., 2003; Mazzarol, 1998) that concentrate on university branding, although some attention is given to the international marketing of higher education the influences selection of preferred institution. The focus of these studies was to identify the factors that help to market and promote university brand to attract more students. Other research topics range from looking at the university strategic marketing (Balwin and James, 2000; Reindfleisch, 2003), positioning and branding (Gray et al., 2003), marketing communications (Klassen, 2002; Mortimer, 1997), marketing models (Waeraas and Solbakk, 2009); to market planning (Maringe and Foskett, 2002). Looking at United Kingdom universities, Chapleo’s (2011) main research objectives revealed the decisive purpose of universities to attract different stakeholders from all over the world through marketing strategies. Other studies have also looked into how universities, in specifically Asia and Europe, are transforming themselves into ‘world-class’ or ‘global’ universities around the world in response to globalisation and the need to be internationally competitive see for example, (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Deem et al., 2008; Mok 2005; 2007). These studies have looked into how the selected universities’ institutional plans, practices, policies, programs and so forth are being reformed and restructured with international benchmarking in mind. These studies suggest that there is a tendency for the convergence of these institutional plans, practices, policies, programs and such, with respect to Anglo-American paradigms and standards (Mok, 2007).

Osman (2006) studied universities’ logos and adds that institutional logos are used creatively for promotional reasons by academic institutions, and are created mostly to establish a prestigious image for an organisation and is usually not for sales purposes. Wells et al. (2003) cited in Osman (2006) emphasise that these institutions create bold slogans, which are realistic enough to attract prospective students, as they are created based on good advertisement practices. Wells et al. (2003), cited in Osman (2006:43), add, “the slogans are designed to be remembered and repeated, to impress a brand and its messages on consumers, and ideally should be short, clear, and easy to remember.”

To ensure that the slogans are easily remembered, creative elements such as boldness, parallelism, rhyme, and rhythm, alliteration and aptness are used. In a frequency analysis of the use of slogans among universities, Osman (2006) finds that more public universities use
slogans than private universities. He concludes that although using slogans is a promotional
strategy commonly used by profit-making organisations, public universities use slogans
because of the effect of the changing university culture. This aspect is of interest, especially
when looking at how the globalised contexts of South African universities force them to
continuously position their brands in a different manner. This particularly applies to the
former white universities.

Aitkinson’s (1997) analysis acknowledges that messages in mission statements have
implications for the identities of universities that are constructed “for public consumption”. 
These statements, thus, act as mantras of organisations to build togetherness among the
management and help publicise institutional values to the potential customers outside the
organisation.

An analysis of the marketised discursive practices of British universities mission statements
reveals that there is pressure for institutions of higher learning to operate as if they were
businesses competing to sell their products to consumers (Fairclough, 1993). In addition,
Fairclough (1993) adds that, nowadays, universities are now packaging their identity
information in such a persuasive way so as to get students to apply for admission. In this
sense, even the university mission statements slide along a continuum between telling and
selling (cf. Fairclough, 1993) through both visual and verbal means. The articulated
messages in the statements have implications on the identities of universities that are
constructed “for public consumption” (Teo, 2007:3). In addition as articulations of
institutional purposes they also function as persuasive abstractions and discursive means to
promote the institutions and their sources including potential students.

universities have become ever more deeply entangled in competitive, promotional culture. It
is just not a question of clever advertising, “but what really matters [he contends], is all the
accumulated promotional capital that has gone into the constructing of a school’s perceived
academic reputation”. Thus, this culture, a dense communicative complex, is one of the most
potent ways in which the market threatens to colonise other domains. Among those domains
are the higher education institutions such as the universities this study is investigating.
Mautner (2005), on the other hand shows that most of the quotes found in universities’
discourses show that the up-beat promotional tone and ‘entrepreneurial’ is considered a good thing for a university to be something to aspire. Mautner (2005:95) asserts that:

The growing orientation of public universities towards the corporate sector has had a significant impact on higher education governance, management, and discourse. The rhetoric of the free market, manifested most tangibly in business-related lexis, is now firmly established in the discursive repertoire employed by academic leaders, politicians, and the media, as well as parts of higher education research.

Mafofo (2010) has studied South African universities’ mission statements in a bid to see how they are articulating their identities in the new democratic environment. The author argues that the universities have adopted strategic identity re-branding using interdiscursive formations to share similarities and differentiate themselves from each other, and at the same time, they have appropriated the present government’s transformation agenda as their own. Even from these restricted textual environments, one can identify key motifs and discursive representations. The reference to quality outputs shows academic activity modelled on industrial production. In addition, the language of rapid movement ties in with Barnett’s (2003:66) characterisation of the entrepreneurial university as being ‘restless’ and “always on the move”.

Not surprisingly, one area of student choice that is frequently investigated is linked to understanding why students select one institution over another or determining the brand salient attributes, and exploring the issue of a university brand. For instance, Ali-Choudhury et al., (2008) questioned directors and managers at twenty-five universities in England to determine which components of a university brand were perceived to be significant to student recruitment. An institution’s educational identity, location, employability record, visual imagery, ambience, reputation, sports and social facilities, learning environment, courses offered and community linked activities were all identified as factors influencing student choice. Considering the impact of facilities upon student choice, Price (2003) also reflect upon the notion of “a student-institution fit”, which is explained by Banning and Banning (1986:1) as “the degree of congruency, or fit, between student characteristics and the ability of the institution to respond to those characteristics”. However, what is less appreciated in the existing research is the study of all the discourses that make up
universities’ brands and how these discourses are shaped to communicate uniform brands including their consumptions by students.

Whisman (2007) states that in today’s complex and highly competitive marketplace, universities and colleges have turned to branding as a solution in dealing with today’s global challenges. For example, because of the increased competition, South African universities have realized the importance of branding themselves. Also, few studies (Gatfield et al., 1999; Gray et al., 2003; Mazzarol, 1998) focused on marketing and branding in order to identify the factors that are important when marketing and promoting the universities or positioning the higher education institutions. These studies and examples highlight the growing importance of branding for the colleges and universities, and it is expected to become even more important and vital for their growth and survival.

Most of these previous studies have shown the growing significance of branding for universities, and it is expected to become vital for their survival and growth. Although it has become the latest focus in tertiary education to attract both national and international students, a little has been written about the brand strategic resources used to position university brands and the influence of university brand messages to the customers. Deducting from the above studies, it is evident that although branding has become the latest focus in tertiary education to attract international students, little has been written about African higher education institutions. Researchers have also been looking at certain aspects that reveal the branding processes on a small scale. Understanding the nature of these branding processes in institutions and their identities, it is imperative to study their discourses. This research therefore contributes to the field by doing a thorough examination of the kinds of discursive strategies and features of what is proposed as discourses of branding, from the selected universities. This includes looking at how these strategies and features construct attractive brands for the universities. Acknowledging that the universities are influenced by their local contexts, how this study also examines how such discourses attempt to balance the construction of local and ‘global’ brand identities of the universities.

2.5 The essence of brand positioning in academia

Brand positioning generally helps in developing the goodwill for a company rather than to sell a specific product as it aims to improve the organisation’s image or reputation and
relations with all stakeholders (cf. Mafoko and Wittenberg, 2014). It focuses on the name and prestige of an organisation (cf. van Riel, 1997). Just as there is massive competition among profit-making companies enhancing their brands, even non-profit organisations such as universities in this case, are also branding their identities very competitively (Fairclough 1993; Bulotaite, 2003; Mafoko, 2010; Mafoko and Banda, 2014).

According to Panwar (2007), competition between universities arises because HEIs around the world are set against each other to attract prospective local and foreign students, staff, business partners and investors. This is because choices between universities are made more accessible due to increased mobility and awareness that comes with globalisation. Therefore, instead of merely positioning themselves as national universities, universities need to competitively position themselves by “adapt[ing] a global perspective in their strategic planning” (Panwar, 1997:246) and in “position[ing] [themselves] as global” (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003:579). In the case of global brands, there is branding across borders with local differences. Thus, certain organisations or institutions brand themselves as, ‘global brands’, and this has a particular universal appeal in this globalised world. Consumers in this current age want to be associated with such brands, which connote global connection, recognition and standing. Therefore, due to globalisation, there has been an increase in the emphasis on branding and its importance.

Branding in itself is a form of business discourse that is increasingly needed in order to compete in this global economy. “Brand builders are thus the new primary producers in the [knowledge economy society]” (Klein, 2001:196). The importance of branding in the contemporary society is emphasised as brands are increasingly being established as an essential part of the way people understand things or would like to do a self-reflection. As such, in branding themselves as ‘global’ institutions, universities subscribe to their stakeholders such identities as well. It is increasingly the case that universities around the world are claiming this status of a ‘global’ university, as they are largely driven by the “worldwide market for students and the ceaseless search for research funding and prestige” (Deem et al., 2008:84). With increased competition among universities, both locally and globally, the quality of excellence has become a value to uphold and a marker of distinction of universities.
Brand positioning gives the university a platform in which it can compete with others of its own kind by differentiating itself. This is particularly important in the changing time as it positions the university forward (Bulotaite, 2003). Therefore, branding identity is, according to Aaker (1996), aspirational in the sense that it shapes the identity of the organisation and how it has to be perceived. The identity, in turn, provides direction, purpose and meaning of the university.

Despite the massive competition among universities in branding themselves, every institution’s identity has to be clear as it can also be used as the organisation’s benchmark against which its products and services, performances, and accomplishments are measured (Van Riel, 1997). As such, a brand identity cannot be just a mere slogan or a collection of phrases. Consequently, universities strive to develop distinct and recognisable identities or brands. However, the purpose for universities to venture into brand positioning is not to try and sell a product or service but to communicate an identity (Bulotaite, 2003), as identity will, in turn, give the university a platform on which it can compete with others.

A brand positioning process, thus, sets out what and who the brand is, and what it offers. Traditionally, brand positioning involves focusing on points of differentiation that set each brand apart from its competitors (Aaker, 1996), and such points of differentiation are what customers remember about a brand. Thus, an effective brand captures the distinctive mission, aspirations, and strengths of an institution and appeals to the motivations and interests of the marketplace. Therefore, considering that the South African universities draw from the same post-apartheid discourses and experiences (cf. Banda and Mafofo, 2014) it is important to find out how the three South African institutions create unique brand identities. In turn, considering the different status during apartheid (see Chapter One), it is of interest to explore how HBUs and HWUs have repositioned their brands to fit in with inclusiveness rather than segregation, and the social transformation demanded by the new dispensation.

For the reason that universities can differentiate themselves through serving the needs of different segments with different offerings, they must understand the different segments and perceive differences (Whisman, 2007). However, in order to develop a strong university brand, the brand administrators at universities need to continuously update their branding efforts. In this regard, this study will be an in-depth study of the three Western Cape Province universities’ current branding efforts and strategies. Similar to an accounting audit
or marketing audit, Keller (2008) states that a brand audit is a customer-focused exercise to assess the health of the brand, uncover its source of brand equity, and suggest ways to improve and leverage its equity.

Branding is also regarded as a phenomenon that allows individual academic organisations to provide “information and images that combine neutral information with information intended to create emotional ties between various stakeholders and a given institution” (Stensaker, 2005:6). As such, many studies have shown the importance of emotional satisfaction as more beneficial for universities as compared to the cognitive satisfaction (Clark, 2005). In addition, branding according to (Huisman and van der Wende, 2004) can be perceived as a promising strategy to the improvement of the organisational cooperation. This is due to the fact that institutions are exposed to stiff competition. Therefore, one institutional response may be to join other institutions in some cooperative effort (Huisman and van der Wende, 2004) as a way of creating new networks with others of the same kind. Branding can also be seen as a promising way to initiate internal change at a given institution (Belanger et al., 2002). Providing an internal support and interest for organisational strategies and mission may be a rational reason to engage in branding efforts in the academia (Belanger et al., 2002). This can be an ideal move in situations where institutions are experiencing a rising tension internally as a result of reallocation of resources among other factors (cf. Dill, 1997). According to Stensaker (2005:7), “branding may help higher education institutions to rediscover what they are and their basic purposes.” This is because of, as Clark (1998) suggests, a new age whereby stakeholders are entering higher education institutions with new demands and more demands directed at universities.

In contribution to higher education branding, Yavas and Shemwell (1996) posit that the brand image of a university plays a crucial role in customers’ attitudes towards that institution. Based on their study of university image, Paramewaran and Glowacka (1995) recommend that universities should develop and maintain a distinct image to create a competitive advantage in the present competitive global market. Such a distinct image is likely to impact a student’s willingness to apply to that institution (Ivy, 2001). Therefore, establishing these images in the mind of all the customers is quite important. Also, Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana (2007) state that despite the growing importance of this subject, empirical research that is specifically related to branding of higher education institutions is relatively scarce.
In reference to the impact of competition on British institutions, Kinnell and MacDougall (1997:53) state that, “maintaining the quality of the product is regarded as key to successful marketing in a sector where international competitiveness demands that British institutions retain their reputation for excellence.” According to Mok (2007:441-2), in "the past decade, university performance has drawn increasing attention from the public; hence, university ranking and international benchmarking are becoming more central in university governance”. In a bid to remain competitive in this kind of environment, Beerkens (2009:155) recommends that universities need to become more “innovative and entrepreneurial,” and have to incorporate the interests of a wide range of stakeholders. HEIs are thus propelled to function as business units in terms of attracting prospective students and staff but also in generating revenue for themselves through research (cf. Fairclough, 1993).

Popescu (2012) asserts that a brand is a guarantee of superior quality and a promise made to consumers to deliver a good or a service according to their expectations. On the other hand, Hankinson and Cowking (1993) emphasise the importance of a brand as a distinctive marker of personality and position in which the university is able to compete with others through the unique combination of functional features and symbolic values. Stensaker (2005) adds that “the institution image or brand is now considered as more important than before and it has become a strategic and managerial issue because of, as Belanger et al. (2002:17) put it, “the possible impact a positive image or brand is expected to have, concerning recruitment of students and academic staff, for attracting resources, and to create goodwill.” However, these brands are increasingly tested and contested, in the sense that various forms of national independent evaluation or media investigations, including the students’ perceptions, may to some extent hold institutions responsible for images that are not rooted in reality. Therefore, the results of being caught on the wrong side can be damaging (Stensaker, 2005), not only ethically or legally, but may also lead to poor student attraction (Levitz et al., 1999). Due to these prospective challenges, Stensaker recommends that it is strategically important for the universities to create images that match their organisational brand identities, hence the aim of this study to find how the three universities position their brands and how the students consume these brands.

Deducing from the above assertions, there is no doubt that the ultimate goal of all branding strategies is to build strong brand equity. This is because brand equity is a key indicator of the state of health of a brand (Keller, 1993; Kim and Kim, 2004). As a multi-dimensional
variable, brand equity refers to the value inherent in a well-known brand name (Keller, 1008; 1993; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). In essence, value is created in a consumer’s mind as a result of a brand’s superior quality, the social esteem the brand provides, consumer trust in the brand, and self-identification with the brand (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Keller, 1993; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007). Brand equity is the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on consumer responses to the product or service (Keller, 1993). A powerful brand enjoys a high level of consumer awareness and loyalty, and it forms the basis for building strong and profitable customer relationships (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993; 2008). One of the common themes that most of the results in higher education institutions branding is that this process is quite different from corporate branding. It is more about what the institution is and it is not limited to particular products within the marketplace. An educational brand is often equated to an institution’s academic reputation or an institution’s personality harmonious with its mission and values. Perhaps the most significant benefit of branding in higher education is the focus it brings to an institution.

Mintzberg (1983) posits that the tendency of emphasising branding by universities is just an indication of the ability they have to create convincing structures as a response to new demands in their environments while protecting their core values. However, these brands are increasingly tested and contested, in the sense that society, various forms of national independent evaluation or media investigations may to some extent hold institutions responsible for images that are not rooted in reality (Stensaker, 2005; Belanger et al., 2002; Levitz et al., 1999).

2.6 Brand perception, imagery and consumption

According to Keller (2008), the perception of a university develops over time, and is directly responsible for the continued support from all of the stakeholders connected to it. Maintaining a favourable brand image has a direct impact on student enrolment, faculty hires, recruiting athletes, and other activities. A quality brand image is necessary to attracting prospective students (Keller, 2008). Ultimately, appropriate and effective brand positioning and the fulfilment of brand promises could lead to favourable enrolment. Overall, satisfied stakeholders perpetuate the brand promise. Brand salience is another important tool with regard to ascertaining the impact or popularity of the brand, for example,
how often and easily the brand is evoked under various situations or circumstances (Keller, 2008).

According to Keller (2008), brand imagery depends on the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempts to meet customers’ psychological or social needs. Keller (2008) mentions four types of intangibles that can be linked to a brand namely, user profiles, purchase and usage situations, personality and values and history, heritage, and experiences. As the brand imagery supports the growth of an established brand with a very good reputation, brand judgments are customers’ personal opinions about and evaluations of the brand, which consumers form by putting together all the different brand performance and imagery associations. According to Keller (2008), there are many types of judgments with respect to the brand, but the following four types of quality, credibility, consideration and superiority are particularly important. Consequently, ideologies of such discoursal judgements and brand constructions guide people into the manner they use linguistic resources available at a particular time to index their brand identities. As such, these brand identities can be seen as discursive constructions. In this view, these brand identities are also created through imagination (Anderson, 1983). This imaginative process in identity production is often achieved through using new linguistic terms, visual art, and literary narratives. This leads to new practices of self-representation and new ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1990) within these universities.

This research relates the brand creation to Pavlenko and Blackledge’s (2004) idea of identity creation as having social, discursive and narrative options available in particular societies and institutions at a given time and place “to which people or institutions appeal to in an attempt to self-name, self-characterise, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives” (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 19).

Due to their different backgrounds and stances with regards to the usage and consumption of the marketisation and globalisation language, these institutional contexts that South African students may find themselves in, they can experience misunderstandings caused by the selective filter that is stereotyping. For instance, the branding behaviour of the university and how the students try to assert or refute these brand identities may be concentrated on their historical stereotypes which are almost impossible to erase. Thus, the construction of brand association and discernment of these synthetic metaphors of groups or institutions in the
democratic South Africa involve both the perceivers and the perceived. In some cases, stereotypes can be used by the group being labelled as a means of positively constructing their own brands (Francis and Archer, 2005). Therefore, the convolution of stereotypes should be recognized, and the question of their influence should be considered with reference to particular contexts (Francis and Archer, 2005,) especially the institutions in question. As such, within the student body in Higher Education institutions which has been infiltrated by the marketisation and globalisation language, the influence of these views within the South African learning environments should be neither underestimated nor ignored.

2.7 Brand options and globalisation

Globalisation and technologisation forces are now shaping and intensifying cultures scapes (Appadurai, 1990). Universities now face special challenges in their international marketing efforts, especially concerning the management of their brands. In reality, taking a university’s brand on an international level offers great opportunities both for its survival and expansion (cf. Melewar and Walker, 2003). Many researchers consider the opposition between the global and the local brand as a rigid dichotomy and propose that it is replaced with a more realistic brand internationalisation continuum (Hsieh and Lindridge, 2005). However, global brands seem to have much better bargaining power than local ones. On the other hand, important international brand equity also allows these brands to better conquer new markets and brand extensions (Quelch, 1999). Thus, a global marketing strategy can guarantee a strong, unique and consistent brand.

As a result, Johansson and Ronkainen (2005) posit that global brands are associated with greater esteem while Steenkamp et al. (2003) also argue that brand globalisation positively impacts on customers as the global brand is associated with good quality and brand prestige. In support of this, Alden et al. (1999) noted the tendency of customers to identity with a superior and more prestigious segment when consuming global brands. Nevertheless, in the globalisation era, cultural differences are still important and widely impact on consumers’ behaviour. Thus, since consumers reinterpret the brand’s marketing actions according to their cultural backgrounds, the brand perception often diverges from the brand expression as sent by the firm (Van Gelder, 2004). Local brands’ proximity to local culture allows them to
build better relations with their consumers and to better respond to their needs. Therefore, this proximity is one of their most important assets (Schuiling et al., 2004).

The answer to this dilemma facing the local and the global might be found in an intermediate representation of culture, considering both influences on consumers of local cultures and of the strong vectors of global convergence. People around the world seem to experience both trends, being subject to their original cultural programming and exposed—through the media, their travels and their consumption experience—to different cultures as well as to the global culture. Therefore, the divergent and convergent trends to which consumers are subjected today result in a culture that is neither global nor homogeneous across countries or a set of different local cultures, but rather a state of “fragmentation” (Firat, 1997) where these different cultures coexist and are interchangeable. This diversity characterises consumption choices in which the consumer of this post-modern era that Firat (1997) calls the ‘post-consumer’ uses the consumption act to construct one’s ideal self and always seeks diverse and non uniform experiences.

A brand that operates in different countries should thus be able to respond to this double demand of “glocalisation” (Firat, 1997). Thus, a glocal marketing strategy becomes a more realistic option than a local or a global one for most international brands (Horie, 2002). Brand regionalisation can thus be used as a selective globalisation of the post-global brand, which is placed between the local and the global environment (Kapferer, 2005). The local environment of the brand, also called ‘macro-environment’, considers similarities and differences in socio-cultural and economic levels between the different target markets (cf. Van Raaij, 1997). This environment contributes to the notion of differentiation, which is the act of designing a set of meaningful differences to distinguish the company’s offering from competitors’ offerings (Kotler, 1997). In a brand enhancement process, a global mindset, which combines an openness and awareness of the diversity across cultures and markets with a propensity and ability to synthesize across this diversity as compared to the parochial mindset, becomes important (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2002). It creates competitive advantages, a better understanding of the trade-off between local adaptation and global standardization, coordination across complementary activities, new product development and technology, and cross-border learning (Gupta and Govindarajan, 2002).
However, it is important to note that although universities across the world may appeal to similar values and use similar hybrid discourses to ‘brand’ themselves, there are also local differences in these brandings. Globalisation processes flow across different structural spaces differently, contributing to the inequalities present in these spaces. Therefore, branding strategies of universities located in different structural spaces across a globalising world must be compared and contrasted. Questions such as ‘how the universities in question construct for themselves ‘global’ brand identities, ‘what discursive strategies are employed by the universities to position themselves as ‘global’ universities’ and ‘how the universities attempt to balance national (local) and ‘global’ brand identities’ are raised in this study.

2.8 Summary of chapter

This chapter has given an extensive literature on notions related to globalisation, internationalisation and university branding. It has shown different articulations from several authors who have contributed to the field of linguistics a unique discourse of marketisation that is slowly infiltrating the academia. This literature is relevant in this research as it provides the basis on which the data is to be related and be understood.
CHAPTER THREE

SEMIOTIC LANDSCAPE AND TEXTS: TOWARDS A CRITICAL MULTISEMIOTIC DISCOURSE ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature that situates the study into the language and communication field and looks at related topics that help inform this study. The literature includes the notions of semiotic landscape and universities’ brandscapes material, notions of discursive practice, which comprises ideologies, interdiscursivity, intertextuality, and dialogicality of texts. As texts are now multimodal and a thorough analysis has to look at both images and language as meaning making resources, the analysis needs an interpretative theory that is critical. This way, the researcher is able to make sense of the branding data. Therefore, this chapter includes looking at the Critical multisemiotic discourse analysis (CMDA) as the interdisciplinary theoretical framework followed by the study to interpret the data. This theory includes two main frameworks namely multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) with its extensions and critical discourse analysis (CDA).

3.1 The notion of semiotic landscape (SL) and universities brandscape material

According to Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), people can create their identity through processes of geographical imaginings. As the locating of self in a space includes ownership of place and the interactions with such places with other occupants; in the same way, the national or regional identity is constructed by a simple gaze at the physical attributes of landscape that includes both the images and the linguistic representations of the country side or the particular space. Due to globalisation forces, branding places is rapidly becoming a norm and people are now busy in designing and redesigning spaces to suit the desirable identities they wish to portray to both insiders and outsiders of particular spaces. For instance, the South African landscape can easily be differentiated from that of a neighbouring country such as Zimbabwe or as that of Britain in the West by a simple glance of the semiotic resources placed around as brand markers. In this regard, the iconic signs of a place include the buildings, statues and towers (Lawson, 2001), and these have been incorporated to become part of the imagined ideal of the official national identity.
This emergence of symbolic and mental landscapes identity creation takes place through semioticising processes referred to by Sörlin (1999) as the ‘articulation of territory’, whereby the natural and man- engineered, architectural landscape are described, reproduced, and recreated in different kinds of texts and arts as well as in social practices such as advertising and tourism (cf. Cosgrove et al., 1995).

This notion of territorial articulation intersects with Lefebvre’s (1991) well-known dimensions of space, which he calls conceived space (which corresponds to the mental or represented images of space such as commercial advertising images), perceived space (which is related to material or physical space responsible for both the economic and social production), and lastly lived space (which is produced through either the experiential and interactional of both the conceived and perceived spaces. All these three are modes of spaces or what Jaworski and Thurlow (2010:8) call spatialisation where the semiotic representations are organised and used to create meanings of the spatial and social practices.

Although most research done in this field look at different kinds of linguistic landscapes of different spaces of countries, cities, communities and business organisations, this research treats university scapes as interesting spaces to explore this notion of territoriality. so as to see how the selected higher education institutions in the Western Cape province claim and mark these scapes in the branding process.

In contributing to SL the humanistic geographers have theorised the relationship between space and place. For instance, according to Tuan (1977: 6) “What begins as undifferentiated space, becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value.” As such a deep analysis of semiotic landscapes offers a way of systematically description of how an individual experiences place. By this token, Jaworski and Thurlow (2010:178) define semiotic landscape as “any invisible inscription made through deliberate human intervention and meaning making.

Semiotic landscape is not a fixed image or a picture set within a rigid frame, Rather it is a dynamic layout of surfaces and objects. Despite the fact that the text has increasingly transformed to include other semiotic resources that should be considered for analysis, objects and their surfaces remain programmatically neglected in semiotic theory and in many
visual studies. Consequently, in contributing to this argument, Chmielewska (2010:289) posits:

... an object merely through its images (representation we inevitably lift it from its context and abstract, its surface(s), consequently disregarding a possibility of meaning present in the very attachment of the sign to place a condition of attachment of its attributes and its position within the material surround. Familiar and persistent in our field of vision, clearly speaking to signification of the surface, context and language-image word picture, dyad and substantially unhinging the remarkably conservative grounding that underpins theoretical approaches to the visual. To consider meaning in situ, we need to radically situate our inquiry: allowing for our distinct positions, discourses surrounding the particular locale and their specific linguistic and symbolic contexts, the singularity and subjectivity of the place.

Viewing the SL this way, then makes it imperative to identify what Chmielewska terms ‘the critical where’, which is a situation whereby a semiotic object or sign whose material presence indexes and informs both the visual context and the physical location creates a discrete condition of how the semiosis can be viewed or read.

Although it can recreate the place by offering specific meaning, the topo-semiotic conditions of signs is not equivalent to indexicality; the former is centred on the sign object and the latter on the relationship within the sign system. Toposemiotic implies reciprocal engagement between a sign and its place as well as discrete attachments of the sign-objects. According to Johnstone (2004) semiotic codes found in space index particular localities, show different levels of territorial and societal stratification including identity claims, power relations and their contestations. All of these practices involve territorial claims, spatial segregation or encroachment and the categorization of social actors into in-group members and out-group members into Self and Other. Johnstone (2004) talks about the ideal of creating localness through local forms of speech in response to the globalising processes increasing contact between old and new ways of speaking.

The appropriated brand names become part of the imagery of international tourism, which depends on the construction of myths and fantasies for the consumption of fleeting masses of tourists from the consumption of copies of the iconic buildings and monuments in particular areas in the act of intextual play. The strategic emplacement of the semiotics makes them particular markers of space (cf. Culler, 1988; MacCannell, 1989; Rojek and Urry, 1997;
It is, thus, not only space as place which resemioticises these particular textual practices, but also their movement across space, their mobility. Spaces are therefore constructed and experienced as material ecological artefacts and intricate networks of social relations. They are the focus of imaginary, of beliefs, longings and desires. They are an intense focus and they are distinctive products of institutionalised social and economic power. Although the dialectical interplay across these different moments of the social process is intricate and confusing, it is also the way in which all these moments are caught up in the common flow of the social process that in the end determines the conflicting process of place construction, sustenance, and deconstruction (Harvey, 1996:316).

The frameworks in the landscape can thus be defined by the functions of discourse entered into by interlocutors and by the semiotic choices of expression available to the interlocutors (cf. Scollon and Wong, 2003). The questions of interest in this research focus, for example, on how the branding messages are articulated to the stakeholders, particularly the students (in this case). There shall also be focus on how the selected semiotic resources index the material world and their relevance to the brands being created.

As different cultures and spaces can offer different interpretations, expectations and discourse functions to the questions of what is going on with signage with whom and where (cf. Scollon and Wong, 2003), the researcher treats the brand officers at the three universities as the interlocutors who represent the universities bodies in portraying the desirable brands to students who are some of the consumers of the brand messages posted into these university capes. An exploration of how this is done and some of the questions posed above become important for understanding the branding processes of the universities.

3.2 A Critical multisemiotic discourse analysis approach

The study is inspired by social semiotics, which has an interest in understanding how people communicate and create meaning with a wide range of resources, modes and modalities in particular contexts. In an attempt to acknowledge that there are other types of semiotic resources in meaning process, the researcher uses a multidisciplinary theoretical framework namely a critical multi-semiotic analytical framework. This CMA framework entails both critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1993), multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) and (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006). The framework helps reveal how the university brand
teams use different semiotics to construct social reality and negotiate meanings in the university branding practices. This includes how the students consume the brands. The main tenets of this framework are described as follows:

3. 2.1 Critical discourse analysis

This approach is unique as it systematically explores opaque relationships of causality and determines the discursive practices, events and texts and the wider social cultural structures. The aim of such an exploration is to see how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggle over power (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2001), and how these affect the type of communication that sees meaning making as an interactive social encounter. The researcher is aware of the criticisms that have been levelled against CDA (Shi-Xu 2005; 2007; Blommaert, 2005). For instance, Shi-Xu (2007) has argued against the universalisation tendencies of CDA and discourse analysis studies in general. It is for this reason that this researcher uses the contextualised and localised version of discourse analysis. Therefore, it is in this light that the CDA discussed below should be seen. The researcher nevertheless takes up some of the criticisms of CDA below.

Every discourse is “historically processed and interpreted” (Wodak, 2001:3). That is, it is structured and located in time and space; and, dominant structures are legitimised by ideologies of the powerful groups. Thus, the operational assumption in CDA is that discourse takes place within society, and can only be understood in the “interplay of social situation, action, actor, and societal structures” (Meyer, 2001:21). In this regard, discourse is seen as structured by power and dominance. Power involves control by one group over another, while dominance refers to hegemonic existence where the minds of the dominated are influenced “in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will” (Van Dijk, 1993:255). Thus, in an attempt to understand how the students interpret the promotional discourse in higher education in South Africa, hegemony is one of the factors that can be used to explain why the universities are entangled in the branding process and operate as if they were businesses (cf. Fairclough, 1993), on one hand and in a bid to suit the democratic country (Mafoko and Banda, 2014) on the other. In this case, the students are also likely to reproduce or denounce these sentiments against their institutional brands.
Although there are many different versions of CDA drawing on a wide range of theoretical traditions in social theory (cf. Taylor, 2001) such as from Wodak’s (2001) socio-historical and Van Dijk’s (1993) socio-cognitive to discoursal aspects of institutional orders of discourse to (Fairclough, 1995; 2001), this research considers Fairclough’s (1993; 1995; 2001) work which draws on theories and techniques from a wide range of disciplines in order to bring together these different approaches and different levels of analysis. CDA, thus, according to Fairclough (1995:14) perceives language as “a socially constituted practice where text, whether written or spoken, [is] considered as [a] discourse that is produced by speakers and writers who are socially situated.” The notion of discourse, therefore, relates to language use in a manner that signifies a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective. Wodak (2001:2) also adds that when looking at discourse as social practice, “the focus of CDA transcends texts as objects of inquiry.” Thus, Wodak (2000) calls for a theorisation and description, not only of social process and structure of text production, but also of social process and structures within which individuals or groups, as social historical subjects, create meanings in their interaction with text. Therefore, whatever approach one adopts, CDA demands that it be multidisciplinary and that phenomena be analysed in social contexts (Wodak, 2001). Thus, although there has been literature published on other universities’ branding processes elsewhere, this research is recontextualised into the South African context.

As a corollary of the above, the CDA used in this study has many important elements of non-Western approaches. This includes merging the normative and critical approaches, which exist within textual analysis and the social analysis of text production process (Bloome and Talwalkar, 1997). Moreover, Fairclough’s CDA approach also provides “a theory method linkage that is absent in many sociological discussions of everyday life and language use in many linguistic discussions of social dynamic” (Bloome and Talwalkar, 1997:105). CDA is, thus, particularly appropriate for a critical analysis of the types of discursive interactions that are being reproduced by the universities and their students. This is because it allows a detailed investigation of the relationship of language to other social processes.

Thus, the critical analysis of these discourses owes much to Fairclough’s (1995) language of marketisation. In backing up CDA, Fairclough (2003: 3) contends that “text analysis is an essential part of discourse analysis but discourse is not merely the linguistic analysis of
texts.” He perceives discourse analysis as moving backward and forward between a focal point on specific texts and a focal point on what he calls the ‘order of discourse’, which is the relatively durable social structuring of language, which is itself one element of the relatively durable social structuring and networking of social practices of the students involved in these institutions. Thus, CDA is also concerned with the continuity and change at this more abstract, more structural level as well as with what happens in particular texts. The link between these two concerns is made through the way in which texts are analysed in CDA. “Text analysis is [therefore] seen as not only linguistic analysis; it also includes what I have called interdiscursive analysis. That is, seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together” (Fairclough, 2003: 3).

It normally “targets dominant groups or power elites that sustain social inequality and injustice” (Weiss and Wodak, 2002:38) through social relations. Therefore, it studies their potential for reproducing social structures and the consequences for social inequality. Dominant groups sometimes base social power relations on preferential access to and the control of scarce resources (Weiss and Wodak, 2002). These resources are not only material but also are also symbolic and knowledge-based. They include access to public discourse which Weiss and Wodak (2002:87) argue is “among the major symbolic power resources” in the contemporary society. Therefore, CDA puts the voice of the powerful into question in order to divulge hidden needs, interests, and dominant social relations that serve self-interests, maintaining social inequality and injustice. In some cases, it sensitises the marginalised groups and awakens them to the reality that they can have a voice that is legitimate and that deserves to be heard. This is likely to be the case with the students [and their perceptions] vis-à-vis the universities and their branding discourses. This is possible through uncovering ideological and exercise of power through a systematic exploration of the relationships between the discursive practices, texts, social, socio-cultural structures, institution ideologies, and associated processes.

CDA is also inherently beneficial in theorising transformations by creating an awareness of “what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make or remake their lives” (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999:4). Fairclough (2003) argues that these forces (dominant groups or institutions), which operate as embodiments of power, play an imperative role in the process of social change. They can play the role of a contributor or inhibitor because of their power and knowledge to position
social objects, subjects, such as, students in this particular case, and practices by defining what should and ought to be the case. In so doing, they legitimise or delegitimise objects, subjects and practices usually by situating them as common sense assumptions (Fairclough, 2003). In lending credence to the above assertions, Hall (2003:17) contends that:

Through forms of language games, these forces or groups determine, metaphorically speaking, the rules and goals of the games as well as boundaries. Through the process of legitimisation, foregrounded, backgrounded, marginalisation, demonised, mystified-demystified, normalised or naturalised dominant groups are able to stabilise particular forms of power and domination or reconcile and accommodate the masses of people to their subordinate place.

The paragraphs below provide more details on some of the relevant CDA tools adopted in this study.

3.2.1.1 Notions of discursive practices

Discursive practice involves processes of text production, distribution and consumption and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors. “Texts are also consumed differently in different contexts” (Fairclough, 2007:79) because of the interpretative frame that is applied to them in decoding them. This consumption may be collective or individual. In this consumption, texts can evoke different readers’ activities such as war, gaining or losing jobs. For this research, it is important to find the response to the branding messages that the universities use to attract stakeholders. For instance, in this study, texts are produced and reproduced and transformed in specific ways in specific institutional contexts and are consumed differently as well by multiple audiences. As such, consumption may be individual or collective (cf. Fairclough, 2007) as processes of production and interpretation are socially constrained in a double sense.

Firstly, texts are constrained by the available members’ resources, which may include internalized social structures, norms, conventions including those of orders of discourse and the conventions for the production distribution and consumption of texts, which have been constituted through past social practices and struggles (cf. Fairclough, 2007). Secondly, they are constrained by the specific nature of the social practice of which the parts which determine the types of resources drawn upon, and how they are creatively or in oppositional
ways drawn upon. This makes connections between the natures of discourse processes in particular instances and the nature of the social practices they are part of. Fairclough (1992) cautions that in such practices, different ideologies are highlighted. The following sections therefore explain the concepts that are used to explain the nature of texts as discursive practices.

3.2.1.2 Ideologies

According to Fairclough (1992:87) ideologies are significations or constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination. It is important to locate the ideology within a discursive event highlighting ideology as a process, transformation and fluidity. This can be located both in structures which constitute the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events and in events themselves.

Similarly, Thompson (1984;1990) adds that particular uses of language and other symbolic forms are ideological. The ideologies that are embedded in discursive practices are most effective when they become naturalised and achieve the status of common sense. They can reshape of discursive practices and the ideologies built into them in the context of the restructuring or transformation of relations of domination (cf. Fairclough, 2007). Fairclough (2007) asserts that where contrasting discursive practices are in use in a particular domain or institution, it is possible that part of contrast is ideological. In relation to the South African universities, it is important to look at how these universities’ branding discursive practices are constructed to particularise each university and divulge the kind of ideologies these practices carry. Given their historical background, as mentioned in Chapter One above, locally, these universities are influenced by their past, the new government, new stakeholders and the democratic environment. It is this democratic environment that whets interest to see how the universities are responding or influenced by the forces of globalisation, internationalisation and marketisation in their branding ventures.

Therefore, it is important to locate ideology in the branding of discursive events and to highlight ideology as a process, transformation, and fluidity with simultaneous emphasis on
order of discourse as Fairclough (2007) suggests. This is because, according to Fairclough, (2007) ideology is located both in the structure, such as, orders of discourse which constitutes the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events and in events themselves as they reproduce and transform their conditioning structures. The South African universities under study are good examples of influential institutions that are moulded by both internal and external forces. Looking at the background as highlighted in Chapter One, it is evident that during apartheid the universities had to conform to the ruling regime of that time. The same can be said of their situation in the new dispensation, whereby they are mandated to be the vehicles of a democratic change, both at the local and global scales. Their branding articulations and formations make ideal data for a discourse analysis to highlight a possible ideological discursive practice particular the South African context. In textual analysis, words and other semiotic denotations and presuppositions such as metaphors and coherence are important to reveal ideologies because most of the discursive practices are ideologically invested as they incorporate significations that may contribute to sustaining or restructuring power relations (Fairclough, 2007:91).

This brings in Gramsci’s (1971) term of hegemony, which is about constructing alliances and integrating rather than simply domination or subordination, which takes economic, political and ideological forms. Hegemonic power, thus, takes place on a broad front, which includes the institutions of civil society with possible unevenness between different levels and domains. Ideology is understood in this way as conflicting, overlapping or intersecting currents or formations (Hall, 1988:55-6). In this case, ideological complexes come to be structured and restructured, articulated and rearticulated. In this way, discourses can be seen as tactical elements or blocks operating in field of force relations whereby there is the existence of different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy. Therefore, this tendency to change within the orders of discourse can bring light to the debates around social change in the branding ventures of the selected universities. For instance, in this research, processes of branding in the university arena can be looked at through the lenses of orders of discourse colonisation as different types of discourses are likely to be drawn upon to bring a relatively new discursive practice of marketisation. As such, the following sections highlight the notions of interdiscursivity and intertextuality and the dialogicality nature of texts.
3.2.1.3 Interdiscursivity, intertextuality and dialogicality in texts

The notion of ‘interdiscursivity,’ has become very popular in modern language usage and it exists in many different forms and the ways of understanding also vary a lot amongst researchers. A number of writers have drawn attention to the increasing importance of language as social semiotics in everyday practices in the late modernity (Gee, 1990; Fairclough, 2003; Bhatia, 2004). Hybrid speech forms and texts and the increasing practice of blending modes and genres in the modern era have given a new meaning to what it means to be literate. Gee (1990) perceives interdiscursivity as a matter of how a discourse type is constituted through a combination of elements of orders of discourse or the presence or trace of one or more discourses within another.

Thus, interdiscursive language rearticulates the already existing discourses. It occurs when participants appropriate and reconstruct discourses associated with other participants. This process involves a generative reconstruction of a discourse rather than a recapitulation or imitation of it. Ingenuity in the reconstituted social identities lies in semiotically remediating texts through recontextualisation and blending of different discourses and styles in particular ways. In this idiom, interdiscursivity “refers to more innovative attempts to create hybrid or relatively novel constructs by appropriating or exploiting established conventions or resources associated with other genres and practices” (Bhatia, 2004:392). It thus, accounts for a variety of discursive processes and professional practices that often result in mixing, embedding, and bending of generic norms in professional contexts. Interdiscursivity, as an element of critical discourse analysis, according to Bewell and Stokoe, (2006:114) “traces the effect of other texts and… registers in texts and interactions and describes the resultant hybridisation of discourse.”

Therefore, an interdiscursive analysis allows us to assess how prior texts and linguistic styles initiate causal effects of agency in the concrete event and the causal effects of practices and structures, in the (re) formulation of the institutional brand identities. The idea is to detect shifts in the relationship between orders of discourse and networks of social practices as these are re-registered in the interdiscursivity of texts. Similarly, Johnstone (2008:166) perceives interdiscursivity as “the ways in which discourses draw on previous discourses.” That is, text producers reuse and refer to the already existing text-types and the discursive
practices in which they are embedded. There is, thus, a relationship between interdiscursivity and intertextuality.

Kristeva (1986) used the term ‘intertextuality’ to describe how texts and ways of talking refer to and build on other texts and discourses. She describes intertextuality as “the insertion of history or society into a text and of the text into history” (Kristeva, 1986:39). Thus, texts are conceived as mixtures of pre-existing genres and texts, which are informed by different discourses. They are also partly a matter of the assumptions people make when they speak or write. Therefore, a particular text may draw upon a plurality of genres and discourses or narratives to generate new meaning quite unlike that contained in the original texts. This signifies hybridity in texts, which is “pointing to the absence of fixed boundaries between styles and genre of language, [through] people’s fusing of multiple styles and registers when they communicate” (Kristeva, 1986:203).

According to Wu (2011) intertextuality refers to the phenomenon whereby other texts are overtly drawn upon within a text, which is typically expressed through explicit surface textual features such as quotations and citations. To some extent, all texts can be said to be constituted of elements of other texts and to be using such intertextual resources to varying degrees and for various purposes. As a concept, intertextuality sees texts “historically as transforming the past- existing conventions and prior texts into the present” (Fairclough, 2007:85). It is this historicity of an intertextual view of texts and the way it accommodates creative practice that make it so suitable for this study’s concerns with discursive changes in the wider branding processes of the universities. According to Fairclough (2007:85) intertextuality is:

… the property texts have of being full snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and so forth. It is helpful in exploring the networks the texts move along undergoing transformations as they shift from one text type to another.

In regards to the consumption, an intertextual perspective is helpful in stressing that it is not just the texts that shape interpretation but also the prior texts and those texts the interpreters bring to the fore. This is useful for this research, especially when looking at the students’ comments on some of their institutional brands and the branding materials that are used in the brand creations.
Interdiscursivity, on the other hand, operates on a different dimension in that it refers to how a text is constituted by a combination of other language conventions such as genres, discourses, and styles. Thus, the difference between these two concepts is that intertextuality refers to actual surface forms in a text borrowed from other texts, whereas interdiscursivity involves the whole language system referred to in a text. In this sense, interdiscursivity is more complicated because it is concerned with the implicit relations between discursive formations rather than the explicit relations between texts (cf. Fairclough, 2007).

In some cases, scholars such as Xin (2000:191) have instead used the term generic intertextuality to cover what interdiscursivity actually refers to. Nonetheless, according to Fairclough, (2007) it is important to note that, these two notions do not always have the same connotation as interdiscursivity does not always refer to the mixing of different genres.

In some cases, it is the articulation of discourses or of styles that makes sense in the formation of interdiscursive relations. Although genre is an overarching term among other genres, discourses and styles, the relationship between them is dialectical. It needs to be clarified that generic intertextuality cannot be equated with interdiscursivity. Interdiscursivity is grounded on Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986) notion of heteroglossia, which holds a view that any text is a combination of one’s own voice and the voices of others.

Therefore, heteroglossia is a phenomenon that produces social heterogeneity. Fairclough (1991) recontextualised this phenomenon as interdiscursivity, with the ideological flavour highlighted at the same time. For Fairclough, interdiscursivity is more ideological than heteroglossia in the sense that the tracking of ideology is a more specific task for interdiscursivity than in Bakhtin’s (1981; 1986) works. For Bakhtin, every speech act betrays an ideology or ideologies coming from individual speakers in the context of a given dialogue. However, the Bakhtinian notion dialogicality is closely related to interdiscursivity and sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably in the literature of discourse analysis. According to Bakhtin (1981; 1986), all texts are dialogic and must be understood against the background of other texts on similar or related topics. Texts and utterances are not the writer or speakers’ own products; they usually contain other voices; explicit or implicit elements from other sources, including genres, discourses and styles from other language conventions, through which interdiscursivity can be formed (Fairclough, 1992).
Nevertheless, in application, these two notions should preferably be differentiated because dialogicality is a property of the subject matter of human beings and cultural sciences, while interdiscursivity is a property of text that takes dialogicality systematically into consideration. A tendency to dialogicality, taken as the ability to indulge in dialogue, is an innate human property since man is a semiotic animal. Therefore, dialogicality is a much more general property or principle of language use, discourse and cognition, whereas interdiscursivity is a relatively specific linguistic phenomenon that bears social significance. Moreover, these two notions are used in different situations. Dialogicality is, perhaps, most familiar in the analysis of the literature, arts and scholarly texts, in which we can talk about not only dialogical relations within a given text or piece of art or music, but also dialogue between generations of texts and authors. By contrast, interdiscursivity is generally applied to both literary and non-literary texts, and it focuses on the dialogical relations between different language conventions related to certain social tendencies or ideological significances (cf. Agha, 2007). Thus, interdiscursivity relates to intertextuality in that blended prior texts hint at prior meanings, which are semiotically transformed in social contexts to account for new meanings.

Considering that the apartheid past set ethno-linguistic, socio-economic and racial boundaries between black and white people and universities, this study situates notions of interdiscursivity, intertextuality and dialogicality as some of the important concepts in the study of institutional brand construction in post-apartheid South Africa. The research interprets these terms as interrelated terms that can be used to make sense of the data collected. The terms are applicable in particular relevant cases as the data differ in genres, styles, contexts, formats among others.

3.2.1.4 Summary on CDA

Based on these points, CDA tools allow the researcher to analyse the responses of the students to their institutional branding messages so as to reveal how they are consuming the brands positioned by their institutions and how they are creating meaning in these branded institutions. As Fairclough (2001:119) stresses, his approach to CDA is interdisciplinary and “it opens the dialogue between disciplines concerned with linguistic and semiotic analysis and disciplines concerned with theorising and researching social processes and social
change.” It is, therefore, unified with MDA to create stronger analytical tools for the kind of data gathered in this study. The following paragraphs elaborate on MDA and its tenets.

### 3.3. Multimodal discourse analysis

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) stemmed out of systemic functional linguistics (SFL).

SFL is a very important and common linguistic theory found in most of the work based on text analysis. It is associated with analytical methods, particularly those of Halliday (1978; 1994), and is mainly concerned with the relationship between language and other elements which include aspects of social life. Its approach to linguistic analysis of texts is always oriented to the social character of texts. SFL valuable sources include (Halliday, 1994; Halliday and Hassan, 1976; 1989; Martin, 1992; Van Leeuwen, 1993; 1995; 1996). SFL concentrates more on analysing the formal features of a text in relation to language function in a social context (Halliday, 1985; Halliday and Hassan, 1989). The theory recognises that “any language use serves simultaneously to construct some aspect of experience, to negotiate relationships and to organise the language successfully so that it realises a satisfactory message” (Christie, 2005:11). Halliday and others in the SFL approach have named the above uses, metafunctions. That is, “functions that extend across any pattern of language use” (Christie, 2005:11-12) and these functions have been categorised as: the ideational metafunctions, interpersonal metafunctions and textual metafunctions.

While SFL also accounts for the syntactic structure of language, it places the function of language as central in its analysis. It is this overemphasis on language that made SFL theory inadequate to look at the different kinds of texts that are common in this 21st century. Given the multimodal nature of texts in this new era, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) enhanced the SFL by proposing MDA. Therefore, Departing from Halliday’s work on SFL, Kress and Van Leeuwen, (1996; 2006) argue that semiotics can be used to perceive communication not only as a unimodal where language is treated as the only mode of communication but a multimodal system that encompasses other modes of making meaning such as gesture, speech, image, writing to mention a few (cf. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006). In other words, they believe that like all other semiotic modes, the visual also serves several communicative requirements. By this token, they expanded Halliday's systemic functional grammar to also account for the meanings of visual images. These two scholars set out their extensive semiotic theory of the visual. Thus, when a text is analysed, all modes of meaning,
including language, are important aspects of meaning making within the theory of semiotics. The nature of communication is changing all the time due to technology forces and globalisation. This also continues to bring into the field of linguistics different semiotic resources such as images, language, objects, and architecture, just to name a few.

3.3.1 Multimodality

The concept of multimodality refers to the diversity of semiotic resources of various kinds that co-occur and interplay in the work of textual meaning making (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). It characterises the present postmodern era where people use more than language as a communication mode. Therefore:

... In the era of multimodality, semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation and communication. Indeed, language whether as speech or as writing, may now often be seen as ancillary to other semiotic modes to the visual for instance language may now be ‘extra visual.’ The very facts of the new communicational landscape have made that inescapably the issue. (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001: 46)

What is now important in multimodality is the unique interaction between different modalities in making meaning. Reinforcing the idea that communication is not confined to language or that the primary of language as a communication tool is being challenged by other modes Kress (2001: 67) observes that:

Verbal language is being displaced as a communicational mode by image, in many sites of public communication: whether in school textbooks, in newspapers, in reports produced in institutions of all kinds, in the electronic media, and in the information and communication technologies in general. Image has ceased to be there as mere illustration; that is, as an embellishment of the central, the written text. Image is now fully communicational in very many forms (Kress, 2001: 67)

Lemke (2002:302) also describes this multimodal interaction as making ‘multiplicative meanings’. That is, in texts where the two are combined, language is not simply added to image, nor is image added to language, but the two interact to produce meaning in a way not
possible in a single modality. When looking at the semiotic landscapes, the artifacts and their emplacement can be read as meaningful in a particular setting.

Texts are ever more multimodal, and the tools for composing such texts, are increasingly available on digital technology. Due to this dynamic nature of the multisemiotic text, scholars of social semiotics admit that analytical work should be combined with other analytical tools as one multimodal analysis is limited to look at particular aspects of the text (Jewitt, 2006; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Kress et al., 2005). In order to supplement, Prior and Hengst (2010) call for a close analysis of discourse practices on a sociogenetic level as well as of situated discourses in the microgeneses, in order to understand how activity is remediated. Thus, semiotic remediation pays attention to the diverse ways that semiotic performances are represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity. Such an approach is related to Iedema’s concept of resemiotisation, which emphasizes (re)materializations of talk, text, and drawing into a single historical trajectory (Iedema, 2003).

It is, therefore, of interest in this research to understand how the universities are communicating and making meaning with a wide range of semiotic resources or modes (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001; Van Leeuwen, 2005) in the branding process.

In this way, “new social semiotic frameworks are presented for the analysis of a range of discourse genres in print media, dynamic and static electronic media” (O’Halloran, 2006). Following Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), Iedema (2003), and O’Halloran, (2004) just to name a few, the theoretical framework in this case is helpful in analysing how the various modes interact with each other to make meaning in the texts. Therefore, this entails the concept of multimodality, which according to Kress and Van Leeuwen, (1996) refers to the diversity of semiotic resources of various kinds that co-occur, interplay and are entangled in the work of textual meaning-making. The interest in multimodal texts is motivated by the argument that visual communication has resources for constituting and maintaining the interaction between the producer and viewer of the image (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2007). Thus, multimodality attempts to theorise multiple forms of communication, and identify how multiple modes depend on each other to create whole meanings. However, visual images, like all representations, “are never innocent or neutral reflections of reality, they offer not only a mirror of the world but also an interpretation of it” (Stephens, 1997:164). It is for this reason that the study will also focus on visual codes in order to interpret written and visual
information which comes with the branding discourses of the institutions in question. It will be important and interesting to find out how multimodal designs are used to augment messages in the branding strategies and how the students as customers’ consume these discourses.

One key feature of multimodal texts is the use of ‘hybridity’, which is a kind of assimilation of genres that blur boundaries of genres (Fairclough, 2003). This new reality calls for an inclusive interpretation of the texts as totalities of communicative events in social contexts rather than interpreting on mode in isolation. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), and Iedema (2003) support the idea of inclusive interpretation of texts to account for the new realities. Following this idea, the researcher will therefore explore the ways in which the universities have chosen specific visuals and texts to co-articulate in their branding. Thus, in this case, a systematic analysis of visual grammar will help to demystify a view of images as neutral vehicle replicas of reality. It will also help to comprehend visual modes from the perspective of social critique of communicative potentials. With this mapping out of meaning potentials offered by visual semiotic codes such as advertising images of the brand positioning in this case, the concept of ‘brand’ resembles the concept of ‘discourse’ (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001). In this way, the contemporary commercial concept of a ‘brand’ is realised through specific discursive practices, and can therefore be investigated by means of multimodal discourse analysis.

3.3.2 Kress and Van Leeuwen visual grammar tools

These two scholars show how SFL can be applied in analysing visual semiotics using Halliday’s (1989; 2004) tri-functional conceptualisation of meaning. They have extended the notion of SFL’s three metafunctions to images using new terminology namely: ‘representational’ instead of ‘ideational’; ‘interactive’ instead of ‘inter-personal’; and ‘compositional’ instead of ‘textual’ (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). Thus, in correspondence to Halliday’s ideational metafunctions, visual representational meaning expresses the relationship between the participants portrayed in a visual structuring (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001). This metafunction in the visual analysis provides a syntactic ‘space-based’ mode of analysis centred on the placement of objects within the semiotic space. In this space, the relationship between the visual participants in a given image is realised by elements defined
as vectors (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Under interpersonal or interactive metatfunctions, aspects such as contact, distance, perspective, or modality play a major role in creating a particular relation between viewers and the image within the pictorial frame (Almeida, 2009:490). Textual or compositional meanings, as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996:181) assert, integrate representational and interactive elements to compose a “meaningful whole.” This is usually done through three main resources of compositional structures namely, information value, framing, and salience. These metafunctions are as elaborated below.

3.3.2.1 Representational meanings

Visual representational meaning expresses the relationship between the participants portrayed in a visual structuring. The visual analysis provides a syntactic, ‘space-based’ mode of analysis centred on the placement of objects within the semiotic space. The relationship between the visual participants in a given image is realised by elements defined as vectors, which correspond to the category of action verbs in language (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; 2006). This function also has two types of participants, namely, interactive participants and represented participants. As such, vectorial relations which connect participants in pictorial structuring may be depicted as either narrative or conceptual processes (Almeida, 2009). Narrative processes depict participants in an action movement, in terms of dynamic “doings and happenings” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:141). The conceptual processes represent participants in a more static way, “in terms of their generalised and more or less stable and timeless essence” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996: 81). These processes are visually characterised by the absence of vectors as they commonly “define, analyse or classify people, places, and things” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:142).

The conceptual processes also have three main structure types namely, classificational, symbolic, and analytical. The classificational visual structures arrange people, places or things together in a particular visual space in order to show that they belong to the same class, order or category. In this structure, images and participants are represented in a sort of “tree structure” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:81) in which one or more super-ordinate (top-level) participants are related to a number of other subordinate, (lower-level participants) in the hierarchy of the categorisation. Each time the super-ordinate participant
is suppressed and the subordinate one is represented, the classification is covert (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). However, if the classified display includes the super-ordinate participant in an explicit manner, the classification is referred to as ‘overt.’

On the other hand, symbolic structures help to establish the participant’s identity in a visual representation by means of attributes made prominent through elements such as size, options of colours, positioning, and use of lighting, among others. This constitutes what Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) regard as a ‘carrier-attribute’ type of relation. There are two distinct types of Symbolic structures. The first one is called Symbolic Attribute, where the participant’s attribute in an image is made salient through elements such as “being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being well lit, represented in fine detail, sharp focus, or through conspicuous colour or tone.” Symbolic Suggestive is the second structure, whereby “the symbolic meaning derives from within the Carrier” (Unsworth, 2001:92) instead of being constructed on the basis of a ‘carrier–attribute’ relationship.

### 3.3.2.2 Interactive meanings

Aspects such as contact, distance, perspective and colour play a major role in creating a particular relation between viewers and the image. For example, whenever a participant in a visual semiotic structure is presented looking directly at the viewer’s eyes they form an imaginary pseudo relationship with the viewer. In this case, explicit contact is established through direct address with the viewer, who is invited to engage interpersonally with the presented participant who may, in turn, “demand deference, by unblinkingly looking down on the viewers, or pity, by pleadingly looking up at them” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:145). Alternatively, if the participant is depicted as not looking at the viewer’s eyes and is offered as the subject of the viewer’s look and object of his or her scrutiny, this image is described as an offer for it impersonally “offers the participant to the invisible onlooker’s contemplation and/or inspection” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:124).

In the same way, the size of distance of a shot also alludes to different relationships between presented participants and viewers. Depending on the distance between them, a different degree of intimacy is established, thus, “suggesting a more intimate personal relationship or a more impersonal one” (Almeida, 2009:490). Thus, when participants are pictured from a
close-up, every detail of their appearance is captured, including their facial expression, which helps to reveal traces of their personality and makes the viewer feel more intimately acquainted with them. Conversely, the long shot makes the viewer feel more detached from the participants by seeing them as “types rather than individuals” (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:146). The intermediate degree between the above two is the medium shot whereby participants are cut off somewhere between the waist and the knees indicating that the relationship between the depicted participant(s) and viewer(s) is of a social kind.

Additionally, the concept of perspective or point of view signifies the audience’s ‘subjective attitudes towards the represented participant(s), which is instantiated by means of frontal, oblique and vertical angles. The use of a frontal angle, for example, is associated with an attitude of involvement. This is whereby the viewer is invited to become part of the world depicted in the image. On the other hand, a sense of detachment is conveyed by the use of an oblique angle, whereby the participant is presented in profile, thus, implying that what the viewer sees is not part of his or her world (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Moreover, the vertical angle and its variants such as high, low or eye-level denote power at different levels and in different relationships (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). That is, whenever a represented participant is pictured from a high angle, they are seen from the powerful perspective of the viewer, unlike when the represented participant is shown from a low angle, which gives them power over the viewer. Finally, when the image is at eye-level, it encodes equality between the viewer and participant (Almeida, 2009: 492).

Lastly, the use of particular colours in a visual image may also represent particular moods or feelings. The symbolic meanings that we attach to particular colours may change according to context. For example, in one visual image, red may suggest passion. It may suggest danger in another, or both, as in picture one. Colour can also be described in terms of tone and saturation. Tone is the degree of lightness or darkness of a coloured area; hence a particular colour can have a light or dark tone. Saturation is the degree of purity in a colour, which can be for example, highly saturated.
3.3.2.3 Compositional meanings

Compositional meanings, as Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996:181) assert, integrate representational and interactive elements to compose a “meaningful whole.” This is usually done through the three main resources of compositional structures, namely, information value, framing, and salience. The information value of an image is mostly given through the placement of the elements of a composition. Depending on whether an element is placed within the three dichotomies of pictorial ‘zones’ (left/right; top/bottom; centre/margin), it provides the picture with a specific idea (Almeida, 2009: 492). Therefore, for an element to be regarded as Given (left), it has to be presented as something whose potential meaning is both commonsensical and self-evident to the viewer, something they already know, as “a familiar and agreed upon point of departure for the message” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:187).

The information value of top and bottom placements also carries distinct features in that the upper section of a visual composition is believed to contain what is presented as Ideal (top), whereas the lower section carries what is Real. In this respect, an “Ideal element symbolises the idealised or generalised essence of information” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:193), being shown as the most prominent part of the visual composition. In contrast, a Real element tends to be presented to the viewer in a more direct way, including more practically oriented information of ‘what a product is’: the details of how to obtain it, where to order it and or how to request further information about it. The centre is regarded as the nucleus of the information whilst the margins may provide supporting information. We need to remember however, that these are abstract tools and it does not necessarily mean that the centre will always have concrete information.

In terms of framing, connection is created when the boundaries which mark off the distinct units of texts are absent, so that “elements are connected in continuous flow” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:115). In visual terms, connection can be achieved through similar colours, forms, connective vectors and the overlapping of images. That is, framing is not only achieved through framing lines. Elements such as inverted commas and same colours can also serve as connection devices, as shown in the poster above. Disconnection, on the other hand, can be created by the presence of framing, “through contrasts of colours and forms and white space between the elements which visually signify individuality and differentiation”
Whenever the elements within the layout of an image are disconnected or marked off from each other, they are strongly framed and therefore, they are presented to the viewer as a separate piece of information. If, however, these elements are presented to the viewer in a connected manner, they are described as weakly framed.

The last compositional component is *salience*, which stands for the way some elements in a visual composition are arranged in order to look more eye-catching than others. Aspects such as the placing of elements in the foreground or background of a picture, their size, their colour contrasts and sharpness can reinforce or decrease their level of prominence by creating a “hierarchy of importance among the elements, selecting some as more important, and thus, more worthy of attention than others” (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:212).

In addition to the visual tools offered by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) below are other analytical tools that this research utilises to map out the multisemiotic discourse analysis.

### 3.3.3 Resemiotisation

Following this mapping on multimodality, this study uses the concept of resemiotisation, which is “about how meaning making shifts from context to context, from practice to practice...” (Iedema, 2003:48). This notion originated from Jacobson’s (1971) notion of intersemioticity whereby semiotic remediation privileges the multiple and complex flows through which the meanings are mediated (Eco, 1976:55). It thus, serves to highlight how practices capitalise on meaning making across semiotic modes and towards increasingly non-embodied phenomena. This study is interested in the manner in which the selected images and other semiotics are purposed and repurposed (Iedema, 2003) as they circulate across different modalities in the universities’ brand positioning processes. The relevance of this concept is thus, on the mobility of different semiotics and how they get circulated across different modalities assuming different forms. It is also on the intertextuality of semiotic forms in different media that give rise to consensus on social meanings. Fundamentally, resemiotisation produces effects similar to those of intertextuality and interdiscursivity (*cf.* Fairclough, 2003) in that messages are circulated across a variety of media, a process that reinforces particular orders of indexicality.
Resemiotisation analysis is also helpful in capturing how practices manifest intersemiotic shifts in the branding processes of these universities. It addresses the principle and the possibilities of social change and significantly involves the reconstitution of such resolutions at new levels of semiotic organisation whose materiality of content downplay difference (Iedema, 2001). Such shifts remove the interaction from here-and-now particulars into a domain where knowledge of such specifics is either assumed or purposefully backgrounded and is rendered as relatively non-negotiable (Iedema, 2001). These shifts can also remove the explicit meaning of the language medium by changing it into the iconic medium of visual design (Sebeok, 1994) and from there into the indexical domain of the built environment (Iedema, 2001). In addition, resemiotisation focuses on how some “meaning makings anchor a general accessibility and negotiability,” while others require and embody considerable investments of resources (Iedema, 2003:48-9). The interest of resemiotisation is therefore centred on how “materiality” serves to realise the social, cultural and historical structures, investments and circumstances (Iedema, 2003:50) of the universities in question.

In using the concept of resemiotisation as an analytical tool, one thus, has to consider tracing how semiotics are translated from one into the other as social processes unfold. One also has to ask why these semiotics and not others are mobilized to do certain things at certain times (Iedema, 2003). As such, this study also adopts this analytical tool, as it is important to see the kind of semiotics used by the universities, including how they have chosen certain images and linguistic forms among other semiotics, and lost out others in their branding process. In this way, resemiotisation contributes to displacing analytical attention “from discourse as structured meaning towards practice as material affordance” (Iedema, 2003:50).

The concept of resemiotisation is related to Bernstein’s (1990) concepts of recontextualisation. The paragraphs below give a brief overview of this term and how it is useful for this study.

3.3.4. Recontextualisation

Recontextualisation involves shifts in meaning and materiality away from their previous instantiations (Bernstein, 1990:60). This process primarily aims “to maintain the processes of production and thus, involves shifts towards technological or exo-somatic materialities:
from talk to print or from design to built construction” (Iedema and Wodak, 1999:13) especially in the organisations. In turn, these technologies ensure that this process of meaning from one mode to another achieves both what Bernstein (1990:60) calls “depersonalisation and power.” In other words, this technologisation process becomes the means for the production of reified and naturalised meaning and materialised power (Foucault, 1977; Schatzki and Natter, 1996; Iedema, 1997). In addition to this, Iedema and Wodak, (1999:13) argue that technologisation processes alter discursive practices, hence, the “recontextualised meaning [is moved] away from interpersonal and ideational specifics and these can thereby be taken-for-granted.” As a result, what used to rely on extensive specification now becomes the newly constructed background assumption redefining the community constituted by that practice.

It is thus; in this light that organisational interaction protects what Latour, and (1988:261) terms a “progressive and formative value” and becomes productive of alternative realities (Law, 1994; Law and Mol, 1995). Therefore, the concern with the concept of re-contextualisation in this study enables this organisational analysis to take into consideration the linguistic and other semiotic productions as well as describing the multimodal logic underpinning structuring in the academic institutions under study. In other words, the researcher attempts to describe the re-contextualisation processes through which meanings and materialities are constructed as containing and achieving a broader social relevance and material presences and absences (Bernstein, 1990). This also includes considering the decontextualising (Bernstein, 1990) processes through which relevancies and presences or absences (meaning-makings) are politicised and contested in the identification process of the universities under study in question.

3.3.5 Semiotic remediation

As mentioned above, texts are constantly evolving, from the written word to the printing press, to digital text, and to unparalleled speed as hypertext. This way, it becomes difficult to study each medium separately. Offering the tools for making sense of media, which is ever changing, Bolter and Grusin (1999), both professors in Information Design and Technology, propose a more holistic approach with their theory of remediation. They argue that media derive their identity from their relation to each other. For instance, website of a news
organization reproduces the layout of a printed newspaper. Bolter and Grusin (1999:53) assert that remediation is a manifestation of the “desire to get past the limits of representation and to achieve the real”. In other words, rather than perceiving the ‘real’ in metaphysical terms, Bolter and Grusin (1999) define ‘real’ as something that brings out an authentic emotional response. They add that this reality is achieved through a double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy.

Immediacy strives for authenticity, whereby the author gets eliminated from the medium and this enables the audience to pass into its represented world. Bolter and Grusin use virtual reality as an example of immediacy. However, they also argue that complete immediacy is as good as impossible, as the audience is always aware of the medium to a certain extent. On the other hand, hypermediacy calculatingly reveals the medium to enable the audience experience the medium and the represented objects explicitly. They name this kind of interaction of immediacy and hypermediacy as remediation, in which:

…this oscillation is the key to understanding how a medium refashions its predecessors and other contemporary media. Although each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. [Therefore], “immediacy process leads to the hypermediacy process.” (Bolter and Grusin (1999:11).

The analysis also involves an exploration of how the universities revoice others' words in talk, repurpose objects, re-present ideas in different media and remake both their environments and themselves along the branding positioning process. This brings to the fore the notion of semiotic remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999), which refers to the representation and transformation of one medium in another, leading to repurposing of semiotic material in different modes and contexts. Such reworking of discourses and semiosis routinely involves manipulation of multiple kinds of signs, words, images, and sounds across modalities, such as computer or television screens. (cf. Banda, 2011). That is, exploring semiotic remediation as a question of discourse practice is one important aspect of multimodality as this aims to reveal how semiotic remediation is employed in the process of re-creation and repurposing of objects and messages in the branding discourses used to highlight the universities’ brand imagery.
Semiotic remediation as a practice then is fundamental to understanding the work of culture as well as communication; it calls on us to attend to the diverse ways that semiotic performances are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity. This includes how the brand managers dialogically envoiced and embodied others (or copied material features of texts/objects) when they produced represented speech, thinking, and writing. Semiotic remediation is closely tied to recent work on indexicality, indexical orders, and chronotopes \(\text{cf.}\) Blommaert, 2005; Hanks, 1990; Prior and Shipka, 2003; Silverstein, 1993, 2003). Authors such as (Leander, 2001; Lemke, 2005; Prior, 1998, Prior and Shipka, 2003; Silverstein, 2005) have articulated the centrality of the notion of *chronotopes* to understanding how participants in a moment of discourse routinely navigate multiple representational worlds or indexical fields on the one hand, and also how such situated interactions link to past and projected histories of representation on the other hand.

Semiotic remediation is also seen as a dialogic process that interdiscursively weaves together modes, media, genres, and events and serves as a foundation for indexical and chronotopic orders (Prior and Hengst, 2010). Central to exploring spatial-temporal semiotic production, reception, representation and distribution of artifacts and activities across modalities and contexts is the notion of *repurposing*. The idea is to attend to the situated *production* and *reception* of the artifact and activities (Prior and Hengst, 2010) through tracing the semiotic activity and resources across chains for subtle remediation, not mediated anew through taking up the materials at hand, and putting them to present use. The result is therefore a production of altered conditions for future action such as the branding discoursal strategies in this study.

### 3.3.6 Geosemiotics

To clearly make sense of the above contributions in linguistic landscape (LS), it is imperative to point out the importance of Scollon and Scollon’s (2003) concept of geosemiotics as an analytic tool to make sense of the social meaning of the materials placement of modes or semiotics in the branded fields of the universities. Geosemiotics is the study of the meaning systems by which semiotic materials, buildings, and artefacts are located in the material world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). Liaung and Huang (2008:1) also describe it as “the study of meaning of placing signs in the material world, [which] concerns
the interaction of spatial, individual, social, and cultural contexts.” In this instance, geospatial emplacement of material signs is no longer necessarily limited to the stagnant posters on billboards and buildings. This is because the introduction of mobile, technology which can enable spatial awareness is successfully transforming the spaces hence, broadening the geosemiotics study.

According to Scollon and Scollon (2003), geosemiotics consists of three sub-systems namely, interaction order, visual semiotics, and place semiotics. These three subsystems can have different discourses which facilitate a particular social action. For example, an embodied social actor might simultaneously experience interaction order through actions such as talking, laughing, and walking and signalling. Visual semiotics can include materials such icons, posters, and signs, among others, and place semiotics’ examples could be situated building, landscape and historical artefacts. Liang and Huang (2008) raise concerns that when a virtual world overlaps or annotates a physical space, geosemiotics research becomes complicated in the sense that the readability of the intended meaning is blurred between what is authentic and what is inauthentic.

Moreover, in geosemiotics the meaning of texts and signs can only be interpreted in the social and physical world in which they are located. In this case, mobile technology comes to augment the geospatial by sometimes making them present, even on cyber-space, through technologies such as wireless mobile technology, global positioning system, and augmented reality. These enabling technologies, according to Liang and Huang (2008) bring cyberspace and geosemiotics together and in turn cyberspace participants become embodied social actors. However, in an exploration of geosemiotics, and cyberspace research, Liang and Huang (2008) posit that cyberspace, essentially decontextualized, has to give careful considerations to the spatial interaction as geosemiotics emphasizes. That is, contexts in social action become significant and necessary in designing future cyberspace. Similarly, geosemiotics cannot evade the cyberspace while mobile services are ubiquitous. Scollon and Wong (2003) posit that indexical signs identifying specific places, whether representational, perceptual spaces or reimagining spaces, all interact with one another with the spaces of their emplacement and with the social actors inhabiting these spaces in creating complex networks of meaning or ‘semiotic aggregates’.
Liang and Huang (2008) however, address important issues that can be visible between the geosemiotics and cyberspace. The first one is that of complexity around indexicality between spaces. The indexicality is not simply a real copy of the physical signs to the material world, but rather that of the similarities and differences between the physical signs to the tangible world, physical signs to the virtual world, virtual signs to the virtual world, and virtual signs to the tangible world. In each instance, the meanings of indexical signs may vary according to the context in which they are placed. This, in turn, brings in what who call an indexicality conflict, which is when a sign is set out of place causing problems such as exaggeration and the context-inconsistent situations.

As indexicality is the focus of geosemiotics study, this explores the importance of digital indexicalities referring to physical space in the branding process of the universities. Physical indexical signs are usually determine set by approved government or organizations, but, in this case, the study looks at the brand managers’ choices of indexical signs in the physical space in the process of brand showcasing. As these semiotics overlap onto the physical world via visual, iconic, and metaphorical methods (cf. Liang and Huang, 2008), it is important to see the kind of brands the semiotics bring onto the institutional landscape.

In relation to the above assertions, Klingmann (2007) adds that researchers must learn to look at cities, not as skylines, but as brandscapes and at buildings, not as objects, but as advertisements and destinations. Buildings are no longer only about where we work or study, but who we imagine ourselves to be. Architecture, thus, has now become an important tool in branding as branding in architecture also helps in expressing one’s brand identity. In most cases, it is used to enhance images and elevate their positions in the global village. Looking at branding from these lenses can reveal both the benefits and disadvantages that this practice has. Today’s brandscapes have become a culture of “the copy.” As experiences become more commoditized and the global landscape progressively more homogenized, it requires the brand managers to bring in meaningful transformations. Geosemiotics, thus, aids in interpreting the indexability of the material world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003) of the universities as it makes reference to the real world.
3.3.7 Summary on MDA and its extensions

The notions of multimodality and its tools (Kress and Van Leweeun, 1996; 2006): resemiotisation (Iedema, 2003) semiotic remediation (Hengst and Prior, 2010) and geosemiotics (Scollon and Scollon’s 2003) can thus be used to chart and capture messages in motion as they negotiate the brandscapes of the universities.

One of the key premises of multimodal social semiotics is that meaning-makers always draw on a multiplicity of modes to make meaning. These modes are put together space and arranged into a multimodal design (cf. Kress, 2010). It is, then, important for this research to look at the kinds of semiotics used to make meaning in branding. Apart from using markers of the text such as images and writing, buildings and artefacts are now also considered as modes of representation. Their emplacement becomes important in decoding the intended meaning. Selections are made for each mode and each mode offers ways to highlight that to which the consumer’s attention is to be drawn. For instance, in typography, the size and weight of type is used. This is how the makers of a text can create reading paths and shape how their brand consumers navigate the text. In other words, the design is a sign of the interest of the brand managers in these universities.

Multimodal social semiotics assumes that power relations are manifest in all forms of recognition; yet rather than establishing an opposing hierarchy of valuation, it sets out to investigate how people use and continue to develop modes of communication in response to social and cultural demands. Thus, a multimodal perspective draws attention to that which is not (yet) known before interpretation (cf. Bezemer, et al., 2012). For instance, in the branding process at one level, the researcher has to understand the apt resources in their given context to make meanings and also to express this meaning through interpretations basing on the research objectives. This holds true for all meaning-making processes.

The nature of the changing semiotic landscape also poses new questions about what is included in the text making process and how the text as a whole can be decoded. For instance, in the previous years, one mode of writing was sufficient for the task of composition of a text. Even if there were few images, they would be used to augment the meaning of the written words. On the other hand, these days, even an image, building, or artefacts are also types of semiotic modes in which viewers or readers can draw meaning.
from. All these modes contribute in text making process and as such new ways of understanding cohesion, coherence and meaning making sense emerge (Bezemer et al., 2012). One of the semiotic changes identified by Bezemer, et al. (2012) is the shifting relationship between images and writing in designs, whereby the visual is no longer just a mere illustrative appendage to word in the meaning process. Instead, images are rather used fully in representation and they are integrated in multimodal ensembles. In other words, an image can independently make a text where meaning can be drawn.

This has effects on how, for example, such texts become mobile in the process of the universities branding. Therefore, how they circulate and are inserted into social interactions of brand enactment become important for this research. This kind of shift in semiotics and notion of text can change a place, its functions and uses of image, writing and speech (Bezemer et al., 2012).

Having presented the extensive description of the MDA and its extensions and outlines of their importance in addition to the CDA and its components as the theoretical frames for the study, the following sections provides a summary for this chapter.

3.4 Summary of chapter

This chapter has provided literature that situates the study into the language and communication field and looks at related topics that help inform this study. The literature includes looking at the notions of semiotic landscape and universities brandscapes material, discourse as a text, notions of discursive practice which include: ideologies, interdiscurivity, intertextuality, and the dialogicality of texts. This also includes looking at the critical multisemiotic discourse analysis as the interdisciplinary theoretical framework followed by the study to interpret the data.

The CMDA framework in this research, as shown above, is mapped out from the SFL to MDA and CDA. Due to different forces of democratisation, marketisation, and globalisation, to mention a few, it is evident that the nature of textual analysis is also being transformed in the field of language and communication. Text is no longer just a set of words grouped together to make meaning, but it is rather a more complex phenomenon. Therefore, in trying to make sense of the data collected in this research, the researcher makes use of the two main
theories in the field to understand the nature of the universities’ branding discourses, strategies, and student brand consumption discourses.
CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS A QUALITATIVE INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology for this study. It covers issues on qualitative-interpretative approach, the sampling and data collection techniques, and data analysis. In addition, this chapter provides vivid explanations and justifications on the various data collection methods, sample and research sites used for this study. The limitations and ethics of the research are also presented.

4.1 Qualitative-interpretative approach

The qualitative approach is the collection, analysing, and interpreting of data by observing people (institutions and their students in this case) or their say on particular topics (Denzin, 1989). Unlike quantitative research, which is basically the counting and measuring of things, qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things. It has its roots in symbolic interactionism and concentrates on qualitative aspects such as meaning, experience and understanding (Streubert, 2003). It emphasises on the fact that social science requires different methods from those used in quantitative research. Mouton (1989:157) defines qualitative research as:

\[
\text{…that approach in which the procedures are formalised and explicated in a not so strict manner but in which the scope is less defined in nature and in which the researcher does his or her investigation in a more philosophical manner.}
\]

Therefore, whereas qualitative researchers are more involved with the phenomenon, quantitative researchers, on the other hand, look at the phenomenon from a distance. Sometimes, qualitative researchers can go an extra mile to be part of the phenomenon. They are, therefore, more open to observation and to pinpoint behaviour or conduct what accurately. Even the research designs are more flexible and involve a closer relationship between the researcher and those being researched. In addition, the outcome focuses on understanding rather than on predicting general patterns of behaviour (Denzin, 1989).
It values richness of detail and depth of understanding. Qualitative researchers are more interested in observing and describing what happens and what people do and experience in actual social settings (cf. Polit and Beck, 2008). It is closely associated with interpretive and critical research paradigms as it enables the researchers to provide a description and interpretation of some phenomenon, setting or event. In this way, it is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, and it consists of a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible (Ritchie and Lewis, 2005:3). These practices turn the world into a series of representations. Thus, qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings in an attempt to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Consequently, this study follows the multiple interpretive paradigms in which individuals within the universities’ contexts create particular social worlds. Social reality as it exists outside the consciousness of any individual is thus regarded as a network of assumptions and inter-subjectively shared meanings (Morgan, 1983). These assumptions lead to the belief that there are shared multiple realities, which can be sustained and changed. The goal of interpretive research is thus to find out the orders that prevail within the phenomenon under consideration. Under this paradigm, scientific knowledge is socially constructed and sustained; its significance and meaning can only be understood within its immediate social context such as the particular universities’ contexts in question (Morgan, 1983).

Thus, the interpretative research in this case enables the researcher to examine the universities’ branding discourses and strategies and brand consumption. Although this method is an exploration of what is being assumed to be a dynamic reality, (Denzin et al., 2006) it does not claim that what is discovered in the process is universal and, thus, replicable. This study has been narrowed down to look at the South African institutions’ branding discourses and their students’ brand consumption discourses with a view that they are not the same as the ones elsewhere. This approach enabled the researcher to capture a complex and holistic picture of the brand positioning processes. It provides, in detail, direct quotation and careful descriptions of situations, people’s interactions, and observed behaviour (cf. Creswell, 1998), which is precisely what this study sets out to examine. Research questions in this study have been formulated to find out the “what” and “how” of the topic rather than the “why”, hence calling for a thorough exploration in order to provide a detailed view of the situation. Therefore, this research follows a rich qualitative research
design, which is more text-based and is done by theoretical investigation. As such; it is qualitative-interpretive in nature. It then, becomes important to explain the notion of text as it constitutes the data collected for this research.

Although qualitative research can be time-consuming and sometimes costly to conduct, many fields use qualitative techniques that have been particularly developed to provide more succinct, cost efficient and timely results (Trochim and Donnelly, 2005). For instance, this research mainly followed the textual analysis also termed as a text-based research. This type of research has been employed by a number of scholars (cf. Fairclough, 1991; 1995; Bock, 2007; Blommaert, 2005; Mautner, 2005; Bhatia, 1993). However, this study also added to this kind of method by using stimulus texts in interviews to add to the data found within the university scapes and on their websites. Below is a brief explanation of the text-based research.

4.1.1 Qualitative text based research approach

Burns (2000) describes the text-based research as the use of already published material such as books, newspapers, journals, as well as Internet sources to obtain data without going into the field. It falls within the scope of secondary research as opposed to primary research, which involves field research. The data collected through this research, was used to undertake an investigation to discover facts and reach new conclusions by a critical study of the branding materials and discourses, which constitute the main texts for analysis. In following this branch of the qualitative research, researchers in this field have always known that a lot can be learnt about the world by just looking at documents (Travers, 2001). This kind of research can therefore, study textual and multimedia products ranging from television programmes to websites on the Internet, including looking at semiotic landscape and semiotic materials as is the case in this study. Travers (2001:5) also contends that “it is also worth noting that texts of all kinds form an important part of everyday life”, and that they can be analysed to reveal such everyday events. For instance, one can learn a lot of things about different organisations by simply studying the messages pinned on notice boards (Watson, 1997). This study, for example, brings new ways of looking at the higher education institutions that are now adopting the business branding system as a new way of identity articulation. This kind of text-based research is known as text linguistics in the field
of language and communication. In this approach, text is viewed in much broader terms that are beyond a mere extension of traditional grammar towards the entire text. It takes into account the form of a text, the setting, participants and all the semiotic resources put together to articulate the universities’ brands. Both the author of the text and its addressees are also considered in their respective social or institutional roles in the particular communicative context (Travers, 2001). In other words, it is an application of discourse analysis at a higher level of text rather than a mere word or sentence. As the research is more text-based than field oriented research, it is in order to provide here an interpretation of the notion of text that is suitable for this study.

4.1.2 The concept of a text

In its conceptualisation of text, this study follows Halliday’s perspective of a unit of meaning materialised by a chunk of language that is actually used for purposes of communication in a context of situation. Halliday (1989:10) explains that:

We can define text, in the simplest way perhaps, by saying that it is language that is functional. By functional, we simply mean language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences that I might put on the blackboard […]. So any instance of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed [expressed] in any other medium of expression...

As such, Halliday points out those texts are not limited to the written mode of language. Other semiotic resources may create them. In Chapter three, the researcher has clearly highlighted that texts are more than just a language as other semiotics are also treated as texts that can be meaningful on their own or with the aid of others. Texts can even be created with or without written verbal language. Therefore, this study treats language as one of the modes through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in culture. On the other hand, images are another mode through which ideas and feelings are represented in the same culture. One can, thus, conclude that language is the privileged mode through which we make sense of the world, but images also represent concepts, ideas or feelings. Language is, therefore, not a self-contained system of communication, but rather requires reference to
other systems to make sense of the world, such as, non-verbal signs (particularly images and historical artefacts in this case).

In using the CMDA approach, cited in Chapter three, texts can, therefore, be seen as products and processes, which can be stored, retrieved, bought, sold, and cited. Texts, as processes, can be grasped through regarding what Fairclough (2003) calls ‘texturing.’ The making of texts as a specific modality of social action or making of meanings includes the understandings, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, social relations, social and personal identities. In addition, Fairclough (2003:8) contends that texts also have long-term causal effects, and, “one might argue that prolonged experience of advertising and other commercial texts contributes to the shaping of people’s identities as consumers or their gender identities… [or even] contribute to changes in education or changes in industrial relations.”

Therefore, texts have causal effects on people and contribute to changes in their lives and the material world. In this case, they have a causal effect related to branding and transformation in the South African context. In this view, some of the universities branding related texts that were collected for this study from the internet were treated as the relevant texts and data for this study. These kinds of texts however are slightly different from the traditional texts. This is elaborated below.

4.1.3 The nature of internet texts

Apart from the emblematic and distinctive features of texts on the World Wide Web (WWW), the language used is just as diverse as that in other paper-based texts. Crystal (2001: 18) states that the “Web does not differ from other more conventional situations where writing is used.” Most varieties of the written language can be found on the Web, with little stylistic change, other than adaptation to the electronic medium (Crystal, 2001). For instance, text types such as academic, legal, religious, business-related and journalistic, among others, are also found on the Web, just as they can be found in non-electronic forms. Consequently, Crystal (2001:18-9) contends that “there is not only one genre or text type found on the internet; instead the text types are just as diverse as those found in print and can also accomplish just as many different functions.”
However, the most apparent difference between internet texts and paper-based texts is the fact that internet texts are displayed on a computer screen and not on paper. Crystal (2001: 198) adds that language on the web pages is constrained because it is displayed within the physical limitations of a monitor screen and that it is subjected to user controlled movements called scrolling. Obviously, there are differences in the way users of the internet ‘read’ Internet texts in comparison with other paper-based texts. This is because reading on the Internet requires other skills that are not required in reading a paper-based text. As such, this differs per individual. WWW texts also differ from paper-based texts in the fact that Internet texts are not static. For instance, a traditionally written book or newspaper would remain the same each time one goes to read it. On the other hand, a page on the Web can be different from time to time. This is because factual content can be updated and advertising sponsors or the graphic designer might change or add new features on the Web page as they please. The writing itself is also not necessarily static as the texts can move around, “appear, disappear and change colour” (Crystal, 2001: 44).

The use of hypertext is thus, the most important feature of texts found on the WWW. It has the “hypertext link which is described as the ‘jumps’ used to move from one page on a site to another, which is the most fundamental structural property of the Web without which the medium would not exist” (Crystal, 2001:201). In addition, Levinson (1997:137) also describes hypertext as “an active programmed implementation of words, phrases, and their links, crystal clear or slightly implied to other words and phrases; a map, constantly under revision of their meanings and associations.” In other words, hypertext is the road mapping the structure to the huge area of the WWW. This can be related to the way the books are opened from one page to another.

Mitra (1999) also describes the texts on the WWW pages as intertextually connected and not existing in isolation, but as always connected with other texts. This fundamental characteristic of hypertext shows the uniqueness of the WWW discourse. Thus, the rationale for using hypertext to present information is to utilise its non-linear nature. Due to the nature of the Web pages, the researcher surfed most of the linking pages carrying the branding material. These include the values, histories, logos, and location, texts and videos links. Chiew (2004:131) also defines hypertext as “a computer supported online telecommunication technology that makes possible the assembly, retrieval, display and manipulation of texts, which are realisations of a single semiotic resource or a combination
of semiotic resources, some of which include visual, linguistic, phonic and music.” In this case, the researcher opened the homepages of the universities, and, in turn, scrolled to the hypertext of the branding resources, such as, the histories, logos, values, and the location. These are called “lexia internal” (cf. Chiew, 2004:132) as they are scrollable pages from the homepages.

Another feature of Internet text identified in the literature is the increasing number of non-verbal visual signs used. Schmar-Dobler (2003) states that a lot of Internet content has blinking graphics and vivid colour which can attract or distract readers while reading. Consequently, the use of colour can have positive or negative effects on readers. Crystal (2001:200) also mentions that the use of colour is an attempt to meet the very substantial communicative demands of the Web. This includes achieving coherence, making immediate impact, needing structure, as well as having clear detail and practical interactive areas, and the harmonisation of words. Following these definitions, the branding materials of the universities as posted, were retrieved and analysed. This analysis has been given in the subsequent analytical chapters. The analytical chapters have however been preceded by a section on study sites and that of data collection.

4.2 Study sites

The data was collected at three universities in the South African Western Cape Province, namely, UWC, UCT, and SU. Historically, UWC was one of the “bush universities” that was instituted in 1959 for “Coloureds”, to offer clerical and manual labour to whites (Gerhart, 1978). Conversely, UCT was first established as a college for white boys only and later evolved to the now UCT in 1918 (Gerhart, 1978). On the other hand, SU was opened in 1865 as a result of the white Dutch elite who were determined to establish their own university as a part of the nationalist conflict with the English (Gerhart, 1978). A detailed description of these universities has been given in Chapter One. Their historical backgrounds and their present democratic, globalised, and technologised contexts make them ideal data pools to study the phenomenon under investigation. Data was collected within the physical spaces of these universities and their WWW sites on the Internet. The sections below provide an explanation of how the data was collected and the instruments that were used.
4.3 Instruments of data collection

To investigate how the branding discourses and semiotics are circulated, adapted, recreated, and consumed across different modalities, the study objectives and research questions seek data on a wide array of variables. This necessitates an application of several methods in data collection. This practice is not new in qualitative traditions. Therefore, the research used multiple methodologies, and this provided the researcher with a better understanding of the topic under examination (cf. Patton, 1987; Creswell, 1998). Guided by this understanding, below is a brief description of multiple methods that were used to gather the research data.

4.3.1 Documents as part of the data

The universities use different information from different documents in various formats to serve certain interests in their branding contexts. As such, document collection was the main data collection method. Methodically, brand discourses and strategies were analysed by applying CMDA to explain the multimodal actions and meanings. This involved the search and retrieval of semiotic patterns across multimedia data bases to investigate the relations between semiosis, text and context in the branding processes. Such patterns helped in explaining the nature of realities which universities construct and the interests served by such constructions. Documents considered as data include different modes related to the branding discourses within the universities, such as mission statements, promotional videos, images, and information from the universities’ websites, booklets and brochures, t-shirts and caps. Considering Scollon Scollon’s (2003) arguments for the need of semiotic analysis to include semiosis placement sites, the researcher also looked at branded landscapes such as historical buildings, rocks, murals and artefacts as a way to include all the modes used in the universities’ branding processes.

In addition to the above, document collection was supplemented by interviews. The interviews slightly differ from the traditional ones, as they made use of some of the documents collected here as stimulus texts to see how the brands are constructed and consumed. This is elaborated in the following sub-sections.
4.3.2 Interviews

The researcher follows the key informant interviews (KII) (Seale et al., 2004). By means of qualitative interviewing, recording, and transcribing data, the researcher accessed the perceptions of the students to gain insights into the meaning-making processes involved, and attitudes towards the universities’ brands. The idea was to gain insights into how discourses are formed, transformed and responded to. KII allow extended narratives and open talks, especially where one wants to justify their perceptions (cf. Seale et al., 2004). This study, therefore, used KII with open-ended questions to gather data on special insights and perceptions of the students. Open-ended questions, in this case, allowed the interviewees to talk freely, without constant interruptions. The interview targeted broad themes, and, as such, specific uniform questions for all the interviewees were partially avoided. According to Seale et al. (2004:18) this is a “central rationale of qualitative interviewing that enables [one] to gather contrasting and complementary talk on the same thing or issue”, while at the same time allowing the researcher the chance to ask the same questions differently in each interaction.

Given the nature of the data and analytical tools in this research, the researcher made use of stimulus texts as the basis of the interviews. The sections below provide more information on this aspect.

4.3.3 Stimulus texts in qualitative interviewing

The stimulus interview resembles the ‘positivistic’ survey research tradition or qualitative interviews that are content oriented in the sense that they are used in order to get knowledge about the states and actions that prevailed or prevail outside the interview situation, such as, the ‘facts’, beliefs, motives, emotions, action and logic comprised in the outside world’s states and actions (c.f. Silverman, 1993:91–2).

The stimulus interview has its scientific roots in constructivistic approaches and semiotic traditions, where language, representation and communication are not seen as sources of error for biased knowledge. Rather, they are understood as the necessary constituents of interaction. The use of stimulus texts in the interview does not introduce a strange thing for
the members of a culture. Rather, it is familiar and ordinary (cf. Torronen, 2002). As social psychologists, structuralists and the researchers of culture have emphasized people identify the meaning of their position, relations and actions through comparing themselves with others. Stimulus texts offer points of comparison for the interview and bring new communicative subjects to the interview. The interview does not only proceed as an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee because the stimulus texts also become part of the dialogue. This is a central feature of the stimulus interview. It puts the researcher and the interviewees in a dialogical and discursive connection with different social realities. In using stimulus texts in interviews, the researcher can still use the traditional questioning techniques as resources in order to guide the interviewees to interpret the stimulus texts in the intended way (cf. Torronen, 2002).

Following the semiotic theory on qualitative interviewing, as described by Torronen (2002), the research used stimulus texts (cf. Torronen, 2002) as devices for encouraging the interviewees to comment on the selected branding materials across the universities. The texts collected included materials such as videos, photos, adverts, historical sources, websites contents, clothing, and crockery, among others, as the resources that make the data. The use of stimulus text encourages the interviewees to commend on both the universities brands and the material that are used to create the particular brands. The study used stimulus texts as microcosms, whereby, according to Torronen (2002), through the interview questions, the interviewees are able to make sense of their worlds and identity positions against those of the stimulus objects (Torronen, 2002). Stimulus objects can be used as devices to encourage interviewees to speak about a research topic (Gaskell, 2000; Padilla, 1993) and to interpret different semiotics, or to discuss movies among others (Krueger, 1998: 71–78).

There are at least three analytically separate strategies for selecting and using stimulus texts in the production and analysis of interview data. The stimulus texts may be used as clues, as microcosms or as provokers (cf. Peltonen, 1999). When stimulus texts are used as clues in an interview, they are meant to indexically refer to the subject matter under examination. When used as microcosms or provokers in an interview, again, the researcher prepares the stimulus texts to represent the research topic as iconic (mimetic) images, maps or metaphorical worlds (cf. Veivo and Huttunen, 1999: 45).
In this case, the researcher treats the semiotic objects as both clues and microcosms in relation with the branding phenomena under study. As semiotic forms can be complex as they can have their meaning as (icons, indexes or symbols), it was important to be clear on how the objects were to be treated to relate to the universities branding (cf. Fiske, 1990: 47–8). For instance, when the interviewees were shown the videos of their universities they could identify them as iconically representing their institutions and when the researcher indicated that the pictures are used as branding materials again this, orientated them to particularly look at the pictures as indexes to the branding processes. Stimulus texts therefore, as already mentioned can be used in interviews as microcosms (icons). In this case, the interview questions are built in a way that encourages the interviewees to compare their own conceptions and experiences to the world constructed in the stimulus text (Torronen, 2001). This use of the stimulus text channels the interviewees to mimetic action, to identify and interpret whether the stimulus text represents the phenomena under examination truthfully and credibly. Therefore, considering the research topic and the objectives, the researcher chose a few stimulus texts as clues and microcosms during the interviews.

It is also noteworthy to mention that some researchers carry their interviews face to face in the form of individual or group interviewing (Kvale, 1996:145). Others, point out that it is equally sensible to interview by asking the interviewees to write their interpretations or responses on paper. In this case the dialogue between the stimulus text and the interviewee is more private and intimate, less determined by the immediate social expectations a face-to-face interaction would bring along (Vainikkala and Kovala, 2000:36). Following the latter, the researcher asked the students to watch the videos and comment in form of writing at their own time. This was done to give the students time to go and watch the videos before they could answer a few questions. The writings were collected analysed.

4.3.4 Participant observation

One way of understanding people and their behaviour in the field is to observe them over a period of time. While the term “participant observation” may mean merely “looking at or watching closely”, as used in qualitative research, it does actually mean “spending long periods watching people, coupled with talking to them about what they are doing, thinking
and saying, designed to see how they understand their world’’ (Delamont, 2004: 218). For this reason, the term ‘participant’ means much more; the researcher as a participant engages a great deal with the informants. As an instrument of data collection, participant observation allows the researcher to: understand the context of the activities, be inductive in approach, move beyond selective perception of others, and access personal knowledge and direct experience as resources to aid in understanding and interpreting the phenomenon under observation. Therefore, in trying to understand the universities’ branding practices and brand consumption, the researcher observed the interactional modes used to articulate different universities’ brands, including the students’ universities brand consumption. In this case, the researcher acted as an instrument for the data collection process (cf. Creswell, 1998). This enabled the researcher to: understand the context of activities, be inductive in approach in understanding and interpreting the branding practises of the universities.

4.4 Sampling procedure

The researcher sampled a sizable and controlled number of respondents. This was important as it would also determine the feasibility of the collection of data within the available time frame and other resources. Therefore, total of thirty key participants were chosen for this study. That is, ten respondents from each university. In this regard, this study made use of purposive sampling to identify respondents whom the researcher thought would provide the best information that would achieve the objectives set out in this study (cf. Kumar, 1999). For instance, respondents from the different racial groups within the universities were selected. The power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information, thus, enabling researchers to target and engage only those respondents who are likely to have the required information and are willing to share it (Kumar, 1999). It would not be prudent to imagine that the researcher knows all the participants before going to the field or that they would pick only those informants that they are familiar with. Therefore, purposive sampling was important for three reasons, firstly, not every student (in the larger universities ‘fields) was willing to provide information. Secondly, not all those who would be willing to provide information would be able to give sufficient information. Thirdly, and as a collary of the first two reasons, the identification of a “few “rich cases”, those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of evaluation was important” (cf. Patton, 1987: 52).
The other technique used in this study was snowball sampling; Snowball sampling identifies cases of interest from people who know other people within the same environment that can provide relevant information. Hence, the researcher had to identify key informants and request them to identify other willing informants who were keen to be interviewed (cf. Schutt and Engel, 2005). In addition to the above, opportunistic sampling was also used. This involves on-the-spot sampling, taking advantage of the new opportunities during the fieldwork (cf. Patton, 1990). This technique allowed the researcher to follow new leads during fieldwork, taking advantage of the unexpected and unforeseen opportunities. Thus on-the-spot sampling allows for flexibility even after fieldwork has begun.

4.5 Data analysis

As qualitative inquiry opens up world situations to readers through a thorough description of research’s concrete and detailed information (Denzin, 2001), the phenomenon of branding in universities is better understood through careful interpretation of meanings and branding materials collected during the research. The leading qualitative researchers attest to the fact that there is no single methodological framework or prescription for the analysis of qualitative data, as this sorely depends on the phenomenon under study. This is because research analysis has its own challenges in processing the data collected from numerous methods. This coding requires searching for common themes that hold the data categories together. Miles and Huberman, (1984) emphasise that data analysis should commence immediately after data collection begins so that researchers will have a progressive focus and also be able to identify areas that needs further investigation. Therefore, the researcher in this case systematically sorted, reviewed and coded the data according to the emerging themes. Themes were coded into different categories based on similarities and differences.

Based on the research questions as mentioned in Chapter One, data analysis and interpretation in this study began in the field so as to reduce the workload since there was a huge amount of data collected from the different methods as mentioned above. The analysis was further extended to define and describe the themes in detail through narration and explanation. The final stages involved swinging back and forth and organising the data in ways that helped formulate the final themes, refine concepts, and link them together and relate then to the existing literature to create a clear description and explanations of the universities’ branding processes. Using CMDA (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; O’Halloran,
2004) and its extensions, such as, resemiotisation (Iedema, 2003), semiotic remediation (Hengst and Prior, 2010), and geosemiotics (Scollon and Scollon, 2003) and CDA (Fairclough, 2007), the researcher reveals how semiotic choices work together to give meaning, including what meanings are conveyed and for what purposes. Notions such as localisation (Pennycook, 2010), globalisation and glocalisation, and internationalisation (Tsuruta, 2003) are also applied in the interpretation of the data.

4.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher provided a report to the participants in which the research purpose was explained. The researcher then asked for consent from the prospective participants. The researcher had the responsibility to let the informants know that even if they had agreed to participate in the research, they had a right to withdraw at any stage of the study. In addition to this, their personal information and names remained confidential and anonymous respectively (cf. Appendix A) and, the researcher used pseudonyms in data presentation.

4.7 Summary of chapter

This chapter has provided a discussion qualitative-interpretive approach adopted by the study. It has looked at issues of qualitative-interpretative approach, text based research. There has also been a discussion of how to work with discourse especially as pertaining to this study. It has looked at how stimulus text as an important addition to interviewing can source rich data for a qualitative-interpretive research. Sampling, data collection techniques and data analysis were also discussed. The chapter has also provided vivid explanations and justifications on the various data collection methods, sample and research sites used for this study. Lastly, the researcher has presented the ethics of the research by which they had to abide. The next chapters delve into data analysis: making sense of the data gathered in relation to the branding aspects focused on in this study.
CHAPTER FIVE

RESEMIOTISING CORPORATE BRANDS AT THREE SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter firstly shows the types of resources, metaphors and modalities used in the branding process and how they are used creatively to make distinct brand meanings. This includes showing the types of branding strategies and discourses that are used to highlight unique and competitive brand imagery and brand awareness. Secondly, using notions of interdiscursivity, intertextuality, resemiotisation, geosemiotics and semiotic remediation (see Chapter Three), this chapter shows how the universities recycle semiotic resources and genres in mission statements, logos, crests, branded goods for differentiated brand identities. It also shows how semiotic resources get circulated across a variety of virtual media platforms and other social contexts to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process. Finally, the chapter shows how these three universities multimodally maintain, deconstruct and reconstruct their historical, cultural and social structures in the branding process.

5.1 Interdiscursivity and intertextuality as branding strategies in mission statements

The three universities draw on different discourses to creatively construct mission statements that indicate desirable institutional identities. Therefore, the analysis of mission statements, below, shows how each university competitively and uniquely identifies itself as an able university and as a positive educational brand. The analysis also shows how the three universities borrowed texts from different genres, such as globalisation, political, educational, and promotional material, which they commodify to brand and market themselves to potential stakeholders. In other words, it shows how these mission statements are a result of interdiscursive and intertextual processes of different discourses, commoditisation, nominalisation and self-promotional claims, among others, to paint attractive brand identities.
5.1.1 UWC’s mission statement

UWC identifies itself as a national institution that has a huge role to play through partnering with the government in ensuring the transformation of the country on one hand and on the other, helping the country to link and interact with the world at large. UWC’s mission statement reveals this brand identity through self-promotional claims that emphasise a prestigious and favourable brand. This is how its mission statement starts:

*The University of the Western Cape is a national university, alert to its African and international context as it strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and nurturing and research...*

Phrases such as, it is a national university...a place of quality, a place to grow... are typical of the prestige-advertising genre. Having the above sentence in the topic position, the mission statement creates a slant aimed at attracting and predisposing the reader to have a positive image of the institution. This opening links the institutional, translocal and global aspirations and mobility at the same time. This is shown in the way UWC defines itself as a national university alert to its African and international context as it is able to broadens its horizon and reaches out to the people from all over the world. This is a bold stance by UWC considering its restrictive background in which it was only to cater for a few students, mainly from the coloured community. Therefore, this self-promotion is also seen in the incremental role and status the university prides itself in positioning itself as a national, African and international player. It positions itself, not only as an opportunity institution, but also as one of the best universities in Africa and the world. It is for this reason that the nominal verbs in the phrase excellence in teaching, learning, and nurturing research... are borrowed from the discourse of educational management; these verbs also emphasise the claims to the prestigious and favourable status of the university. This nominalisation (Iedema, 2003) enables the reconstruction of the university’s identity and its social relations in the country and the world through tapping into other discourses and experiences, which are then repackaged as part of the new institutional brand identity.

Moreover, without mentioning race in the mission statement as the main identity creation document, UWC recontextualises its role of fighting against inequalities and divisions, which were cultivated by the system of apartheid as a commitment to lead in transforming
the new South African society through “nurturing [its] cultural diversity... and to [respond] in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition.” UWC also appropriates and repurposes the government’s agenda of social transformation through taking the lead in being critical and creative in finding solutions to problems that beset a society in transition.

The social roles evident in the UWC mission statement relates to Fairclough’s (2003) assertions that institutions can legitimatisé or delegitimatisé objects, subjects and practices by situating them as common sense assumptions. The mission statement foregrounds marginalisation and vows to make sure that it “respond[s] to the needs of a society in transition.” UWC, thus, legitimatises the South African government’s transformation agenda by making it its own mission. It further delegitimatises the apartheid ideology and social order through reference to the liberation struggle and pro-democracy claims in the following extract:

*Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society...*

The twin adjectives in the noun phrase “an equitable and dynamic society” has been refigured from political polemics to sales-promotional elements through taking a stance to promote democracy, egalitarianism, and smooth transition of a once racially and ethnically divided society. The commodification of political discourse elevates the mission statement into a new form that has to be consumed as a sales-promotion text. Fairclough (1993:144) notes that universities are increasingly obligated to “operate under government pressure as if they were businesses competing to sell their products to consumers.” In this case, the aim is to use the resulting discourse as selling points to market themselves to attract potential students and institutional funders who are likely to support institutions that are mandated and have the support of the government of the day. The researcher elaborates on this argument below.

In the process of embracing the government transformation agenda, which puts more emphasis on community reintegration and racial inclusivity, UWC cleverly shuns away from using (black) race as a brand resource in support of racial inclusivity. Instead, it overtly distinguishes itself from the other two universities through stressing the struggle credentials,
which are subtly intertwined with what can be said to be typical promotional academic discourse. Consider the following:

In particular it aims to: advance and protect the independence of the academic enterprise... further global perspective ... and contributing to South Africa's reintegration in the world community... develop effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable...

The hybrid text above, has borrowed terminologies (especially those in bold font) from promotional academic discourse. It has also borrowed from socio-political and globalisation discourses. The university also aims to expand its interactions beyond South African borders and be known as an able university worldwide. Therefore, through blending these discourses with its own struggle experiences, UWC recreates the fight to “advance and protect the independence of the academic enterprise” and to “develop effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable,” as its own mission, rather than as a societal or government driven agenda. This is a reminder of the fight against the undemocratic apartheid government in which UWC took a leading role in campaigning for academic freedom, accountability and transparency (cf. Lalu and Murray, 2012). Moreover, the university also aims to “assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies.” This assistance symbolically brings in the original identity of UWC as a HBU.

This ironically makes UWC a powerful organ that is able to plough back to the disadvantaged communities through education despite the fact that it was created to partially serve these disadvantaged groups during the apartheid era in a limited way (cf. Chapter One). This is designed to portray itself not only as a champion of societal freedom, but also as a beacon for academic freedom, thereby articulating a desirable brand for itself to potential students, South African community and the world. The university therefore discursively reconstructs a positive brand identity that is admirable and competitive in the country and the world, thereby blurring its original identity as a disadvantaged university. As such, this mission statement functions as both an information-giving text and a branding resource. Having said this for UWC, the sections below show how UCT distinctively recreates its brand using different discourses.
5.1.2 UCT’s mission statement

Following Mautner’s (2005:106) assertion that academic entrepreneurialism goes beyond mere commercialisation, the researcher notes that in similarity to UWC, UCT’s mission statement is filtered with self-alignment claims as a strong academic institution which is able to claim its South African, African and international identity. In the opening statement, UCT’s mission statement indicates that UCT aims to be a "Premier academic melting point between South Africa, and the world...expanding global networks... This shows brand identity transformation that is not necessarily rooted in South Africa but goes beyond borders. In this way, it is able to strategically claim a glocal brand identity without assertively claiming a clear national identity as compared to UWC. This kind of articulation makes it link with many stakeholders at a glocal level and carrying a strong recognisable brand in the country, region, continent and world at large. It continued to show this double barrel of telling and selling itself as a strong brand by elaborating on the kind of linkages it can offer to the world as an academic institution.

It posits that it is ... committed through innovative research and scholarship, aim to produce graduates whose qualifications are internationally recognised... It is noteworthy that the choice of such words, as the adjectives, committed and innovative signals the discourses of self-promotion and prestige. The research and scholarship which are the main aspects of its function are described as innovative, which also shows that it does not perceive itself as just an ordinary old academic institution, but one that is a dynamic territory enhancing its recognition in the academia worldwide. This context is further indicated by the use of adverbs such as globally and internationally (which are used interchangeably). This reveals the embedded spirit of entrepreneurialism that has become part of the brand building process. As can be seen also from the above quotation, UCT’s identity shows an alignment to the whole world rather than just to the local context as a South African university. It is clear that the university describes itself as a desirable product that even assures the business stakeholders that it produces students who are internationally recognised. The emphasis on the international recognition is evidently used as a selling marker. In addition, it is used as a way of showing how the university is now more inclusive and becoming a global business partner whose main purpose is to offload competent workers into the business arena.
The personalisation of using the pronoun ‘we’ in *We aim to promote diversity and transformation within our institution, growing next generation of academics*… also shows good interpersonal relations with the clients. Considering the fact that the university was not as diverse as it is claiming now, having this statement in its mission statement is another way of acknowledging its role in supporting the democratic government agenda through redressing the apartheid social ills. As such, articulating that it aims to foster this diversity within its territory for a South African context also makes it an attractive academic territory. This social responsibility makes it appear well connected and accommodating hence admirable at the same time. The mission statement is strategically written to include its position as an academic institution that understands the need for transformation of both itself and the country as a whole. This is a careful construction of a more compassionate and integrated societal image in which it brings people together both in the country and the world at large.

Moreover, it is also through such articulations that UCT is able to also connect with the business, thereby marketing the university as a strong brand in the academia that the business world can rely on. Therefore, by claiming this huge responsibility of fostering diversity, UCT creates an attractive brand image. It is able to position itself at the centre of the world transformation agenda as it claims a shared common ground with readers through the constant use of the pronoun “we” and the adjective or determiner “our”. This in turn also enables UCT to inventively claim a collective South African, African (shown by the noun *continent*) and global identity. The collective, confident, and assertive articulations make it admirable, as by being inclusive, it also helps facilitate the transformation and globalisation in the world. This also naturalises the up-beat promotional tone (*cf.* Mautner, 2005) in the mission statement as the university constructs itself as a leader in the world of academia and partner to the business world. The reference to quality outputs recreates and recounts the university’s academic activity as modelled on industrial production. This supports Wernick’s (1991) argument that universities are now entangled in competitive, promotional culture. The choice of discourses and pragmatic choices intentionally blur the racial identity that it carried during the apartheid era.

This culture is one of the most potent ways in which discourses of business have come to colonise the higher education domain (*cf.* Fairclough, 1993). This portrayal of the holistic brand identity can be seen in the sentence fragment *…advancing and disseminating*
knowledge that addresses the key challenges facing society- South African and global. Therefore, as Wernick (1991:181) points out that even in generalised promotion, there is a communicative function, in which discourse can be perceived as “a vehicle for selling goods, services, organisations and ideas or people across orders of discourse”. UCT chooses superiority in academia as one of its points of reference. This stance is designed to make it more admirable, and the convincing annotations distinguish its idiosyncratic brand identity from other universities under study.

It constructs itself as a more serious and active academic institution that is geared towards a major role in growing next generation of graduates…[whose] qualifications are internationally recognized and locally applicable. This way, the students who become part of this institution are also supposed to be turned into brand ambassadors who can automatically be targeted as good recruits by the world at large.

The behavioural verbs such as aspires, taking, grapple, and aim and promote show a prestigious personality. The university sees itself as more powerful with a mandate to ensure both the growth of the world’s economy by giving its students high quality education that will, in turn, give them a competitive edge in the labour market. Additionally, it also positions itself as a caring and momentous university growing through research. This research is what is centred to be the marker of its prestigious brand identity as it is put forward to help the university link with others of its kind and the world. The choice of the behavioural verbs in their present continuous tense (protecting, nurturing and valuing, ensuring, advancing, disseminating, and stimulating) also shows that it is dynamic and promotes both human and academic growth. This relates to Barnett’s (2003:66) characterisation of the entrepreneurial university as being “restless” and “always on the move.” Thus, UCT is able to package its positioning statement to put across a forward-looking brand. It draws its importance on meeting the requirements of external stakeholders rather than offering the opportunity to develop a real sense of purpose and authentic transforming identity within the organisation. UCT shows a university-centred and authoritative voice. In this way, the mission statement is clearly an instantiation of the commodification of language (cf. Fairclough, 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) as it becomes subjugated to the imperative of branding and promoting the university to target consumers.
Therefore, whilst UWC reveals itself as a more national brand with international association, UCT staunchly identifies itself as a superior glocal brand. SU reservedly articulates the same brand identity as UCT and this has been unpacked below unpack this.

5.1.3 SU’s mission statement

SU opted for a mission statement that is covertly painted with the prestige discourse to persuade potential stakeholders as compared to the other universities. The mission statement reads in part as:

*The raison d’être of the University of Stellenbosch is... to create and sustain, in commitment to the academic ideal of excellent scholarly and scientific practice, an environment within which knowledge can be discovered, can be shared, and can be applied to the benefit of the community.*

The presence of a French phrase in the English text, which means, “motive”, could not by accident or due to the lack of English phrases. It appears calculated to cast the university as a prestigious and sophisticated ‘global’ institution. Ironically, even though the phrase is often used in English discourses, it gives credence to SU’s stance to promote multilingualism in the modern and globalised world.

Moreover, the choice of words used such as “to create, sustain, academic, ideal, of scholarly, and scientific practice” is intended to give the reader the picture that the university is not only innovative with the South African context but is also a global player with an international status in which its academic practices are of good standards. These are the kinds of common vocabulary used in the world organisations such as United Nations, World Bank and other international corporations, and are also examples of globalisation discourse (*cf.* Mafofo, 2010).

Like the other universities, SU also emphasises inclusiveness and tries to claim ownership by not including its socio-historical and political position and by not drawing on negativities of the past but by articulating its aspired role in the present era and asserting its African identity. SU reconstructs itself as stretching its horizon, not only across the South Africa but
also across on the African continent and world at large by emphasising on the importance ...

of being relevant to the needs of the community, taking into consideration the needs of South Africans in particular and of Africa and the world in general...These discursive representations that the university holds put it at the forefront of intellectual development as part of its branding process. This helps SU not only to divest itself from the negative associations of the past, but it also effectively renegotiates its relationship with the local, national, regional, and the global institutions as a responsible partner in the academia. In essence, SU foregrounds pursuing excellence and remaining at the forefront of its chosen focal areas that are: gaining national and international standing. This it does through research, production of well sought after graduates whom it describes as well-rounded and creative thinkers. It also wants to be known for being enterprising, innovative and self-renewing. These articulations show a very attractive brand identity for the university. The chosen clauses and phrases are adventurously combined to paint an identity that is self-promoting, thereby repositioning itself to aspire to the same dictates as UWC and UCT.

Looking at the three universities, the section below sums up the brand articulations found in their mission statements.

5.1.4 Common promotional outlook in the three mission statements

From the points raised above, the researcher argues that in the democratic dispensation in South Africa, the commodification of struggle, globalisation, socio-political transformation discourses have blurred the trajectories of the historicity of the universities in such a way that they appear similar and show a rejection of the apartheid values and ideologies under which the institutions were created. The boundaries between previously white and previously black universities has been further blurred by the changing student and academic profiles as the transformation discourses on which the universities draw their inspirations demand that there must be no gender, racial, ethnic, economic and regional biases in the make-up of the universities’ populace. This has led to commodification of struggle and transformation discourses, leading also to the new forms of contested values, identities and in particular, the notion of community.
The apartheid ideology of a community as being constituted by people who share a particular race or ethnicity has been replaced by the notion of non-bounded and non-homogenous people who share a similar vision of freedom and common good for humanity. Thus, even though UWC, as a previously black university and UCT and SU as previously white universities, initially followed different paths and had different experiences, the new dispensation has redirected them towards a similar goal of an equitable and transformative society in which race and ethnicity are not a differentiating and disqualifying factor.

In short, the researcher argues that the rejection of ‘blackness’ as the definitive characteristic of UWC finds focus in the current dispensation, as shown in the previous section, in which UWC cannot claim exclusive rights to the struggle discourse or the transformation discourse. Doing so would ideologically mean acquiescing to the discriminatory social order designed by the apartheid regime, which UWC rejects at its inception. UCT and SU also reject ‘whiteness’ as their definitive identity marker. Indeed, both UCT and SU do not market themselves as previously white universities; instead they focus on the commodified transformational discourses, which they appropriate as their own and use as folders for both branding and marketing the universities.

This analysis shows that the ideology of a non-racial society and equal opportunities championed in post apartheid South Africa as well as translocal and transnational demands for academic excellence have necessitated the need for South African universities to develop and cultivate new entrepreneurial endeavours that are locally located and relevant, but also international in scope. Race, as a defining feature of the universities, has been replaced with commoditised discourses of transformation, redress and equal opportunity. This demonstrates that each of the universities has reworked cultural, political, educational, and promotional materials to create commoditised discourses of transformation and marketisation. In the branding process, they have created independent and unique identities which they use as points of sale in the “worldwide market for students and the ceaseless search for research funding and prestige” (Deem et al., 2008:84).

Moreover, this call for openness and inclusive citizenship has been blended with globalising aspirations in which universities, worldwide, strive for equal opportunities and global transnational recognition. What is evident in the previous sections is that the appropriated
discourses have been repurposed for marketing the universities as objects of desire to which all racial, ethnic, national and global groups are welcome to consume the academic excellence.

These hybrid mission statements are seen as the main texts in which the universities are able to effectively articulate their new identities. It is also evident from these mission statements that other resources are created to emphasise each university’s brand. Therefore, rematerialisation of transformation and marketisation discourses has created a dialogic position between the apartheid era identities and present egalitarian ideals on the one hand, and between HBUs and HWUs on the other. The semiotic performativity of these repurposed material resources have created altered conditions (Prior and Hengst, 2010) which have enabled the universities not only to interdiscursively construct different identities, but also to blur the intertextual and interdiscursive chains, which, in turn, have distorted the boundaries between historically underprivileged black universities and historically privileged white universities.

Below, follows a discussion of how the universities are able to expand their mission statements claims to further brand themselves as distinct and attractive institutions through logos, slogans and crests as brand articulation resources.

5.2. Universities’ logos, slogans and crests as brand markers

This section looks at the logos, slogans and crests as part of the branding material that is used to enhance and represent the brand articulations highlighted in the mission statements, as shown above. Despite sharing the same transformational discourses, the universities are still able to create distinct brands using the resources available to them. In this way, discourses are strategically placed and repurposed for branding. Figure 5.1 below shows the distinct logos, slogans and crest for each of the universities.
Wells et al. (2003) cited in Osman (2006), assert that educational institutions, such as universities, are able to create slogans, mottos, and crests, which seem realistic to attract prospective stakeholders as they are normally based on sound advertisement practices. As can be seen in picture 1 of Figure 5.1 above, in its slogan, UCT, chooses to foreground the three main official languages of the Western Cape Province which are: English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The slogan reveals a recurring pattern as the name of the university is creatively repeated, circling the university’s crest and motto. This repetition, as Osman (2006) asserts, makes the slogan unforgettable and known to all the people that use the languages. In this way, following the theme of inclusivity highlighted in its mission statement, UCT seems to extend the government inclusive agenda by drawing on the notion of multilingualism. However, these languages fall short of any extended meaning apart from
that of labelling the university and can be interpreted as merely branding languages at UCT. It is interesting to note that this kind of embracing diversity reveals linguistic inequalities that can be traced back to the historical background of the political situation in the country, which saw some groups favoured more than others. English is still positioned in the first position to mark the identity of the university; isiXhosa is positioned as the second language, as if to show the need to be more receptive to the black students whose entry, into the white universities was ‘painfully’ restricted during the colonial era. Afrikaans is positioned last, as if to say that the university is also able to accommodate the ‘Coloureds’, whose main language is Afrikaans, and even those that are from the White Afrikaans speaking community who had their own educational spaces due to tensions between the British and the Afrikaners (see Chapter One). This is strategically done as if to reveal its inclusivity to the South African community and the world. Therefore, through these branding materials, UCT is able to cleverly divest from its old identity as strictly an English institution and tries to be a more accommodative brand. Despite this, it is evident that this is also a symbolic acceptance gesture towards the government’s language policy (cf. Mafolo and Banda 2014). However, the primary language is English. This clearly marks UCT’s maintenance of its old identity as an English medium based university. Therefore, English is further embraced and legitimatised in this context, as it is also the main lingua franca in the world. UCT, is able to boldly maintain its original identity using the concept of globalisation in which the other two languages are perceived as only significant locally.

This slogan is wound up around the crest, which is made out of an open book, emblematically signalling the academic world and a burning lamp as if to signal the continuity of successful academic life at the university. In its crest, it inserted a motto written Spesi Bona, which means Good Hope in Latin. This motto still resonates with the university identifying itself as an institution investing in being the education and research hub of Africa, as also indicated in the mission statement above. Latin can be interpreted as a prestigious language as even though, it is hardly used worldwide in this twenty first century, it is one of the old scholarly languages. This way of brand-building echoes Bulotaite’s (2003) argument that the purpose of university branding is not necessarily to sell a product or service, but as Fairelough (2003) contends it is also to communicate a brand identity that will enable the university to compete with others of its kind. All in all, UCT selectively creates its slogan, motto, using four languages that represent South Africa and the world at
large. This resonates with Wernick’s (1991:84) contribution that promotion is a communication style that is “defined not by what it says but by what it does.” These resources are strictly created for branding purposes, which are both business in nature and oriented towards the social duty towards building a dynamic and equitable society.

In similarity to UCT, which repurposes multilingualism as a branding tool, SU creates its name, logo and slogan (see picture 1 of Figure 5.1) using Afrikaans and English, respectively, to claim its academic position both in the South African and world contexts. SU is also seen strategically maintaining its past identity as an Afrikaans medium based institution. The way the languages are positioned with Afrikaans in a prominent initial position signals. It reads: **UNIVERSITEIT-STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY.** English is used as an additive language to also show the inclusivity that goes beyond the borders of the country to the world at large.

Unlike UCT, SU does not use its old crest with the Latin motto: ‘Pectora roborant cultus recti’, which means ‘The multiplicity of education of mind makes spirits robust.’ Its meaning during the time of its creation, seems to have resonated with the lifestyle of the white Afrikaners who owned winery farms around the area where the university is located. They were not only interested in ammassing wealth but also have access to education for full enrichment. In the new era, the university strategically shows signs of unique transformation through creating a new logo and slogan. Its uniqueness is shown through the stylised modern logo as compared to the conventional university crest. The logo is made out of the letter ‘U’ that is inventively combined with the letter ‘S’ which is further stylised as having a tail-like oak leaf. This can be interpreted as a signature for the university, which identifies with Stellenbosch town, a rich farming geographical context surrounded by oak trees and winery farms (see Chapter One). This area is not only robust with farm produce but also education and they all continuously change people’s lives. This education, to some extent is not divorced from the lifestyle of the people as they are able to identify themselves with what they do within their environment. It also signifies that although SU is one of the oldest and conservative universities in Western Cape Province, it is continuously growing and transforming, and has a rich diverse student life. That conservatism is also seen as a way of life in which even those who join this community are expected to abide by its way of life.
This is further seen in its video analysed in Chapter Eight where it asserts to be the ‘culture melting pot’ in which it integrates people through education.

SU just like UCT, uses English and other local languages as brand markers whilst UWC chooses English and Latin (see picture 3 of Figure 5.1). In similarity with the crest, the slogan is also ordered in the same way as the university’s name foregrounding Afrikaans as the main language followed by English. It reads as *Jou kennisvennoot. Your knowledge partner*. The university uses repetition to highlight both its name and slogan. SU makes this slogan unforgettable to the viewer (cf. Osman, 2006) and at the same time emphasise its old identity as an Afrikaans based institution since one would have to read the slogan inAfrikaans and English respectively. In this way, SU is able to build a positive brand through using its geographical context and multilingualism as positive brand markers. In this case, SU again shows its original identity but at the same time is able to assure the world that it is now open to everyone by adding English - a global language as its sign of conversion and further growth. English in this case is used as a brand marker that comes to ‘sanitise’ SU’s old identity as an Afrikaans based university. Therefore, through semiotic repurposing, the university manages to recreate a ‘balanced brand identity that is acceptable especially in the South African context where Afrikaans has been one sign of division.

UWC’s crest’s upper part, as shown above in picture 3 of Figure 5.1, is composed of three bunches of a protea flower, which is the South African national flower growing in the WCP. The South African rugby national team (The Protea) is also named after this flower and this sport has been a positive integration for the racial groups that were separated by the segregation laws during apartheid. Using the same flower symbolises an academia at UWC that is inclusive to all the South African racial groups and the world at large and continuous growth and fruitfulness in the academia. Therefore, by using this national flower to be part of its branding resources, UWC articulates its identity as ‘a national university’ as highlighted in its mission statement analysed above. There is also an image of a Greek temple in the middle of the crest, and it resembles the front part of UWC’s main hall building.

Lastly, the crest is patterned using the laurel leaves to make it more beautiful and these leaves were also historically used in wreaths awarded to victors. Using its historical
trajectory from the oppressive years, UWC continues to portray itself as a victorious university. This is further seen in its Latin motto: *Respice Prospice* which means ‘look back and look ahead’ is placed at the bottom. This motto still resonates with the historical background that the university seems not able to detach itself from as raised in the mission statement above. The motto, therefore carries a double barrel meaning; it urges the South African community to learn from their past and look into the future to positively transform their lives. This message is applicable to even the contemporary political situation in which these universities are encouraged to help the government transform the country from the social scars left by the previous apartheid dispensation. It also works as good motivation for the students who come from different ethnic backgrounds and are on a path to transform their lives through education. Therefore, as much as it is in a language that is foreign to the South African context, the meaning can still be read in a positive way that is locally relevant.

Whilst English is used as the global language that signals inclusivity, Latin, in this instance, can be interpreted as a sophisticated brand language that is used to enhance the brand and make it sellable to a wider community that transcends South Africa. Whilst English is also a global and academic language, Latin is mainly used as an attention grabber that also hybridizes the brand and makes it more appealing beyond South African borders. This echoes to Pennycook’s (2010) claim that globalisation is in the local. In this case, the university strategically uses these foreign languages to construct a brand identity that resonates with both the local and international communities. It is also able to mix both local and global semiotics to paint an attractive brand.

These linguistic or semiotic adaptations reveal the processes of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation, in which glocalisation becomes the end process as the semiotic resources are taken from another context and reused in a new context for different purposes such as branding in this case. This in turn, gives these universities hybrid brand identities as they are no longer confined as institutions of particular racial groups but are now open to a wider community. Moreover, the branding resources show that hybridity is used as a metaphor for brand identity strategy as the old and new discourses and semiotics are recreated and resemiotised for better and more acceptable universities’ brands as compared to their past exclusive identities as highlighted in Chapter One.

Although this hybridity is used as a positive metaphor showing reconciliation between different races and social inequalities of access, this is mainly done for branding purposes as
the gap still lies on the practical eradication of these social ills in order for this metaphor of hybridity to realise its full potential meaning. Looking at UCT’s and UWC’s mottos in Latin, it seems that this Western language has been retained and are regarded as important as they still occupy the prominent positions within the crests. These crests are in turn used on the web pages, letterheads, and graduation certificates and, branded materials among others, (this is shown below) thus enhancing the European languages’ statuses. However, they are also somehow neutralised by the new slogans the universities have created to show signs of transformation on one hand, and to brand themselves as attractive and more accommodative institutions on the other. UWC’s new slogan uses English only, which is one of the main global languages. In this way, it refutes Afrikaans, which was its original language during apartheid. The university’s new slogan ‘a place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge echoes the Latin motto mentioned above. There is a subtle reference to its past in which it aims to continuously transform and brand itself, not as a ‘bush’ university (see Chapter One), but as a site of academic excellence that promotes growth and knowledge. The way this statement is loaded with adjectives shows that it is not just a mere slogan, but one that has to create a powerful brand for UWC in the post apartheid era. As much as UWC shows its refutation of the language related to its oppressed past, it still fails to acknowledge some of the local languages as a way of promoting multilingualism.

However, all the three universities seem to be conscious of the need to transform and they have all come up with slogans that are more highlighted as a way to outshine their old identities. Therefore, what is evident here is that the universities are all foregrounding their slogans as the new brand markers which all the stakeholders can relate to. In other words, the Western mottos are still placed in prominent positions but they are also reinforced by new slogans that the universities chose. In choosing to keep these mottos, the universities also seem to promote the old ideology that the mottos in unfamiliar languages especially those of the West are aspirational and more powerful. This however can be seen as a powerful brand strategy, as it evokes a sense of diversity through multilingualism and multiculturalism within the transforming universities. This in turn makes the universities attractive to a wider community.

Each set of the main university brand markers carries the intended brand messages that are uniformly maintained and recycled in the branding discourses as is shown throughout this
thesis. The universities show clear signs of producing unified branding materials that are
glocalised. Therefore, unlike the traditional image of a university that was independent of
political and societal influence and was not built by advertising or branding (cf. Wernick,
1991), the modern image of these universities is responsive to the society and speaks to an
ideal political situation. Each university according to Osman (2006) was identified by its
name or logo and no further promotions were required. However, looking at these brand
markers, South African universities have clearly added new appealing lines in addition to the
traditional logos and names to create better brands that are more attractive, thereby marking
distinct brand identities.

In the awake of the new technologies of telecommunication, these universities are able to
access different resources and transform their brands using different modalities to
continuously repurpose and recirculate their names, logos and slogans on different goods for
public consumption. These goods are freely circulated as the universities now sell them to
the public and generate monetary gains just as other businesses in the world. Although this is
done on a low scale, the discourse of universities’ brand identities now includes more than
just a reputation. This echoes Fairclough’s assertion that universities are functioning and
articulating their identities as if they were businesses and are adopting what Treadwell and
Treadwell (2000) call a ‘corporate culture’.

The following paragraphs elaborate more on these arguments by looking at the homepages
and revealing how the universities continuously repurpose their crests, logos, slogans and
mottos together with the mission statements to build unique brands.

5.3 University homepages as brand marketing vehicles

The homepages are the first port of the universities’ virtual worlds and they carry different
modalities that highlight the attractive brand identities of the universities, as suggested in the
mission statements above. This section shows how the universities accentuate their brands
on their websites through resemiotising different semiotics as branding resources that
augment good university brands. It reveals that the universities’ brand teams are cognisant of
what can be used to create attractive imageries for their universities. They create websites
that are fully packed with hybridised information that is intended to let the world know their
brand identities, their services and achievements. This includes promises to the prospective
students. It also signals that the universities’ brands are accentuated on the websites not only for local consumption but also for regional and international consumption. The multiple semiotic and discursive chains are resemiotised and remediated in different modalities, as is shown in the websites homepages and other links analysed below.

5.3.1 SU Homepage

As can be seen from the SU website homepage in Figure 5.2 below, the university captured its landscape which includes well renovated old architectures, trees, statues, pavements and students to make an image that shows its brandscape on the website.

![Figure 5.2: SU’s homepage](image)

In similarity to its modern logo, analysed above, SU uniquely presents its well designed homepage as compared to UCT and UWC’s more conventional homepages as shown below. It has creatively packaged the most important semiotic materials on one main landscape image to carry its brand. Therefore, through the semioticizing processes (cf. Sörlin, 1999), the image carries different semiotic resources which are being remediated for branding
purposes. Together, they create an emblematic mental landscape brand identity of the university. Therefore, image reading path that entails looking from the Given/New and Real/Ideal Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (1996:187) is not clear cut. However, the way this main image is photographed, including a lot of semiotics without clear framing shows that reading of images in this growing technologised world is not as clear cut as argued in Kress and Van Leeuwen’s contribution to MDA. What is seen here, instead is that SU recreated a new reading path of its brand identity that entails both the old and new meanings. The images are grouped by the way the picture is captured on the camera. Blending of its institutional maroon colour and the landscape image helps in regrouping the different images as a unit that carry a unique SU brand identity. As such, the colour and the embedded Afrikaans and English links are used as connective devices (cf. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2007) that regroup the semiotic materials as showing one unified brand identity. The image is therefore strategically used to represent a brand identity encompassing both the old and new semiotic resources that paint a new SU brand identity. The old buildings and the statue of one of its fallen heroes John Marais, are repurposed to show both SU its original identity and new identity in which these resources are interpreted differently. Their recreation on this homepage as branding materials mixed with other semiotics such as the new logo and the inclusive slogan show the slowly changing institutional brand identity.

In addition, this landscape image shows students from different racial groups walking around the campus area in which the meaning of the statue of John Marais as a benefactor carries new meaning that SU is now inclusive and the groups who were refused entry during the colonial era are also able to be part of the university. This is shown by the distance as the students are pictured from the long shot, thus making the viewer more detached (Jewitt and Oyama, 2001:146). Therefore, this position enables the viewer to see the students not as individuals but types of participants that make up the university’s population. In this regard, the students’ presence in the image is subtly to add meaning to the brand identity the university intends the viewer to see. This image is also captured at a frontal angle thereby signalling involvement (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) with the viewers the university is inviting to become part of the world as depicted in the image. Therefore, this kind of brand identity repositioning on this homepage seems to suggest that the university is moving from being a site of exclusion to a site of inclusion in which the fallen heroes are meant to be interpreted by the previously disadvantaged group as also benefactors who helped build the university they can now benefit from.
This inclusion is also highlighted in the fact that SU which was predominantly Afrikaans, now uses English as the other language to include a wider community as compared to the past. This is clearly seen on the homepage above as the languages are neatly packaged to repetitively articulate the name of the university. The university however cleverly resuscitates the prestige of Afrikaans by foregrounding its name on the logo and salutation. The salutation reads as: WELKOM BY UNIVERSITEIT STELLENBOSCH followed by WELCOME TO STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY. Although it still shows that its main language is Afrikaans, it shows that it is accommodative to both the whole South African community and the world at large by having English as an additional language. Afrikaans, as the main language used by Afrikaner nationalists during apartheid has been associated with the oppression of the marginalised black people. Resistance to Afrikaans is epitomised in the infamous Soweto uprising of 1976, in which black learners rejected the imposition of Afrikaans, as the medium of instruction in their schools. SU chooses to maintain its previous identity centred on Afrikaans through casting the language in a new and positive way. It redefines Afrikaans and weaves it into the multilingual discourses that have become part of the new South Africa’s transformation agenda. In comparison to UCT’s homepage, below, which uses the three languages in a symbolic manner; it is noteworthy that SU genuinely uses English as the second language of academia (cf. Oostendorp and Anthonissen, 2014). On this homepage, users are directed to the webpages that have information presented in both languages.

As geosemiotics focuses on the meaning systems by which semiotic materials, buildings, and artefacts are located in the material world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003), what is captured in this image is SU’s material world with particular semiotics that are within the geospatial context to index a SU brand imagery. The landscape image is accentuated by these additional designs and other semiotics that make this main brand image more appealing to the virtual world. Therefore, geospatial emplacements of material signs are no longer necessarily limited to the stagnant posters on billboards and buildings. Technology enables spatial transformation of SU’s image of a physical landscape into an image that is not necessarily emblematic of its material world. As can be seen in the image above, the university is able to successfully transform and accentuate its brand identity on the virtual world for a wider consumption. It uses available semiotics to paint a brand identity image that is attractive through the blurring of boundaries between its past and its present as the old and new signs have been blended and repurposed with new assigned meanings. Through the
double lenses of relinguification and delinguification of the semiotic landscape, the homepage carries a metaphoric mental picture of a more accommodating university brand as compared to its past. This is further discussed below.

The statue of one of its benefactors, Marais, is also part of this identity and together with the old buildings, the university shows the identity it still intends to keep. The use of English however is a clear sign of the transformation at this university. The semiotic materials used to highlight this brand identity are well knitted together with the natural landscape of the mountains that surround the university. The maroon colour is uniformly used as the main colour thereby grouping the images into one main image and this can be interpreted as a device of oneness within the university. This inclusivity also shows a corporate identity SU is painting to the world. The inclusion of those mountains also signals the importance of these surrounding physical features in relation to the brand SU is painting. It also articulates its brand using the city in which it is situated. The Stellenbosch town’s physical tourist attraction promotional mountains are also included as part of the SU scenery. This strategy of drawing resources within the university and the town makes a beautiful brand that cannot be separated from this beautiful cityscape.

In the same way as SU, UCT also shows the resemiotisation of semiotic landscape of selected images that include the students and beautiful scenery, greenery and part of the tourist attractive mountains Cape Town is known for. This is further elaborated below.

### 5.3.2 UCT homepage

UCT also reuses its beautiful architecture, surrounding scenery and students to create its brand imagery. This is shown in Figure 5.3 below:
Figure 5.3: UCT’s homepage

These resources are enhanced using technology; colour and linguistic devices to paint an attractive virtual world as compared to the physical landscape (see Chapter Six). For instance, in the image with the UCT landscape image, the camera is zoomed to capture the surrounding mountains which automatically make the image more attractive. This kind of picture is also used as evidence of the fact that UCT is situated in an attractive area. Therefore, the prospective stakeholders are likely to consider this aspect in their brand consumption. The inclusivity of these mountains also represents the tourist sites that the stakeholder is to enjoy. Therefore, the university’s brand is blended with that of the city in which it is built upon. In this brand, UCT is able to accentuate its brand on one hand and that of the city on the other. Additionally, a sense of detachment is also conveyed by the use of an oblique angle whereby the resources and students are presented from a particular angle as if to show transition, thus implying that what the viewer sees is not part of his or her world (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). This is also a subtle way of capturing the attention of the viewer as they may spend more time in interpreting the image. Even the newsworthy
heading chosen to accompany the image (reads as: ‘Why there are so few black professors in South Africa’) provokes the viewer to pay more attention as discourses about racial inequalities are of interest especially in previously white-dominated spaces. This also makes UCT a more acceptable partner of the current government in addressing social inequalities.

This is further seen in the logo which encompasses the three official languages of the Western Cape Province, namely, English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans as part of its salutation that welcomes the viewer. This logo, in which UCT repeats its name in those three languages respectively, as discussed above is also recycled as part of the semiotic resource of the UCT brand. As shown above in the logo analysis, UCT maintains its original identity as an English based university. It however shows inclusivity by adding isiXhosa and Afrikaans as a way of claiming the government’s transformation agenda as its own. This echoes the theme of inclusivity as highlighted in the mission statement above. Using multilingualism as a transformation metaphor, it shows that it is changing not only to accommodate the South African community, but also the world at large. The multilingualism metaphor is strictly used for branding purposes because in effect, UCT only uses English as its primary language.

As much as UCT and SU use multilingualism as a brand metaphor signalling transformation, UWC shows monolingualism as a resource that also signals transformation in a subtle manner. This is further discussed in the following analysis of UWC homepage below.

5.3.3 UWC’s homepage

In contrast, UWC refuted the Afrikaans identity and replaced it with English which is more inclusive both to the local community and the world community. The interesting thing about UWC is that it continuously disowns its old identity. Figure 5.4 below shows the university’s new buildings that signal a new beginning in this 21st century.
Figure 5.4: UWC’s homepage

The landscape image of UWC seems to have been captured at night as the pictorial background is dark, but the lights and the golden colour illuminate into the university’s main building as if to signal the new era and also to show that it is evolving from being a bushy university to the one that is now competing with the others, such as UCT and SU. The dark background and the bright building can be read as a metaphor signalling UWC’s past and new era. As the other universities are sanitising their brands by renovating their old but beautiful buildings, and use signs of inclusion, such as having students from different backgrounds interacting and different languages, UWC uses its background to show that it is flourishing despite its crippling past. In this way, it continues to market itself as a site of inclusion and also tries to attract the international community as well. In terms of salience, (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996:212) the golden colour and the light makes this building more eye-catching and reinforces UWC’s prominence in the present era as compared to the past which is signalled by the darkness in the background. The UWC homepage uses several colours such as white, black, gold, and blue in presentation of different information and the building. This disconnection signifies individuality and differentiation (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996:215). That is, each separate piece of information has to be interpreted differently to reveal how it helps build an admirable brand.
The indexicality in this instance, is not simply a real copy of the physical signs to the material world, but rather that of the similarities and differences between the physical signs and the virtual world. In each instance, buildings are exaggerated to beautify the image of the university in the context in which they are placed for a wider consumption. This shows the importance of digital indexicalities to the branding process of the universities. As the semiotics overlap onto the homepages via visual, iconic, and metaphorical methods (cf. Liang and Huang, 2008), they bring to the institutional brandscapes a new look that is more admirable than the physical semiotic landscape. The emplacement of semiotics to the website homepages is a matter of cutting and pasting different semiotics that are selected for enhancing the brand; a practice that is not the same within the physical university scapes.

It is also noteworthy that on these websites, the universities package their information that one would normally get if they visit their offices. Therefore, their virtual worlds are now as good as the physical world. This shows that the universities, just like businesses, which are also making use of online services, are operating on the same level in which the students are encouraged to apply online and navigate the informational sites as a way of saving time and resources.

The universities remake and beautify their architectural images to accentuate their brand imageries for a wider consumption on their websites. The virtual world is used, not only to carry the brand to the world, but also to enable the consumers to enjoy such online self-services in independently accessing (or downloading) information. However, this is despite the fact that reality is sanitised and accentuated for selling purposes. The information uploaded on the virtual world is also an enhanced and recycled version of the physical university administration offices that enable the interested stakeholders to pick their choice through exploring or surfing the internet. The universities are able to package their information on these websites such that the people do not have to visit the physical spaces of these universities; they can even apply online and interact with the university team on this virtual world. Therefore, spatial-temporal semiotic production, reception, representation and distribution of resources and activities across modalities and contexts show subtle remediation (Prior and Hengst, 2010) of materials at hand in the brand building process. Just as businesses have online products or service buying and selling, the universities are also able to communicate their brands online and offer services to the consumers. This echoes Fairclough’s (1993) assertion that universities’ discourses are becoming more
entrepreneurial in this era of globalisation and that their discourses resemble those of businesses. Even their physical spaces especially offices may not be congested as some of their clients can now have self services on the universities’ online help desks. This decongestion of their physical space is also one way the universities make their brands more marketable and desirable.

What globalisation is doing is to make the world small and enhance interaction amongst people from different backgrounds and geospatials. As much as it makes communication and interaction easier it is also noteworthy that as much as the universities are able to brand and advertise themselves online, they are not doing that on the same footing. For instance the two HWUs simply sanitise their old but beautiful and expensive brandscapes, achievements and resources that backdate to the apartheid era whilst UWC is still evidently limping from the past despite being able to creatively accentuate its brand identity. When the customers especially the ones who are from the upper to middle classes may be more interested in classy brands and they are more likely to choose UCT and SU, the historically white institutions to maintain their status quo, whilst those from middle to lower classes may choose UWC, the historically black institution out of necessity. This on its own also continues in widening the gap among these universities and rich and the poor communities. This is further seen below as UWC seems to be too busy to create brand materials whilst the other two seem to brand themselves effortlessly. This echoes the fact that globalisation filters into spaces differently and in some cases it actually widens the gap between the poor and rich instead of converging them and creating an equal society. What can be seen here is also a glocalisation element of it that whereas the other two universities are more able to connect with the world by just opening up, UWC needs to rebuild itself into an able brand that reaches out to the world more for support rather than for students. The section below takes this argument further.

5.3.4 Website link internationalisation as brand selling point

In reinforcing the brand identities articulated in the mission statements, the universities continuously reappropriate and reformulate the hybridised discourses to position themselves to the world community. Notions of internationalisation and globalisation are used as branding strategies, as is evident on the websites, which contain dedicated links that are
dedicated to international students. Therefore, besides giving information, these branding strategies also help sell the universities. For instance, on its website, UCT gives reasons as to why it is the best to choose for international students. In its articulations, it focuses on describing itself as a leading African university, which is well connected to the world. Figure 5.5 below shows some of its claims:

Figure 5.5: UCT’s international student link

UCT describes itself as a world-class African university, the magic of Cape Town, which is one of the African cities that is frequented by tourists due to its natural beautiful physical features, such as, the Table Mountain, the fauna and flora, and the beaches, among others. Despite the fact that the other two universities are not very far from it, UCT takes the privilege to claim this association because it is located right in this city. Therefore, the city is reappropriated and remediated (cf. Bolter and Grusin, 1999) to present its brand as inseparable with that of Cape Town. In this way, UCT’s brand is more attractive even to the international community. The articulations are clear selling and convincing points that are aimed at attracting the international community. In such convictions, the university mentions that some of the staff members are reputed international scholars. Everything that is sellable
is included in this list from the services to academic programs. In a summary, the university organises the most attractive statements that augment its brand.

SU has also created a link that is particularly aimed at inviting the international community to come and study at the university. Just like UCT, SU also relates more to the beautiful town in which it is located and concentrates on its excellence and achievements as brand selling points to attract the international student. Figure 5.6 below shows how SU brands itself as an extraordinary university, and also how it tries to convince the international community that it is a world class university even if it is in Africa, an underdeveloped continent. It focuses on some of its internationally recognised world rankings as proof.

![Figure 5.6: SU’s international link](image)

As pointed above, the university continuously describes itself in relation to the town’s attractive features to paint an attractive brand. This is also in relationship to Popescu’s (2012) assertion that, as the city grows economically through branding, the university within that location also grows. The same happens to the city as the university grows or becomes well-known through branding strategies. In this case, the prominent Stellenbosch town just as Cape Town, does to UCT, becomes inseparable from the status of the university. The interested stakeholders are able to have complementary information about the town too.
The university also focuses on its achievements, which are recognisable at an international arena. Besides acknowledging its position as a South African academic institution, it paints an ideal brand identity as a world-class university. These convictions are undoubtedly attractive to those who would want to travel and study abroad. In similarity to UCT above, SU also claims the African territory and identity such that when people outside of Africa consider studying in Africa, they are likely to choose these academic institutions, being branded as international but African based universities. The surroundings of the universities’, achievements, rankings on the South African, African, and international level are communicated in the construction of an attractive brand.

In similarity to UCT and SU, UWC also clearly has a link dedicated to the international community assuring stakeholders that it is devoted to cater for the needs of the international students. Given its historical background as an underprivileged university, UWC takes pride in announcing that it is transforming as it can house the students in its own student village. Accommodation and security are the main concerns that people visiting South Africa normally have. The fact that UWC is cognisant of these concerns shows the dedication it has towards fostering a diverse student community. This is shown in Figure 5.7 below.

![Figure 5.7: UWC’s mission for international students](image)

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![Figure 5.7: UWC’s mission for international students](image)
There is a clear discrepancy in how the universities try to catch the attention of the international students. UWC does not have much to say in terms of its surroundings and other achievements that can be equated or compared to UCT and SU. Generally, all the universities show that they are not only open to the citizens of South Africa, but they are also open to people from other countries or the international communities. The resulting globalisation, on one hand, allows UCT and SU to boast about their achievements, resources and staffing, among other positives. However, that same globalisation shows, on other hand, negative consequences of an increasing inequity and marginalisation of the previously poor universities such as UWC, which do not have much to boast about as compared to their historically advantaged counterparts. Therefore, due to the socio-economic disparity, the 'digital divide,' and uneven access to higher education especially in South Africa, the concept of globalisation contains a number of intertwined but irreconcilable dynamics such as competition and cooperation, convergence and divergence, homogenisation and heterogenisation, generalisation and particularisation (Tsuruta, 2003). The universities are able to rearticulate their brand identities and fiercely compete, although on an unequal strength in this case.

Having these links on their websites allows the universities to share the information and easily gain more exposure within social networks and hence they become more widely available to other consumers. This gives them the opportunity to showcase themselves and thus deepen social connections with the world. This echoes Knight’s (1997:6) view that “globalisation is the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas” across borders whereas internationalisation of higher education is one of the ways a countries and their institutions (such as universities in this case), respond to the impact of globalisation whilst respecting their individuality.

Thus, the three universities focused on in this study find themselves on a new and rapidly changing playing field where acceleration of information and knowledge revolution is necessary for their prominent economic growth and development. One way to revolutionise development seems to be the increasing the rate of internationalisation, which is promoting worldwide mobility of people and knowledge. Obviously, these new challenges mean that universities are getting more opportunities to enhance their relevance. At the same time, however, these new challenges create a potential for conflict with universities’ institutional characteristics.
Considering the conflicting backgrounds and the present environment of these South African universities, it is evident that the universities have recognised the need to realign their institutional brand identities with strategies and policies that reform from an elitist and race-based system towards a more democratic education system, which fosters greater participation. The notions of internationalisation and globalisation (Elkin et al., 2008) are both used as strategic tools in the branding strategies by all the three universities to both recreate their brands and link themselves to the world at large. An international linkage therefore, helps these universities seek institutional status, pride and economic returns (Elkin et al., 2008). Similar to the western universities, (Mestenhauser, 1998), these universities claim world-class status. They also claim to offer international education through their promotional discourses, thereby widening their horizons through branding strategies. By internationalising themselves, (cf. Qiang, 2003) these universities are also able to revolutionalise their contexts and contribute to the labour market through moulding the much needed diverse graduates that respond to the needs of the new world economy (cf. Nicolescu et al., 2009).

In the online branding process, the universities create these web lexias that have rich information that enable them to be in touch with both local and international stakeholders. Through advancement of technology, the universities are further able to have social chat rooms in which they brand themselves, share information and engage with others within their contexts and abroad. Internet makes it very easy for these universities to even have an ‘e-admin’ as people from afar are able to contact them through emails, social chat rooms or the application and enrolment links through the websites. Even the stakeholders within the universities are able to participate in discussions of various topics regarding the universities via these social chat rooms. Therefore, to some extent, they are able to influence the branding process.

The sections below show how the social chat rooms are also viewed as brand building modalities that use different resources to continuously particular brands.

5.4 Going glocal on social chat rooms

As mentioned above, in positioning themselves as competitive international academic brands, the universities are able to widen their horizon by being immersed in the social chat
rooms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube among other links. They circulate their branding materials on these sites where they are consumed and shared amongst different people from different geospatial contexts. Links of these chat rooms are found on their website lexias where participants are able to access them at any given time. Just as the business world is flooded with different information on goods being branded or sold, the universities’ lexias are also bombarded with information that is blurring the boundaries of telling and selling (Fairclough, 1993). These forums enable the clients to click and pick the brands of their choice.

The use of internet, enables the universities to enhance their brands online and interact with their stakeholders. Figure 5.8 below indicates a picture of UCT on Twitter.

![UCT's Twitter page](image)

**Figure 5.8: UCT’s Twitter page**

In this case, UCT celebrated twenty years of freedom for which Nelson Mandela is shown as the main participant. UCT constructs its image through the monumental structure of the
Jameson Hall as highlighted in the image. The picture is taken from the frontal angle to show the scene as it were in the real world of UCT. Therefore, the image is Symbolic Suggestive because it stands for the Freedom Day celebration. It is also Symbolic Attributive (cf. Kress and van Leweeun, 1996) in the sense that the setting and all the participants, and represent UCT’s interactive and transforming world whereby the university officials (for example the ones in red gowns) are interacting with others who have come to join them in this commemoration. The fusion of the buildings, the participants, and the Mandela image with the UCT logo highlights authentication as if to convince the viewer that the event happened at UCT. Putting this on Twitter page shows an extended meaning of freedom to the country and world. This is because now, unlike the past, UCT is being portrayed as an open and democratic environment. As such, posting this image on Twitter is a deliberate move by UCT to showcase a new brand identity of an accommodative university as compared to its past.

The image is taken from a high vertical angle, and as such, the interactive participants look smaller and therefore not as powerful as the face of Mandela, which is shown as more salient. Mandela is positioned at a higher angle, to show him as being more powerful. This is partly because of his position as a freedom fighter, the first president of a democratic South Africa and also as the image of the new dispensation of a free country. The buildings and Mandela’s image are made more salient to communicate the event and the history on one hand and on another hand, to subtly rebrand the university.

In this particular case, Mandela, however, momentarily overshadows the other historical icons of UCT and one may be tempted to think that this is the new face of UCT. Having this picture on Twitter will have UCT’s brand elevated as transforming and more accommodating in the new South Africa. This mass mediated event started as a social gathering way before the country gained its independence, [when freedom fighters and their supporters would gather and mobilise each other in their quest for freedom]. Eventually, this event that is commemorated at UCT- a historically white university. With the turn of events, interestingly, it is being reposted on Twitter that UCT itself is commemorating national freedom. Echoing the sentiments [in the mission statement] on redressing the past ills as an attractive stance, this event is recycled, repurposed and recontextualised as a branding
material. The semiotic materials used to showcase this event such as the crest slogan, name, and crest of the university and surrounding physical features such as the mountains and the greenery show a hybridised branding image that brings in different discourses that are subtly fused to communicate a positive brand for UCT.

The photos and videos of that event are posted on this Twitter page, and people from all walks of life are able to tweet and share, thereby helping UCT to gain more popularity. This extends to what is called interpersonal semiotic encounter, in which a lot of people are connected within unified participation frameworks (Agha, 2007:9). Therefore, given the historical background of this university, strategically selected events, pose as evidence of a transforming UCT.

SU’s Facebook page below, in Figure 5.9a, also shows the university’s name, logo, buildings and different pictures of events captured to showcase its activities to the world and also to promote its brand.

![Figure 5.9a: SU’s Facebook page](image)
Just as the other branding semiotics used above, the same image used on the SU’s homepage is also reused on Facebook to continuously show attractive and unified brand imagery. More images are used to show the events happening at the university. This conscious selection can be seen as a strategic tool to enhance the university’s brand.

This picture also includes a Twitter page in which the student’s logo Maties is used to invite prospective students to apply at the university. As such, current students are also brand ambassadors that are used to attract new students and appeal for them to enrol with SU. Figure 5.9 b below, gives a picture of this kind of Facebook branding helps SU with the facilitation of information about enrolment.

Figure 5.9b: SU’s Facebook page

The current university students are able to interact with the potential clients. Having this kind of interaction helps the university to publish more information about itself and make it believable and authentic as the students share their experiences of being a ‘Matie’ at SU. Consequently, they can elicit desired responses from these students and save those
prospective students who may not make it to open days due to distance and financial constraints. Thus, refreshingly, some prospective students will always have their ‘open days’ on Facebook, especially those who cannot travel from other countries for such information. The image below, in Figure 5.9c, shows the main page for the SU students’ interaction platform, where they post different types of videos of events at their university.

![SU’s Maties TV page](image)

**Figure 5.9c: SU’s Maties TV page**

In these three images, SU uses its current students on the social platforms to both communicate its brand and also invite prospective students. Their interactions within the university become important in the brand communication. Just as the business world uses famous people to sell their products and services, SU uses its students to show the good and interesting student life at the university. The lexia above have multiple links to show more events, discussion forums, and music, among others. The selected branding materials are not random; rather, they have been subtly chosen to index the intended brand.

In similarity to UCT and SU above, UWC also uses Facebook to showcase its brand. The image below, in Figure 5.10, is also a resemiotised event theme of UWC’s achievement as a winner for being the greenest campus.
Figure 5.10: UWC’s Facebook page

Sharing such recognitions, help UWC enhance its brand as through resemiotisation and remediation, this event can be shared and circulated on the social chatrooms. That is, it goes beyond being an informational point about what UWC is doing, becomes a sign of the transformational authentic branding materials for the university. This way, the university automatically engages consumers with the brand and enables them to share the message.

The internet chat rooms therefore, play two roles. The first one is that they are used to give factual brand data about events and messages the universities subtly choose to relay to the public. The second one is that of continuous transformation of the brand imageries to aid wider consumption of the brand with a unique set of psychological characteristics. Typical messages are creatively chosen and presented with a mindset of enhancing the consumption of information by consumers. It is noteworthy, in this case, that the universities choose the events and news that have the ability to transform the actual experience to an accentuated brand image and unique selling proposition strategy, which consumers cannot resist but share with others, thereby helping the universities to be well known. In this way, the consumers are also able to form and build relationships and experiences with the universities’ brands. Therefore, semiotic remediation is done at each stage and each semiotic material attracts different genres and discourses in the branding trajectory.

Moreover the internet allows the consumers to engage with the brand for a long period of time, and it can go into greater depths than other forms of advertising (Taylor, 2009). For instance, as can be seen in this picture from UWC Twitter page, in Figure 5.11, the consumers are even encouraged to not miss any updates.
Figure 5.11: UWC’s Twitter page

The Twitter page for UWC above shows the outgoing rector’s farewell tribute. People who visit this page are encouraged to like or share their messages in response to the event. This way, the tribute is extended beyond borders, for a man whom UWC respects as one of its own and also as part of the brand. This rector is also the face of UWC brand as is shown in the video analysis in Chapter Seven. The way readers would read this message goes beyond it just being a UWC affair; the message helps enhance UWC’s brand by associating the university with such a phenomenal man. Consumers are able to engage through sharing, chatting and voting thus increasing the brand effectiveness. This can be related to what DasGupta (2009) terms crowd sourcing, which is a method that involves and uses “crowds” or large numbers of people to perform and engage on the chosen material for branding in this case.

This ability to crowd source is also a way of globalising the universities’ brand identities as the sharing and connectivity goes in depth on the internet as compared to other strategies of advertising media.
5.5 Repurposing historical discourses for competitive advantages

Given the universities’ historical backgrounds, as highlighted in Chapter One, UCT is not able to boast of its past under the apartheid regime as compared to UWC. Therefore, instead of recontextualising this history, it does what Bernstein, (1990) calls decontextualising processes, whereby relevancies and presences or absences (meaning-makings) are politicised and contested in the identification process.

UCT’s history is rewritten in a transforming manner by accepting the university’s historical negative role in the apartheid era on one hand and using counteractive measures on another hand in a bid to signal how the university, at each stage, has moved away from the ghosts of oppression. For instance, on its Facebook pages, it puts all its years of existence dating from its formation years up to now, and chooses to show how it countered the oppressive measures against the non-white community as signs of gradual transformation. This is shown in Figure 5.12 below.

![First black students officially admitted](image)

Figure 5.12: UCT’s Facebook historical update

These apologetic positive statements subtly erase or neutralise the negative history upon which the university was built. It is ironic that in the midst of oppression, these minor
changes were actually implemented in response to the rising number of the black people in South Africa who were relentlessly fighting for equality.

However, UCT shows the subtle rejection of the previous identity by accepting the history and centring its new identity on the achievements of trying to accommodate the different racial groups. This is despite the fact that these previously out-casted racial groups slowly gained entry into these hitherto forbidden lands through merit. To some extent one can say they earned their worth to be part of the white institution as it was not through equality that they gained such entry by working very hard or they had to be exceptionally good. Without a closer reading and understanding, readers especially, those who are not familiar with the political discourses in the country, can easily misread UCT as a university that has always tried to offer equal opportunity to the disadvantaged races.

This shows how UCT is keen as any business enterprise to attract diverse target audiences. It therefore, advantageously recycles its history through choosing pragmatics that is positive, both during the apartheid era and the present. For instance, since UCT is a HWU and was not disadvantaged during the apartheid era, it distances itself from the politics in which it was created and chooses to articulate its brand as solely a university that had to continuously function despite the racial divisions and hardships. It draws on the positive aspect, the fact that all the colonial masters built the university, which would benefit the society. It also, in a way, criticises the government of the day for not only dividing racial spaces but also for favouring white spaces at the expense of the other races. In this way, UCT creatively use the notion of recontextualisation and decontextualisation (cf. Bernstein, 1990), both during the apartheid and the present era to articulate a positive brand. That is, on one hand it recognises itself as one of the institutions which housed the colonisers and on the other hand, it reveals the inner conflicts within the academia in response to the political situation as a way of slowly pulling away from its original identity in favour of a more functional and attractive brand identity that is more diverse.

In contrast to UCT, SU uses an avoidance approach, as it does not recycle its historical background. Instead, it holistically embraces its past identity and continues to remould it to fit into the new dispensation. On its webpage and Facebook pages, it rather focuses on the current events such as: strategically calling upon the most influential black people to be
guest speakers or receive honorary degrees, an act that is also seen as claiming to celebrate the prestigious, black and on the other hand subtly ignoring those that are seemingly not adding any worth to its identity. By drawing on these public figures, SU seemingly associates itself with the new dispensation. Therefore, SU recreates and enhances the relevance of their brand by association. For instance, Mandonela in Figure 5:13 below, is a public protector who has been fighting against corruption in the country.

Figure 5.13: SU’s news link

Her focus has been on the current government’s way of handling national funds. Although she has been widely criticised for trying to undermine the democratic government, SU sees it as an opportunity to be one of the universities in the country to honour her with a doctorate degree for her courageous execution of office duties. This can create press publications for the university, and this kind of publicity can also help the university to increase its reputation in the new South Africa, considering its historical background as a HWU. This positive role positions SU as an accommodating institution that also has an interest in the public and governmental affairs. Moreover, the picture shown on the website is taken at a frontal angle (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996). Mandonela is, thus, presented as a powerful figure. As has already been said, SU therefore, recreates its brand through honouring powerful people in the country. These powerful people would, in turn, become part of its community as alumni. They would also be possible commencement speakers during important events at the university.
Conversely, UWC keeps on using its historical background as a branding tool. Positive events at the university are seen as big achievements despite the crippling past. This past is backgrounded information (see the historical artefact in first picture in Figure 5.14 below) signalling the kind of platform it is transforming. The transformed is discursively shown through catchy phrases such as UWC- AN OASIS OF LEARNING and its new slogan (a place of quality to grow, from hope to action through knowledge...) as shown in Figure 5.14 below.

![UWC’s prospectus page](image)

Figure 5.14: UWC’s prospectus page

As such, the historical background is treated as the catchy mantra for its key strengths and this positions it as an able university that is now competitive in a global marketplace. This positioning attracts stakeholders that would want to see it compete more with the other big universities and move away from the negative brand of being a bush university.

Its achievements are always measured against its past. Therefore, UWC has moved (or is moving) from a disenabling history to an enabling time and situation, in which it can where it can operate well and help the nation to grow whilst also connecting to the world. An example can be seen above, with the embodied women students who are now part of student
population at UWC. This is the opposite of what the historical statue depicts. These female students are used to sanitise that history where women were confined to housework. This image can also be interpreted as evidence for the democratic environment and success at the university. The image does two things: showing the the prospective stakeholder how UWC is changing lives for the better and reasserting its identity as a strong brand in which success is possible despite its background. This picture is then accompanied by links in which UWC informs the client about its world-class excellence, the admission criteria and application and registration processes. The packaging of the information is strategically done to enable the client to do a self-service, as is common with big financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies where people are able to complete forms and do transactions with much ease.

Whilst the other two universities can do the same, UWC gains more points for being able to accelerate in development, given its history. This, however, does not necessarily mean that it is becoming more of world-class than the other two as it is still competing on unequal grounds. It is evidently limping in a bid to catch up with others and compete with both the privileged South African and other universities outside the country.

5.6 Semioticising corporate identities and globalisation through fashion and crockery

Apart from selling their courses and other services on their websites, these universities also sell goods that carry the brand slogans and promises, among others. The universities’ use fashion and crockery as branding materials.

In circulating and publicising their brands, the universities have small shops in which they sell branded goods. The goods carry the universities’ names, logos, slogans, and brand promises that are imprinted or engraved on them and sold or distributed to people within their environments and outside. These are also given to academic partners or visitors, who will, in turn, circulate these branded goods in their respective environments. This way they help the universities to be more popular. Figure 5.15a shows some of the items that are used as branding semiotic objects at UCT.
In the first image of Figure 5.15a above, UCT is seen branding itself through repurposing its logo and name to sell clothing items. The second image shows the special offer at UCT’s shop on collected items used to mark the twenty years of freedom in South Africa. The items are even sold at a reduced price to make sure that the university gains many customers. The advertisement shows that the special offer is not only for the UCT community but for the country as a whole as it is posted in several online portals. In similarity to the Twitter page that shows the freedom commemoration, this is another way of UCT redressing the past by being on the forefront to celebrate freedom. This is a sign that UCT is accommodative, repentant and transforming. As these clothing items recirculate within the country or outside, the UCT brand will undoubtedly grow.

On the other hand, SU and UWC also sell selected branded items such as clothing, tea sets, mugs, bottles, vehicle livery, and flags, among others, to make the brand identities of the
universities known to both insiders and outsiders of the universities. The mobility of the people using branded items, will also increases the brand’s awareness.

In branding their items, the universities use different promotional lexical sets that make the brands attractive. For instance, UWC’s materials carry messages such as *excellence in sport* to signal that it is of high quality and also to tap into the sport market that, at another level, has been used as a successful catalyst of integrating the racial groups in a post apartheid South Africa; *a Place to grow from hope to action* to show both its growth and dynamism. UCT’s *hottie* depicts newness, modernity, and friendliness. It also shows a relaxed atmosphere at a once restricted and restricting university, where the variety of Standard English as the main language was mainly associated to the British sentiments and royalty. Hottie derived from the word ‘hot’ carries a different meaning and is used to transform the conservative UCT brand to a more dynamic one just as it is in the business related advertising industry. SU uses its name and phrases such as *Forever SU* to depict that it is everlasting and trustworthy. Conservatism can also be used interpret such a phrase to denote a continuous a refurnishing of the old brand identity to fit the contemporary environment Originality sells more on the market, and SU uses this as a branding strategy. All these articulations become the promises that are created to define the brands. The images of the semiotic objects are as shown below in Figure 5.14b and c.
Figure 5.15b: SU’s branded items

Figure 5.15c: UWC’s branded items
While carrying out the fieldwork, the researcher also noted that the students wear some of these branded items or carry bags that are branded. Some of the items, such as, pens and broaches, are given for free to the students during graduation events, orientations and open days. Additionally, all the universities have Microsoft templates (that are used for conference, seminar and lecture presentations) pens, writing pads, and others. In this way, as they move around different contexts using these goods, the universities gain popularity. Therefore, the branded goods are also used as brand carriers and are able to help the universities to be known. Although the universities do not massively produce and sell these products, their main purpose is to showcase their brands to the world rather than to sell the items themselves. As the customers use these brands, they increase their association with the universities, and this connectivity makes the universities brands grow bigger and bigger.

These resources are reused in different contexts to create the massive brand imageries. Therefore, one can infer that the ‘fashionable’ items are used as metaphoric means to a dynamic branding that is a two way street in which both the university and the brand user are benefiting.

5.7 Summary of chapter

This chapter, has thus, shown that these universities are dedicating their time and resources to brand building, and that each uniquely tries to identify itself as an inclusive university and as a good academic brand. They all use semiotic resources, such as, their mission statements, logos, and crests, buildings, and branded goods, among others, to brand themselves. These resources are circulated across different modalities such as homepages, Twitter and Facebook lexias. These selected semiotics and modalities get circulated across a variety of media and contexts to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process. Using these resources, the universities are able to discursively maintain, deconstruct and reconstruct their institutional, historical, cultural and social structures in the branding process. Therefore, these universities, just like their counterparts in the West, are no longer creating discourses that are only informational but that blur between giving information and selling (cf. Fairclough, 1993). Their information, functions as persuasive abstractions and discursive means to promote the institutions and their prospective stakeholders..

The promotional materials examined in this chapter reveal attractive brands with all the affordances of the internet as their medium (Myers, 1999). The universities’ branding
discourses are filtered with prestige and elitism. Every university under study takes whatever is necessary for branding purposes. A closer look also notes that this stylisation of branding discourses is an imposition of a style in which universities are entangled in a bid to sell themselves to the world on one hand, and to take forward the government’s transformation agenda. Therefore, the discursive strategies and semiotics of what is proposed as a discourse of branding is a remediation of different discourses, images and events that are reconstructed to carry new meanings relative to the brand articulation process. The universities attempt to balance local (national) identities with global identities. It is here that the differences in identity construction between the universities are highlighted so that they remain distinct universities. Prospective students are fully mobile and immersed in various digital worlds, and the universities constantly show that they are continuously branding themselves for their growth, survival, and that they embrace, changes to meet the needs of these students. The universities’ websites are busy social platforms in which the universities are fiercely competing for publicity and branding purposes.

These universities also appropriate social and corporate discourses in the refashioning of individualised brand identities. Of particular interest are those of struggle and social transformation discourses which are blended with sales-promotion and globalisation discourses, effectively blurring the boundary between socio-political and marketisation. This commoditisation of struggle and transformation discourses has led to the semiotic refiguring of universities from spatial edifices of racially based unequal education to equal opportunity institutions of higher learning.

In terms of individualisation, the kinds of semiotic resources, modalities and metaphors the universities use in their corporate brand enactment process show an unequal footing in which the HWUs are better off whilst the HBU tries to impress the audience using the little available at its disposal. The chapter has also shown the implications for corporatisation and responsible citizenship, especially in the face of the inherited socio-economic inequalities in South Africa. This is also revealed further throughout the thesis as the discrepancy is wide despite the fact that each university is trying by all means to paint a unique attractive brand for itself.
CHAPTER SIX

CREATION OF INSTITUTIONAL BRANDSCAPES AT UCT, SU AND UWC

6.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the semiotic landscape and resemiotisation and re-presentations of semiosis at the three universities. It shows how the different resources are emplaced and carried out in different semiotic modes to capitalise on brand meaning making across both physical and online scapes. This includes revealing how the universities have recreated their semiotic landscapes as university brandscapes through repurposing and recirculating certain images and linguistic forms in their branding process. The emplacement of different resources brings out the brand identity of each university. Looking at the emplacement and the semiotic remediation of different symbols and artefacts that contribute to the brand construction, the chapter also shows how the universities revoice others’ words, repurpose objects, represent ideas in different media and remake both their environments and themselves along the branding positioning processes. Such reworking of discourses and semiosis shows manipulation of multiple kinds of signs, words and images across modalities in the post apartheid South African academic contexts.

6.1 Territorial branding at the three universities.

In this section, the researcher reveals that LL is better seen as a combination of SL, as suggested by Jaworski and Thurlow (2010), and the semiotic emplacement within the physical locations also calls for an inseparable analysis using SL and geosemiotics (cf. Scollon and Scollon 2003).

In reference to the architecture as a branding semiotic resource, as shown on the universities’ homepages in Chapter Five, the buildings in these universities seem to be telling different stories in connection to their brands. It is within their original physical spaces that the universities tone down the promotional upbeat and creatively articulate brands that carry ideological meanings as compared to their virtual worlds. SU and UCT carry the apartheid history whilst UWC is seemingly erasing that past and moving on to the future where it is possible to completely erase it.
There is a sense of repurposing of historical artefacts that are being made relevant in modern times. There is a juxtaposition of the past, present and continuity within the universities’ landscapes; there are also remarkable historical artefacts that have double logic. Each artefact symbolises the universities’ early beginning on one hand, and on the other hand, they become the identity markers of the universities where they are used. All these signs refer back to the apartheid time. The statues are read as texts that contribute to the branding discourses. Lemke (2001:301) describes this kind of multimodal interaction as making ‘multiplicative meanings’ within semiotic landscapes. These arguments are detailed in the following sections.

6.1.1 Signs of contradictions and signs of change at UCT

Historically, at UCT, Cecil John Rhodes is well known as one of the benefactors who helped in funding and providing some of the land where UCT is built. During this time, he was working hand in hand with the colonial emperors to colonise South Africa and its neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe and Zambia. At UCT, Rhodes’ negative role during colonialism is blurred by his financial influence over the establishment of the university. This influence, to some extent, is used here to paint a good brand identity associated with old business players. In short, his presence at UCT is interpreted rather positively for what he did to build and further support (or sustain) the academic institution. Figure 6.1 below shows the strong and remarkable man who is seemingly in contemplation.
This man was one of the mining tycoons who donated some of his money and land to build the university. In remembrance of him, UCT erected this statue, which is well positioned in front of the university’s main hall that is also named after another fallen hero, Jameson. The statue’s emplacement within the university’s landscape marks UCT’s brand identity that is not separate from its past donors. One cannot miss it as they enter the university. Looking at it closely, it is clear that this statue forms part of UCT brand identity without having to verbally express itself. The statue is highly erected, facing the horizon of the university as if to mark territory. His posture is also of someone who is relaxed and in deep thought, perhaps thought of what they may be seeing. It shows a captivating presence that makes it unavoidable to the UCT visitors and stakeholders.

A clear interpretation of this statue is that of a tycoon who has contributed his wealth to build the university, which everyone, especially in the South African context can enjoy. This
way, the university opens the doors to everyone. By the same token, such signs of the past as Cecil John Rhodes’ statue are sanitised; they should be a positive part of the university that perhaps ought to be divorced from the oppressive hand of the apartheid regime. What is ironic, though, is that even those students from the once oppressed backgrounds are ushered into this university to share what the now ‘fallen hero’ left. Their interpretation of Cecil John Rhodes as one of the people who oppressed them in the past, could lost as they are seemingly encouraged to remember him as a tycoon who generally left his legacy for all to enjoy. UCT subtly maintains its old identity in this case. This is further illustrated by the way it named most of its buildings after fallen heroes who were also on the right hand of the apartheid regime. An example of some of these names is shown below in Figure 6.2:
Figure 6.2: UCT’s buildings

As if to neutralise this identity that carries signs of an oppressive past and bring in signs of change, UCT placed Nelson Mandela’s statue on one of its buildings in the university; In fact, this building (that carries Mandela’s statue) is only a few meters away from the main hall, which of course carries Cecil John Rhodes’ statue. The way Nelson is placed can be interpreted using the notion of double logic raised above. On one hand, one can interpret it as a way of the university honouring Mandela, who fought against the apartheid regime and also as the first president of the democratic South Africa. In comparison to the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, it is clear that the two statues carry different weights and importance. Rhodes’ statue is well foregrounded as the main contributor to the establishment of the university. He is honoured by erecting a huge full-bodied statue, which suggests permanent presence as part of the university.

In contrast, Mandela’s statue seems to have been placed as an afterthought to try and sanitise the identity UCT is foregrounding. His statue is just his head and shoulders and is placed on a window like wall on the building as one who came to intrude in the university’s order when he fought against apartheid and became the first president in South Africa whereby UCT is now open to everyone. It is ironic that these two statues which are signs of contradictions, are placed within the grounds of UCT to chorously identify UCT and redress the past atrocities left by the apartheid regime. This is despite the fact that their positioning, sizes and qualities are different and index different meanings in building the university’s brand identity. However, through semiotic repurposing one can say that the university strategically uses these statues to bring in the needed change in which, through new meanings, the statues are positively interpreted as positive brand resources for a better UCT brand identity.

It is however noteworthy to mention that during the last few days of writing this thesis, there was a radical campaign in which Rhodes’ statue was defaced by angry students at UCT. In a protest marked ‘Rhodes Must Fall,’ the students aired many unaddressed inequalities within the institution after two decades of democracy. They argued that Rhodes’ statue is a remnant of the past and, that it reminded them of a painful past. They insisted on having statues of some of the freedom fighters erected at the expense of those of the ‘imperialists.’ This campaign reignited both political and social discourses, at the institutional, national and regional level, on how the past is not adequately addressed in order for people to move on in
the post apartheid era. After heated discussions, the statue was removed to a ‘safe place’ (see Figure: 6.3 below).

Figure 6.3: Rhodes’s defaced statue and its removal

This campaign clearly brings to the core the blurred transformation discourses that are being reconstructed by the HWUs, which are at crossroads with regard to how to brand themselves in the new South Africa. In this campaign, the students no longer saw Rhodes as a benefactor but as a symbol of the colonialism and racism within the university, an interpretation that also defaces this statue as a positive brand marker. The landscape at UCT is now carrying new signs of campaigns, to rebrand and find ways to truly give the university an African brand. Figure 6.4 below, shows one of the homepage pictures that indicate these issues at UCT.
This campaign sparks off other discourses of how to transform UCT. Therefore, even the UCT virtual brandscape and chat rooms are now dotted with new images and stories that seem to lead to another engagement of a continuous trajectory of brand transformation. This case also shows that different people can interpret signs the same signs differently even though they may be in the same geographical space. This radical campaign has since spread to other universities, which have statues of other colonialists or those who were supporters of the minority rule during apartheid.

### 6.1.2 Signs of contradictions and signs of change at SU

In similarity to UCT, SU carries the statue of its benefactor, Jan Marais who financially supported the university during its early years (*cf.* Chapter Five). This statue is also strategically erected and positioned near the Student’s Centre where it is clearly visible. It is a gigantic statue standing tall and watching the horizon of the territory. As such within this
landscape, Jan Marais is unforgettable and becomes part of the university’s brand identity through association to its benefactor who was economically sound.

Figure 6.5: Jan Marais at SU

Celebrating the life of this influential businessman also carries double logic. The first one is that, as the university cherishes this man, it also associates its brand to the people who helped it grow. It is clear that SU and UCT benefactors cannot be separated from the apartheid-ruling regime, which presided over and supported segregation laws and in which the people who were benefiting amassed wealth at the expense of the oppressed people. This image draws on a selective historical discourse because it is a monument of Jan Marais who was a wealthy Stellenbosch citizen and benefactor of the town and university. Jan Marais left a 100 000 (British) Sterling pounds to The Victoria College- which later developed into the
Stellenbosch University in his will (see Chapter One). This statue is recontextualised and resemiotised as part of the branding materials that help shape SU’s identity on the virtual world of SU homepage as analysed in Chapter Five. Although this happened during the separatism laws of apartheid it is not only white Afrikaans speaking people who are benefitting now. Now it is everyone who becomes part of SU that benefits Jan Marais’ legacy. This way, the past that is associated with apartheid is subtly backgrounded as unimportant as SU is now an open university.

In addition to the statue, the picture above on the right hand in Figure 6.5 shows part of the linguistic landscape that is used to both name the university and give information. The name of the university is clearly highlighted in red, a colour too striking for viewers to miss. Most of the signage is mainly written in Afrikaans, but some parts of the messages are also translated into English. The way the languages are positioned and used in the naming of the buildings and places around the campus, shows Afrikaans as the main brand marker. In this way, SU subtly maintains its identity even on its brandscape as an Afrikaans university. The signage materials are mostly used to name the buildings rather than to give any other kind of information to the extent that it is clear that their main functions are that of branding the university and marking its territory within the town. Its buildings are clearly marked in Afrikaans as shown in Figure 6.6 below.
The names of the buildings are written in capital letters to enhance their visibility. The building below was named after Jan Marais and it houses the faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. This is a way of maintaining its past with little changes. The branding discourses are thus ideological in that they construct brand identities and relationships with the consumers through representing and reproducing systems and maintaining structures of inequality and privilege (cf. Fairclough, 1992; Hodge and Kress, 1993). This reveals how semiotics can be more socially constitutive of identities as they can reproduce and maintain them through existing conventions, or challenging and transforming them through more creative practices (Fairclough, 1995: 55), such as branding, in this case.

Another example of creatively maintaining this brand identity is shown in Figure 6.7 below.
The first image shows SU’s Student Centre, which, although it belongs to the university, houses different shops that are also open to the public. The second image is a post office, called Matieland Post Office. Matieland is derived from the name matie, which means ‘friends forever’ in Afrikaans. Thus it can also be inferred that this Afrikaans word or name, which is associated with SU’s students does the work of branding SU as an Afrikaans university as discussed in Chapter Five. Bearing in mind that this is an ordinary post office which can just be branded that, SU renames it as a way of marking its territory in the same way it names its Student Centre (NEELSIE) and university shop (MATIE) in Afrikaans as shown in figure 6.7 above. The last image shows the SU shop branded Die MATIE Winkel, which sells some of SU’s branded items. In this way, SU manages to accentuate its identity brand that is well positioned to attract people who walk in and around its vicinity. As people move around the SU area, clients are bombarded by these messages that present a powerful brand. The business related resources are renamed and circulated around this area, where a wider community consumes them. This makes the brand unforgettable, and as the goods are circulated, branding the university becomes an effortless process, but yet a powerful and admirable one.
6.1.3 Signs of contradictions and signs of change at UWC

Unlike the two other universities, UWC cleverly uses an artefact, which represents the historical struggle whereby the majority of the people in the country were oppressed. The statue also symbolises that time when women were restricted from the academic spaces and confined to household chores. A well-known sculptor called David Hlongwane erected the statue placed in between the university’s main library and the administration buildings as shown in Figure 6.8a below.

![UWC's landscape 1](image)

Figure 6.8a: UWC's landscape 1

In this context, the statue is simply used to highlight the oppressive background in which UWC was created. In this way, UWC claims the ownership of the country’s liberation struggle in which it was one of the disadvantaged. This statue is also strategically placed in front of (and between) the student centre, the main hall, administration offices and the
library. It is clearly visible. It can also be interpreted as a sign of heritage denoting both the university’s (and the country’s) past and the present.

Unlike UCT and SU, which used the apartheid wealthy benefactors, UWC, used the freedom benefactor, Nelson Mandela, as the main figure who helped bring freedom both to the country and at the university. The banner on one of its buildings as shown above shows Mandela’s smiling face. The message accompanying Mandela’s resilient face, thanks him, not for building the university but for his contribution to South Africa’s liberation struggle. To emphasise on the role Mandela played, this banner is strategically posted around the campus and it forms part of the branding discourse. Here, Mandela is strictly portrayed as a liberator rather than as an opponent as depicted at UCT. It is noteworthy that Mandela’s role during apartheid as a fighter against the white supremacy is interpreted differently in these universities.

However, through branding, these universities are able to subtly manipulate semiotic resources that are available to them to create particular meanings that make their brands more desirable. It is also noteworthy to mention that both UCT’s and UWC’s Mandela’s statue and image, respectively, are not whole figures. Both the statue at UCT and the image at UWC are in passport form (showing the head and shoulders only). While this signal Mandela has an important figure as the head or first president of a new democratic South Africa, it could also signal an on-going slow transformation in which one wonders if they would house a full statue of this fallen hero who has also become one of the South illustrious brands. Whilst it could be expected that UWC as a HBU, would be the first to erect the statue of Mandela or other heroes, it is ironic that UCT at least has him as a statue that seems to carry more weight and permanence as compared to the banner at UWC. All in all, this is one example of the South African universities being able to ingeniously build attractive brands using resources that are at their disposal.

In terms of linguistic resources, UWC uses English in most cases to showcase its branding material, and this is maintained on its homepage, as shown above. However, it only uses three Western Cape Province languages on the triangular billboards placed at the two of its main entrances, as shown in Figure 6.8 b:
Here, the languages are strategically ordered in such a way that isiXhosa is not clearly visible to the viewer coming to the university but rather visible to the insider as they walk or drive out of the campus. The isiXhosa part is thus more obscure or less obvious than English and Afrikaans. English and Afrikaans are more visible with English being presented as the prominent language as it is present into two of the four angles that are well positioned to the viewer both outside and inside the universities. This emplacement of English emphasises UWC as an English medium university. However, in similarity to UCT, which uses the three languages in its slogan (see Chapter Five) UWC identifies itself as an accommodating university through using multilingualism as a branding resource. This is a positive brand resource as it is an indication of both inclusivity and transformation on both local and international levels.
6.2 Remediation of signs of struggle and privileges at the three universities

The sections above highlight signs of struggle and privileges carrying new meanings in their respective contexts. The analysis shows that semiotic remediation, as a practice, helps to demystify branding communication by showing the diverse ways in which the selected semiotics are re-represented and reused across modes in this branding process. The universities dialogically voiced and embodied others by placing and keeping historical objects that mark unique brand identities in their contexts. Signs of the past are being resanitised and recontextualised in the universities contexts as neutral but admirable contributors to building the renowned brands of the universities. These signs include the statues of fallen heroes of both the apartheid era and the new dispensation. These relics of the past speak volumes as to the kind of brands the universities are creating. Therefore, here, the signs of heritage are not an isolated trend; they are manipulated to appear as if they are important in the present. This heritage or tradition authenticity gives room for interpretation of the historical buildings and statues, images or names of fallen heroes in the present as monuments or signs that beautify and enhance the universities’ brandscapes.

The statues within the three universities’ brandscapes show a reproduction of the apartheid discourses being repurposed as materials for the brand identity in the new dispensation. In relation to branding they all subtly retain their identities and manipulate them to become discourses of transformation. This contradiction and entanglement between the past and the present raise questions as to whether these universities can ever be able to find neutral brand identities that are not mainly rooted in their past. It is clear here that the contradictory statues of these benefactors are seen as both actors of apartheid and transformation. This articulates the centrality of the notion of chronotopes (cf. Leander, 2001; Lemke, 2005; Prior, 1998; Prior & Shipka, 2003; Silverstein, 2005) as the situated semiotic interactions link to past and projected histories of the universities are silently articulated to brand the universities. The dialogicality of semiotic remediation is therefore seen here as the semiotics weave together modes, media, genres, and events and serve as a foundation for indexical and chronotopic orders (Prior and Hengst, 2010). However, in relation to branding, they are all treated as admirable signs of brand authentication in which regardless of whether they bring bad or good memories, the universities are able to reuse them in a way that the viewer is able to read the positive elements in the signs rooted in the past that carried negative or unpleasant
memories. In this way, they show creative sanitisation of these historical resources as attractive branding materials.

The historical statues and banners the universities used become the main brand identity markers of the universities. For instance, the presence of the statues of Marais and Rhodes at SU and UCT respectively show that whichever way one looks at these universities, the remnants of their original identities would be difficult to erase as one cannot help but give these icons due recognition in their contributions to building the universities and ignore the negative part of their historical connotations on one hand. On the other hand for UWC, although Mandela is not in a form of a statue, his presence cannot be underestimated. Rather, his presence relates to the national identity the university attaches itself to. This subtle enactment of their identities allows the universities to create believable but ideological brands. Their historical artefacts and buildings are being repurposed to carry new meanings for branding purposes. Old Dutch SU’s architecture and British UCT’s architecture are positively reused and maintained as expensive semiotic brand markers that make the universities more beautiful and superior. UWC lacks this kind of inheritance to accentuate its brand; it actually has to continuously build by instituting new buildings such as its Life Science and School of Public health buildings (cited in its video analysed in Chapter Seven). In this case, UCT and SU can be regarded as matured and affluent brands whilst UWC is instead a growing, contemporary brand. In order to compete with others, UWC strategically uses other means to try and articulate a brand that is also competitive and relevant to both the South African context and the world. The section below indicates this.

6.3 Postgraduate advertisement as part of the semiotic landscape at UWC

As the two HWUs’ territories are effortlessly branded as expensive brands, UWC, an HBU, is seemingly elevating its brand with more effort as if to eradicate the ‘bushy’ image. The following sections reveal more semiotics that the university use to paint a favourable brand within its landscape.

In emphasising a growing university, UWC continuously creates new strategies to make an attractive brandscape. One striking element that comes to diminish the poor background is that of the advertisement UWC created to convince its students to pursue postgraduate studies. These students normally do undergraduate studies at UWC and leave to continue
their postgraduate studies at the other two universities. Therefore, in trying to retain these students, the UWC brand team and the postgraduate division created an advert that carries the theme of ‘having great things out of simplicity.’ Figures 6.7a and b show two versions of the advertisement.

Figure 6.9a: UWC’s advertisement 1

What if Jeffrey Bezos only saw the world for it was? What if he never moved the wisdom of paper books into a portable pixeled environment? What if he never invented something as forward thinking as the Kindle? ‘What if’ can change paper pixels and possibly into action? What if your what if works? If you believe it then UWC believes in you.
UWC’s brand managers show unique creativity by metaphorically attracting students through encouragement and motivation. They draw on famous people who invented well-known resources from seemingly useless materials, such as paper and rotten bread as shown above in Bezos and Fleming’s inventions respectively. The idea, here, seems to encourage the students to be creative and confident to share their thoughts through research. This theme of getting something useful from what can be seen as unimportant resonates with the university theme of ‘flourishing from humble beginnings.’

Therefore, they resemiotised and repurposed old ideas and inventions that are familiar to the public as having been invented by famous researchers. The university strategically circulates the advertisement within its brandscape for consumption. It created the slogan that echoes these messages, which is *what if your what if works? Change your mind change the world!* These messages are paired together and recirculated around campus. They are placed in strategic places where the people walking around the university cannot miss them. Figure 6.10 below show this slogan:
These banners also carry the university’s crest, name and logo which mark the university’s brandscape. The promotional message is both aimed to convince the current students to consider furthering their studies by enrolling for postgraduate studies. This can help boost the university’s image through research, which it highlights in the mission statement as one of its strengths. This strategy positions UWC as an engaged university that continuously ploughs into the society by grooming well rounded and productive students. The enthralling message is used to sell and also relate to the students as by assuring the students that if the student’s ‘what if works’ and they believe in themselves, then UWC also believes in them and would help them realize their dreams come true. This encouragement enhances the university and its brand. UWC has been known for decades as a site of academic struggle that stems from the apartheid days. Significantly, therefore, the university now seems to be finding other novel ways to interact with its students, together with whom it will move away from the crippling past.
The creative manner in which this message is recirculated within the university makes it part of the university’s landscape design. The message is placed around campus in strategic places such as in between buildings, along corridors, and in front of the main buildings [such as the student centre, in front of the main library, and the university administration offices] and the car parks, just to mention a few. A good example is shown below, in Figure 6.11:

![Image of UWC's student centre](image)

**Figure 6.11: UWC’s student centre**

The ‘what if’ message is written in capital letters using the golden colour that resembles the walls of the student centre building, where most of the students go to relax, eat and play. This building also houses a few shops, such as, cafeterias, bookshop, fruit stall, and the automated money machines, among others. As can be seen in the image above, this message is spread across the buildings. It motivates the students to study further and also stands as an attractive UWC brand resource.
This message is well distributed. In some cases, it is in the form of placards and banners. It is also reproduced on glass doors as shown below in Figure 6.12

The advertisement also comes as part of branding resources that helps in marking the university’s rich semiotic landscape and selling the brand. Therefore, the advertisement slogan is recirculated into the universityscapes and is normalised as part of the brand. Walking around the campus, the viewer is bombarded by this information, and, whichever way they walk, they are able to read the whole message. Following Klingmann’s (2007) argument that we must learn to look at cities not as skylines but as brandscapes and at buildings not as objects but as advertisements and destinations, it is evident here that through branding, buildings at UWC are no longer just the architecture where people work or study. These are also what people studying and working in them ought to imagine them as holistically creating an attractive UWC brand.

Figure 6.12: UWC landscape 3
This is because architecture has now become an important tool in branding as branding, in architecture also helps in expressing one's identity, as is the case with UWC. The branding messages are placed on walls, poles and even glass doors to give information about the university and also to territorialise it. Consequently, what can be said about these materials is that the university selects semiotics from different backgrounds and deterritorialises them from their original contexts and reterritorialises them into the univertisascapes, whereby they are used to brand the university. Walking around the university, one is sure that they are within the brandscape of UWC as it is explicitly branded. As such, brandscapes have become a culture of ‘the copy’ as can be seen in the resemiotised messages that have been sanitized and used as branding materials at the university. These past famous experiences and discoveries have become more commoditized, transformed and glocalised in the brandscape of UWC.

In the last part of the slogan, the viewers are persuaded to visit the website for more information on the lexia of the postgraduate division, where this message is also semiotically remediated as a video and also as a radio advertisement. Whenever it is replayed on Television, on YouTube, or on the websites where it is remediated with the aid of music and voice among other materials, the UWC brand is elevated. These different modes redistribute the message for wider consumption by both the local and global communities.

6.4 Summary of chapter

Focusing more on the notions of social semiotics and their design features, geosemiotics, semiotic landscape, and resemiotisation, this chapter has shown how the universities make use of the semiotics to highlight ideologically dominant branding messages that are filtered with political, social and economic discourses in their contexts. Moral considerations, justice, equality and power, which are at the heart of much of geosemiotics analysis reveal how entanglement and disentanglement of these semiotics articulate distorted brands that do not show equality but promote inequality. This is because the previously privileged universities remain so after the apartheid regime and the disadvantaged are expected to move on as if nothing happened to them. Some of the discourses in these universities are distorted to subdue the government’s expectation of having these institutions of higher education to redress some of the inequalities within their territories. The emplacement of architectural
features, texts and photographs show how the subtle brand identity echoes these universities’ past which seems to overshadow the future.

The different historical trajectories of these universities act as enablers and disablers of certain signs. The universities’ semiotic landscapes are scattered with different artefacts that include the architecture, historical statues, banners, billboards, linguistic signs dotted on pavements, and buildings to mention a few. Some of the semiotic resources are recirculated within the university environments to create uniform and unique brandscapes for each university. Historical statues and banners show a significant role as brand markers of each university. They all carry different ideological identities within the universities they are placed, as they are emblematic of the brand identities of each university as painted in their mission statements and on the websites (see Chapter Five above). For instance, the presence of the statues of Marais and Rhodes at SU and UCT respectively carry meanings that have double logic, as both the remnants of their original identities and also as sanitised with new meanings of inclusiveness to the entire local and world communities. On the other hand, although Mandela is not in a form of a statue at UWC, his presence cannot be undervalued but rather relates to the meaning of UWC as carrying a national identity. This subtle enactment of their identities allows them to create believable but yet ideological brands.

The resemiotisation of their past through historical symbols, which have been blended with the signs of the future creates a double logic in which the future becomes the recreation of the past that they are trying to move away from. It seems that the apparent contradictions are part of the branding process. Therefore, these contradictions also sell the universities. It can be said, as a corollary of the above, that branding is a very challenging but yet a very creative venture. In other words, the inclusivity within their physical spaces seems to override the past. SU and UCT use their apartheid buildings and artifacts as normal. Accordingly, apartheid edifices are recontextualised to both retain their identity and seek new meanings in post apartheid South Africa. This means rematerializing signs of the past and blending them with signs of the future. Nationalistic and globalised discourses and apartheid symbols (the buildings and the LL on them, the sites of the universities, historical, and economical artefacts) have been resemiotised and corporatised in the new and differentiated institutional brand identities. The notion of material semiosis enables an understanding of the politics of the universities’ brandscapes and other semiosis in a transforming South Africa.
Although they all show signs of change by acknowledging nation building, memories of exclusion and inclusion, forces of globalization tourism and transformation makes the universities to recycle their semiotic resources by categorizing, segregating and silencing other voices and narratives. Commodification of heritage, and aestheticisation of social life and commercial activities (Featherstone, 1991; Debora’s 1995) are more prominent discourse markers in the universities’ landscapes. These practices continue to create unequal brand identities among these universities as the alienation of the underprivileged continues. For instance, when the HWUs brand themselves using their surroundings and resources that they inherited from their past benefactors, the HBUs have nothing in this regard. For that reason, what is seen here is that the starting point of the branding trajectory of a HBU is that of trying to shake off the remnants of the oppressive past whilst the HWUs have just sanitised and reinterpreted their historical resources and claimed their surroundings to make attractive brands.

Therefore, competing and overlapping voices of the universities’ brands in the Western Cape Province contend for visibility and for economic and political survival. This calls for the brand consumptions and different interpretations in different contexts such as, the national, regional and the international worlds. It is in this way that the topic of semiotic landscapes is not only timely, but also politically (cf. Jaworski and Thurlow, 2010) socially, and economically relevant.

Notions of semiotic landscapes and geosemiotics have therefore enabled the researcher to show how the re-materialisation of semiotic resources’ interaction in the universityscapes gives them new social meaning and different identities in post apartheid South Africa. The material semiosis that constructs these institutional brandscapes includes the building architecture, linguistic landscapes and historical artifacts. They have also allowed the researcher to make sense of the branding materials from a socio-historical vantage point as part of a larger critical multi-semiotic analysis of the semiotic landscape in which they are embedded.

Following arguments raised in Chapter Five and Six the following three data analysis chapters present the video analysis of the three universities that have been created to circulate the universities’ brands to the wider community in the world. These chapters further reveal how these semiotics are repurposed in the universities’ videos as posted on
social sites. This also includes the universities’ brand consumption evaluations by the students as clients of these institutions.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SEMIOTIC REMEDIATION AND BRAND REMOULDING AT UWC

7.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of UWC’s main brand video, which has been posted on different, sites such as websites’ homepages, social sites and You Tube. Using the notion of semiotic remediation (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) the chapter shows how UWC manages to rework on different semiotic modes through manipulation of multiple kinds of signs and repurpose them in the construction of a positive brand. This includes showing the kinds of metaphors that are associated with UWC as a brand and how they are refashioned to build an attractive brand through telling a UWC experience and selling the university at the same time. Therefore, it also reveals the diverse ways in which semiotic performances are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity to produce a unique brand for UWC.

7.1 Remoulding UWC through the binary lenses

The overall UWC brand shows an apartheid and post apartheid trajectory being used as a branding resource. In this case, the university is able to reveal transformation from the apartheid-imposed identity as a bushy university to a modern and competitive university. The brand team collected all the discourses and semiotics available and remediated them into the construction of the video. As such, the analysis helps to see how the remediation of mission statements and all the materials (see Chapters Five and Six) create a hybridised promotional video. The mission statements, logos, slogans and crests and the brandscape just to mention a few, are repurposed in this video to cement the identity of UWC as a historically rooted national university that is widening its horizon to interact with others in the world. The semiotic chains (Iedema, 2003) are recreated and repurposed for different meanings that seemingly attempt to erase the old identity. The following sections take these arguments further.

In its branding video, UWC uses its rector as the brand ambassador. This kind of branding of using another familiar and recognized brand is linked to the mantra of business marketing,
where celebrities are normally used to advertise products. Using the rector, in this case, the university makes its brand message look more authentic. The rector’s speech brings resources into the reality of the viewer through technology (Gilje, 2008). UWC, is therefore, seen through the eyes of the rector and aided by technology to make the brand more authentic. The rector narrates what the university is all about, and this is followed by imageries that augment his speech as to assert the validity of the brand articulations.

Semiotic remediation enables us to attend to the diverse ways that semiotic performances are re-represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity. In this narration, different strategies and semiotics are used to roll off the UWC brand to the public. The video starts by showing one of the main modern buildings called the Great Hall. This is the same building that is used on the homepage, as analysed in Chapter Five. The upper part of the building with a clock on it is shown below in Figure 7.1 is revealed together with the sky background and the crest. This part with clocks on each side is shown as if to signal time and take the viewer back in time when UWC was established. The crest that also bears the university’s name and the motto (see Chapter Five) is also repurposed in the video as a brand marking resource.

![UWC's great hall building](image)

**Figure 7.1: UWC’s great hall building**

After this image, the rector appears, dressed in the UWC branded clothing, folding his hands as shown in Figure 7.2 below. This posture resonates with what he is saying about the past struggle, where UWC was subjected to and (unfairly) restricted by the apartheid rules.
The rector’s posture also shows that he is not directly addressing the viewer as he is just giving factual information. In the introductory speech the rector starts by giving a brief overview of the university’s origins as a product of apartheid segregation. An example of this can be seen below:

*UWC was created in 1960 as part of the apartheid regime’s desire to create an ethnic higher education system, so the coloured community in the Western Cape was given their own university. It remained the coloured university right up to the 1980s when it declared itself an open university thus defying government in 1976, prior to that it had started a role of defiance as it were by taking the lead in the uprising following the Soweto marches and killings and UWC formed then an actual turnaround independence a freedom as it were. It was a credible site to struggle intellectually and also...*
This information is hinted at in its mission statement, as analysed in Chapter Five. The information is indicative of justifying its brand as ‘a national university.’ This story resonates with the audience. Besides the fact that it is based on UWC, the struggle theme amplifies this narrative as the audiences are subtly reminded of the days of apartheid. The message is hierarchically organised, from how UWC was created under apartheid, to how it gradually transformed to claim a more powerful and inclusive identity as compared to its previous imposed identity as a coloured university. This background includes the fact that UWC was founded in 1960 and that it operated within the constraints of the then apartheid regime. This is followed by the formative years whereby the university started to fight against the oppressive measures and becoming UWC, as it is known today. The influential years that reshaped the university were characterized by the protests similar to the Soweto marches and killings, which defied the government and called for the transformation of the university from a closed system to the open one.

It is ironic that the university was seemingly in complicit with the oppressive government during its formation years. It was to change its stance later; it eventually saw the need to break away and join forces with the public to fight against the oppression. This breaking away signals the shift from its old unattractive brand to a new one. By choosing to start with the undesirable and powerless brand to the new desirable and powerful brand, it shows a subtle marketing process whereby the rector takes the audience through a rough trajectory that represents both the old and the new. In this speech, the university juxtaposes the emotions that make the stakeholder both a sympathiser and admirer of the university. This echoes Bolter and Grusin’s (1999) assertion that under remediation, what is ‘real’ is something that brings out an authentic emotional response. This is in contrast with the other universities, which were privileged. This is also a unique marketing tool UWC adopts to effectively present its brand in which the rector is clearly telling a UWC story on one hand and selling it on the other hand and selling it on the other.

This manipulation of multiple kinds of signs, words, images, and sounds across modalities, such as computer or television screens. (cf. Banda, 2011) is well fused to reveal an attractive brand. The historical discourses here include its origins and the role it played during the apartheid era. The repurposing of such a background echoes its motto ‘Recipe Prospice’ (cf. Chapter Five) as inscribed on the crest as shown above, and is seemingly used as the main
theme in which the brand is to be revealed to the consumers. The message continues when the rector says:

As a historically black institution it was on the people, as a consequence its work resonates with the people far more than those who are have been advantaged. So when the disadvantaged university is able to flourish and produce great things from those humble origins despite all those difficulties that’s a metaphor for the development of our country I believe and it sparks every South African and understanding that even with very little we are capable of extraordinary things we at UWC understand that to be our special mandate our special calling as it were, show our people that you don’t have to be rich in order to be hugely successful intellectually.

In this part, the choice nominal phrases, such as, a historically black institution, the disadvantaged universities are strategically used to show the strength of the odd accomplishments that in turn are placing UWC on a competitive edge with other universities which have been advantaged. These metaphoric references are extended to mean that the university is flourishing regardless of its disadvantaged background. Through this struggle the university is able to bring to the fore the progress it has made despite the historical hardships and show how it has brought about positive changes that include facilitating the integrated system, whereby the university opened to everyone as opposed to being assigned racial category. However, it must be acknowledged that the changes were also a product of the masses’ protests against unfair treatment meted to none-whites in general. Being part of the struggle, UWC is able to claim the national struggle achievements in which opening all academic institutions to everyone was on the agenda. This also mapped the road to its democratization, a process that marks its remarkable trajectory from being a community university to not only a national and regional but, eventually, also a global university.

This brief history positions UWC on an admirable platform as an able university. It also continuously shows solidarity with the South African people and builds alliances. By subtly choosing this angle the university is both telling and promoting itself to the world. This kind of revolutionary freedom upheaval is what depicts UWC as a highly rated university. The dramatic actions of fighting for its freedom resonate with the South African community, and, being part of the oppressed community, the university strategically uses its positions both in
the struggle of apartheid and democratic environment to paint a good brand. Whilst it can be seen as ‘weak’ in the sense that during apartheid it was oppressed, ironically, it is this oppression that allows it to brand itself as a strong institution that stood up for justice. It is therefore, also seen as a resilient university. In the democratic South Africa, UWC is again seen rightfully claiming what it well deservedly achieved.

The advantage is that due to this background, the HWUs, such as, SU and UCT, in this case, are not being able to display their brands using such double articulations mirroring both the society and the university’s transition from the past struggle. Therefore, UWC is able to uniquely brand itself using all the resources it has, even from a crippling past, to paint a good academic brand. As such, marketwise, it shows the chronotopic (Prior and Hengst, 2010) trajectory from oppression to freedom and becomes a strong, tough and resilient world-class university.

A set of selected images is shown as evidence of the success used to show the benefits of this freedom, as UWC is now able to compete with other universities at national, regional and international levels. These images are as follows in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: UWC’s teaching and learning resources and edu-loan banner
The lecturer, presentation instruments, students’ computers and the student centre with edu-loan banners are resemiotised in different learning contexts to showcase the achievements the rector is claiming. These images show a brand connection as the prospective stakeholder is shown they can possibly experience at UWC. This university is among other things, very technologically advanced. Here, images shown are testament to the fact that UWC is a well-equipped university that guarantees its students success.

Having access to computers does not only allow students to be able to complete their work. This access enables the students to connect to the world, both at academic and social levels, an opportunity it lacked in the oppressive era. It is interesting to note that the university’s meaning of flourishing is exaggerated, here considering that during the 1960s; technology was not as popular as it is today, and even the privileged universities were also without the same technology. The researcher argues that as much as they were so privileged, the HWUs were still within the same stage of technological development. It is also showing that the main source from the government is that of loans that the students get to try and study at UWC. This signals that the university is still growing regardless of it boasting of being flourishing. The rector also subtly explains that this flourishing is achieved through hard work and using the little that the university has had to gain more. However, without critically reading and understanding the message, the consumer is likely to easily agree with UWC, as it does whatever it can to be seen as a competitive brand.

This kind of multimodal communication shows how these multiple modes depend on each other to create whole meanings. As can be seen above, these visual images, like all representations, “are never innocent or neutral reflections of reality, they offer not only a mirror of the world but also an interpretation of it” (Stephens, 1997:164). In this case, these visual codes are interpreted as part of the branding discourse of the institution and as multimodal designs that are used to augment the positive and transforming brand on one hand, and on the other hand, to manipulate messages in the branding strategies. This semiotic hybridity in the branding process accounts for the new realities in post apartheid South Africa.

Nonetheless, the audiences are likely to be inspired by the motivational speech element in the speech that one does not have to be rich in order to study and prosper. The exaggerated ‘flourishing’ is so well cushioned that one cannot help but admire what UWC is doing if
they wanted to be successful. UWC stretches its hand to the members of the society that is staggering from oppression to come and transform their lives and that of the country, as UWC believes in this metaphor of developing using the limited resources one has. Therefore, through semiotic remediation UWC’s old and new identity resources are repurposed to transform a once negative brand to a positive brand.

7.1.1 Recontextualisation of the historical artefact as part of the brand

The historical artefact (see Figure 7.4) that relates to the apartheid struggle reveals UWC’s continuation of asserting a brand that relates to the South African community and the world at large. By claiming and recycling apartheid related discourses and images, UWC resonates with the people, showing them that it understands them better and that if they join it, together they would make a difference. The idea is really not about creating awareness about the past. It is, rather, to sell the UWC brand; a brand that emerged from a humble beginning but is souring like an eagle. This image is now part of the university’s unsaid historical trajectory. The statue is recontextualised in the video not only as part of its semiotic landscape (see Chapter Five) but is actually resemiotised as a branding material that carries the history of the brand where apart from non-whites being restricted to study, women in general were confined to households. Figure 7.4 shows this statue.

Figure 7.4: UWC’s historical statue
As Thibault (2000: 362) points out “the meaning of multimodal discourse is created through contextualization relations between different semiotic choices”. There is a deeper interactional connection across the speech and statue that brings the new recontextualised meaning in the branding process. The artefact works as a semiotic metaphor (cf. O’ Halloran, 2005; 2007) for the struggle being accounted for in the speech.

The historical statue also symbolises the apartheid legacy (cf. Chapter Five). The statue not only stands as factual information of what happened in the past, but also as a brand identity material which UWC wants the people within and outside the university to identify. Through recontextualisation (Bernstein, 1990), stakeholders read it in the present era; they are more attracted to the breakthrough rather than what really happened in the past. UWC, therefore, cleverly chooses images that allow it to paint a national ideology of the struggle and freedom in the South African context and reuse it for its branding purposes. UWC promotes itself by its acceptance of this statue, which articulates deep-rooted societal issues that the people go through at the same time putting itself as the solution to these problems that can be addressed when the concerned stakeholders go there to study.

The meaning of that statue is then backgrounded as given factual information of a South African struggle that would bear fruits if the people were to collaborate with UWC. It shows the possibility of a transforming context in which the university is moving forward by continuously empowering people through education. This semiotic repurposing undoubtedly makes this university gain more favours from the present government and from the international donors. Even investors would want to invest in such a capable university, which can turn something bad into something good. The university does not hesitate to tell its own truth of what it is to the world. It is this true story of staggering from a horrible past to a sustainable present and a bright future that makes UWC an attractive brand.

This narrative of UWC is made solid by the use of historical semiotic chronotopes that connect the university brand to the ‘chronotopic situation of branding’ and of diverse listeners and readers. The semiotics’ visibility and reproducibility across media and historical transmissibility through a series of recessions, aid their circulation across geographic locales. This way, they are semiotically linking moments of experiences of the
past where the majority of the people in the country were affected in one way or the other. In that diverse participation (cf. Agha, 2007), the audience is able to connect with what the university is trying to convey to them. This strategy of resonating with the people at both community and national levels makes this university to be more admirable even to the world community. People can all sympathise with the university for its crippling past on one hand and also admire it for being successful on the other hand. In order for ‘brand resources and meanings’ to be experienced by the targeted audience or readers, the university subtly chooses what it regards as suitable for the brand articulation message. The circulation of chronotopic representations through artifacts and genres has obvious social consequences. For instance, a chronotopic model of the past struggle may be acceptable to many people who were once oppressed. It may however be resisted by others who were privileged. In this case however, UWC used it as the selling point of its brand that has withstood all the hardships and prospered.

7.1.2 Erasing the bushy campus through semiotic landscape

UWC selects a certain attractive landscape with the students interacting as a way to show the stakeholders its transformation from bushy origins to a classy green UWC. The viewer is shown the cleverly chosen new building of this university, which houses the Great Hall where most functions take place. This includes the Student Centre and lecture halls, as shown in Figure 7.5 below.

UWC is able to show that it is no longer made out prefab labs but new modern buildings through the use of technology. These images are reused in the video to both make the brand and spread it to external stakeholders. This also shows how the universities are becoming knowledge business, selling knowledge to the world.
The presence of such building as part of the university’s identity can be seen as its way of continuously renouncing its old identity as a bush university. The buildings and current students are resemiotised in this video to help sell the university. This also augments what the rector is saying about the way the university has changed from a disadvantaged university to a beautiful campus, as shown in the video. This building is shown from different angles as the rector rolls off his narration, and the images are self-explanatory. These images are positioned as background information, which shows a transforming attractive campus as a selling point. The images are also used as evidence of a UWC that is now vibrant and transforming as compared to its past. The message is subtly embedded within the images and the audience can easily interpret a positive brand. The university’s slogan which reads as ‘a place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge”, in Figure 7.6 below is also used to describe UWC as an ideal campus.
The university continues to refute the bushiness and asserts itself, not as a site of struggle as it were in the past but as a site of academic excellence, growth, hope, action and knowledge in the post apartheid era.

The point that UWC was part of the intellectual struggle is cleverly indicated through showing the two flags in which the first one belongs to the university and the other to the country, as if to show that it is in solidarity with and even subject to the government. This resonates with a clear message that UWC is a national university. These two flags are used in the video as carrying a double meaning. One, which could be given, is that the two flags represent both UWC and the state. UWC is in solidarity with the government of the day. They both aspire to move the country forward. The other meaning could be that these two flags authenticate the brand the university is painting for itself; it is a university that identifies with a government chosen by a democratic post apartheid South Africa in a greater way than any other university. The picture is shown below in Figure 7.7
Figure 7.7: UWC’s Great hall

Technology makes it possible for the university to holistically bring a brand to its audience because through remediation, images are combined and repurposed to articulate a positive brand that carries both the past and present features. This building also carries the university’s crest and slogan, which reads: Respice, Prospice (Look back, look ahead) and this still signals UWC’s brand articulation that is rooted in its history to show the present. UWC’s brand identity could be clearly seen as that university which clearly denounced the imposed apartheid identity and assertively renamed itself to echo the liberation of the people. Even in the post apartheid era. Most universities articulate their brands as centres for academic excellence, and not as symbols of liberation struggles in their countries. UWC seems to not move away from this identity as a university. The historical struggle ideologies are subtly foregrounded to continuously name and brand the university. UWC manages to use authentic resources to make a better brand. This argument is further developed below.
7.1.3 Tutu as a historical icon and brand mediator

Here, we see Tutu being remediated from being a priest, a liberator to a chancellor at UWC. The rector and chancellor bring in multivocality as they chorusly articulate a branding message that is rooted in the past. Whilst the rector is the main brand ambassador, Tutu comes to authenticate the historical part of the brand. This notion of UWC subtly repainting its history to its own advantage is repeatedly shown in different ways. As soon as the Rector finishes the informational part of UWC’s origins, he brings in a clip, which showcases an opening ceremony of one of its modern building of The School of Public Health. Archbishop, Desmond Tutu, the former UWC chancellor, led the opening ceremony, and the UWC brand officers subtly chose this instance of opening the school to augment the Rector’ speech of UWC flourishing. Desmond Tutu brings in a motivational speech, which highlights how UWC operates within these restrictive measures, the authentic picture and video of the opening ceremony event of its School of Public Health building are resemiotised here to show the kind of resources UWC is accumulating despite its origins. It is also noteworthy to mention that it is clearly stated that the Atlantic Philanthropies funded the building. This also questions the flourishing aspect as it shows that, in this success, UWC is heavily dependent on the donors. Figure 7.8 shows Tutu, the former archbishop and UWC chancellor, addressing audience on the day he opened this new building.

Figure 7.8: Tutu, the former archbishop and UWC chancellor
This clip is strategically reused in this video to communicate a UWC brand. The main message is directed both to the parents and the children, whereby the parents are encouraged to take the leading role in ushering the children into the academia. The onus lies also on the shoulders of UWC, to make sure that the students are motivated enough to be successful. This statement comes also as a way of redressing the social ills, not by just trying to equalise, but to motivate the students to renounce the role of self-pitying. In the background of Desmond Tutu’s speech, there are also historical images and discourses, which reveal the past struggle. The university aligns Tutu’s speech with showing the different denominations that are responsible for continual mobilisations of people to freedom or that carry the struggle forward, even in the democratic country. These political denominations recruit university students as their representatives that challenge the main student body student representative council (SRC).

The t-shirts are the vehicles that bring into the university different discourses, which are recontextualised into the educational institution and branding. The clip that shows this can be seen in Figure 7.9 below.

![Figure 7.9: T-shirts as part of a branding discourse](image-url)
Therefore, when students join these political denominations, they wear these t-shirts and in this way, they are able to carry these messages forward and recirculate them as part of UWC ideological identity reshaping materials. For instance, the first t-shirt carries the original name of the country and, mark the youth day, which has its origins from the 1976 uprising of the youth who protested during the struggle against the apartheid regime. The youth of that time particularly protested against the imposition of the usage of Afrikaans in schools. “AZANIA YOUTH DAY.” The university students are encouraged to carry these names into the new dispensation. The other t-shirts represent the political parties that fought for the struggle. The way they are positioned, on its own, tells a South African story in which the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party is foregrounded as the main party. The way the last t-shirt to the right hand side in Figure 7.9 above is positioned, shows its importance in this context. In a similar vein the slogan LONG LIVE signals the party’s trajectory from the liberation to the democratic front where it is now functioning as the vehicle to deliver the liberation it fought for. Having these messages transported through printing on the t-shirts, encourages their circulations and creates awareness of the kind of brand identity UWC carries as both the academic institution and as an institution in the South African context.

After foregrounding the journey to freedom, Tutu brings in picture from the apartheid regime highlighting the restrictions that were imposed on the non-white South Africans; the clip below shows a sign indicating that non-whites were not allowed in particular spaces, such as, the beaches. The sign is written in both Afrikaans and English which are official the languages used during this time. It is also telling that, as much as Afrikaans was regarded as the dominant or primary language, UWC divested itself of the language as its medium of instruction and adopted English. English is generally regarded as the main global language; therefore, UWC already chose to assimilate into the globalised world rather than embrace the imposed local identity. Both pictures, as shown below, signal the refusal of the university to be associated with the past regime. One of the big messages in the press as show on the right of Figure 7.10 shows how the rest of the world is being mobilised to denounce the apartheid rule. These images bring in the unsaid historical struggle discourses that are repurposed to create a UWC brand identity narrative. The other part of the Figure 7.10 below shows different people within the country such as the late Nelson Mandela and the women who campaigned against the pass law (whereby non-whites were required to walk around
with a pass or identity document when they entered particular areas.) as the local people who fought against the regime along with other liberals around the country world at large.

**Figure 7.10: Historical struggle discourses**

The restrictive discourses are countered by the discourses that were against the regime and the ones that were used to erase it. For instance, it can be clearly seen that the messages are campaigns against the apartheid regime. The anti-apartheid movement represented all the countries and individuals that were against the regime called for the sanctioning of the apartheid government. The picture of Mandela itself can be said to carry a great deal of revolutionary weight; Mandela goes down in history as a leading light in the epic fight against the regime. Some of the messages shown in this clip read as ISOLATE APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA NOW! WE SALUTE WOMEN OF SOUTHERN AFRICA! The later slogan is in response to the women of South Africa who marched against the Pass Law that restricted the non-white South Africans to move around their country freely.

The university brand team brings in the pictures that resonate with what Tutu is saying as shown in Figure 7.11 below.
Figure 7.11: Historical struggle events images

The first picture in figure 7.11 above shows a historical event where children from different racial groups are interacting. This picture is put as if to resonate with the words that urge each and every student to be comfortable with who they are; they should not feel as if they do not belong or feel inferior. The second part also shows different racial groups with a red banner written FORWARD TO FREEDOM, which again takes the viewer back to where UWC originated from whereby people were discriminated against and were not allowed to interact with each other especially in universities. The last picture shows one of the most traumatic events in which a student was killed during a protest in 1976. The university later also named one of its hostels for postgraduate students Hector Peterson, who can be seen held by a fellow student in that picture. What is also subtle is how the picture is cut not to show the message that says we remember June 16. The way it is positioned is enough to evoke feelings of loss on that day. For South Africans, this part is not difficult to read as this day is now celebrated as the Youth Day.
Through re-imagination of the horrible struggle events, UWC also deliberately evokes feelings of the painful past it had to endure and at the same time tells the client that, as they sympathise with this past, UWC is also there to guide them into success despite having travelled a rough road. These pictures can also be interpreted as evidence of the past UWC had to operate during the struggle days. To depoliticise these images, the university brings to the fore, the vice chancellor’s speech of inspiring the students to embrace their past and unapologetically move forward to continue claiming and utilising the freedom. The utterance, *you are not second rate, you don’t have to apologise, for who you*, has a double meaning here. The first can be interpreted as the university subtly renouncing its identity as a second rate institution which was created for non-whites. Secondly, as the university refuses this identity, it motivates the students to also resonate with its sentiments of not being a second rate.

The untold truth about the struggle is subtly highlighted using the pictures. Tutu was also part of that struggle along with well-known icons such as Nelson Mandela, the late first president of the democratic South Africa. Although he is not directly talking about the struggle, his motivational speech here indicates this. Tutu concludes this part by assuring the clients that the sky is the limit as the country is now free and it is time to grab opportunities. The university subtly uses Tutu who doubly represents the past struggle and who is also from that past and brings in the new dawn. Without being cognisant of the South African history, people can still interpret UWC as that university which makes the impossible possible, and this is a powerful brand-building message to people of all walks of life. UWC repurposes political historical, different old and new images to reveal a positive brand, which carries a transformation metaphor for a new South Africa.

Figure 7.12 below shows part of Tutu’s speech, which ends with encouraging the students to be unapologetic, and grab opportunities to be successful.
Figure 7. 12: Tutu’s encouraging words

Although this part is a piece of motivational advice, it also shows that it is not an easy road for the students and therefore, whenever or as they are conditionally presented with opportunities, they are encouraged to seize them. The material verb grab is also symbolically used to signal a continuation of the liberation struggle in which UWC seeks to address the social ills through education. It is clear that success at UWC is not easily achieved but the students have to continuously work hard given its past. UWC in this way, is treated as the transformation ground where the students are encouraged to enhance their lives through education. This makes the university brand admirable as it promotes togetherness or partnership with the stakeholders and the country at large.

Besides historical refashioning, there is also the refashioning of Tutu as the struggle icon and as an active motivator and brand ambassador at UWC. The crippling past during apartheid is rearticulated in a positive manner in which UWC is to be admired for breaking through such a past and becoming a competitive and engaging university. Therefore, in this instance, Tutu brings in discourses of the past and the present to keep the struggle alive even in the institutional contexts, and repurposes these discourses in the enhancement of UWC as a
brand. Here, Tutu assumes different roles as he represents the past struggle in which he was also an actor and uses that to motivate students to be able to exercise their freedom rights and be able to reclaim both their dignity and success. UWC becomes the institution in which this is to be achieved. Having this message constructed this way makes the university admirable to the public and it also acts as the vehicle in which democracy is to be achieved. This renders the university as serving role that is hand in hand with the government policy of transformation. In his speech, it is clear that the struggle is still continuing; now the challenge is to make sure that the students are encouraged and motivated to claim their lost inheritance.

Tutu also represents the society, which these children come from and his main role here is to make sure that the children also remember where South Africa is coming from. He represents the older generation handing over the freedom gloves to the youth. What is very interesting is that Tutu is used to address the viewer drawing on both national and academic discourses. He speaks as one of the national heroes who is also the educational voice, as a motivator. The images also give factual information that will justify Tutu’s radical speech of asking the students to literally grab any opportunities unapologetically. In this speech, Tutu directly and boldly addresses the viewer and explicitly acknowledges the viewer who he addresses as “you”. This is followed by images that evoke the viewer to feel the past pain. These images come as a demand (see Kress and Van Leeuwen 1996:122) to make the viewer react to the brand UWC is trying to paint. By the same token Tutu’s direct gaze emphasises this demand as if to form a closer relationship with the future students of UWC and as if to implore them to embrace this brand as part of their identity and to resonate with its values.

The past struggle is used to foreground UWC’s origin and past identity where it had to operate from a restrictive territory. In this case therefore, UWC resemiotises the historical discourses of apartheid to roll off its brand identity. These discourses and semiotics play a double logic: on one hand the meaning is in making it known that UWC originated from a crippling past and on the other hand showing how powerful UWC is to have flourished despite its origins. It is in the latter that the university gets its selling punch line. The brand the university highlights here is admirable and shows that it does not continue to dwell on this crippling past but gets its strength in improving itself and being able to compete with all those other universities that were advantaged from the apartheid era. Refreshingly, UWC is
now able to complete with the best universities in the world as well. This crippling past and the poverty that stems from it, are used as the metaphor in which UWC draws its energy towards building a successful brand. It sells itself by making the undesirable desirable. This kind of branding is unique for an academic institution. The paragraphs below further reveal other resources used to create the branding materials.

7.2 UWC brand harmonisation through academic accolades and social life

To continuously elevate and balance the attractive UWC brand, the rector brings in more tangible or perceivable accolades as branding materials. The brand team chooses three of its faculties, which are described as outstanding and also seem to hold the main aspects that make the university admirable. These faculties are Science, Law and Dentistry. Their physical buildings and resources are remediated here to paint a good brand for the university. Complementarily, this intersemiotic cohesion and correspondence provides a convincing branding message through the interweaving of meaning across verbal and visual components. This enables UWC to successfully present a well-balanced brand. The faculties are further discussed below.

7.2.1 Faculty of Natural Science

The field of Natural Science is perceived as one of the most important areas of study in the world as people are continuously seeking answers to everyday natural problems such as, diseases, climatic conditions changes, farming and conservation. UWC strategically puts science on the forefront to articulate its brand. This part is shown below:

On Science, it is flourishing; we lead in the country in a number of different competences.

I think about biotechnology, nanotechnology where we are the country’s centre in terms of bi lapping, nanotechnology where in respect to the alternative energy use and hydrogen cappinum in other, we are in the country leading in maths in bioinformatics an understanding using data all over the world in respect to a particular target like cancer. We have at UWC two of the most powerful computers
Describing the university as flourishing in science again is the opposite of its origin and what can be seen here is that the university’s success is not a moderate one but of a revolutionary and astounding kind. The use of ‘flourishing’ conjures on image of UWC becoming rich, having risen from a poverty stricken background. It is also revolutionary in the sense that the world is now investing billions of dollars to scientifically seek answers to its problems. Therefore, this revolution is also related to the global one in which UWC sees itself as a significant player and contributor. To support this, the rector echoes his speech by indicating that the university is actually leading in the country on a number of science “competences”:

...We lead in the country in a number of different competences... we are the country’s centre in terms of biotapping, nanotechnology... we are in the country leading in maths in bioinformatics an understanding using data all over the world in respect to a particular target like cancer. We have at UWC two of the most powerful computers in Africa. There are three in the country and we have two. They are massive IBM computers so we have a huge huge competence in respect with biotechnology.

Figure 7.13 below shows some of the resources indicated in the speech above, such as the two computers and research output in form of books and dissertations. These resources are also repurposed as brand materials in this video.
Figure 7.13: Science computers and research books

Whilst it is irresistible to hear and see what the rector is saying and the evidence used to enhance the brand, a closer look at these images raises questions as to whether its sense of flourishing is really true. For instance, there is a difference between housing the equipment and having the capacity to use them as an academic institution not a business or branding resource. However, to the viewer the intended message is to interpret that if the university houses the two main computers in the country, the chances are that it is then supposed to collaborate with the others from the international world and those in the country that do not have them.

Whichever way one looks at it, these resources and the notion of ownership are resemiotised to signal a positive brand. Such ownership is seemingly equated to academic achievements that traditionally make a positive reputation. It rather garners on the ownership and boasts of being the privileged to have such resources, which are in turn repurposed in the branding process to attract the prospective students. The richness in this case then is not that of an academic institution that is being productive but rather the one that is accumulating resources either from the government and donors. Nonetheless, the client is likely to be
persuaded in the sense that they will become part of a university that owns such resources and be part of the transformation agenda.

7.2.2 Faculty of Law

The faculty of Law is also highly complimented for huge international connections. However, the same way the university prides itself in the Science faculty goes for the Law faculty. The university focuses more on positively describing itself as showing or being the evidence of the results of its transformation from struggle to freedom or from poverty to mere wealth. It is also noteworthy that amongst all the other law fields, it boasts of having good competence in constitutional law in Figure 7.14. Constitutional law is one of the most common fields in which social ills are addressed and the process of transformation is facilitated in the country.

Figure 7.14: Faculty of Law and resources
Although the rector is talking about having an excellent Law faculty, what are shown in the images are parts of the library where students from different faculties are studying. This is also a subtle choice to communicate its brand in a selective manner by concentrating on the resources it thinks would sell the brand convincingly. The university is conscious of keeping a well-rounded brand message, as it seems not to be able to divorce itself from the country struggles and achievements. Most of its achievements or riches are related to the country first. This again shows how the university continues to emphasise on its transformative role both within the country and the world at large.

7.2.3 Faculty of Dentistry

The same can be said about the Dentistry faculty. This faculty is described as huge with strong collaborations with both local and international communities. The products that can be used within the labs and the dentistry practice are used to indicate the dentistry faculty. This picture in Figure 7.15 does not show how big this faculty is but in his speech, the rector emphasizes that:

Figure 7.15: UWC's Faculty of Dentistry
The part that says: *it is all being done on the basis of energy commitment and focus is brutal* reveals that UWC is not really rich, but is striving through hard work, commitment and focus. This focus is that of not looking into what others are but looking within and drawing its energy for success without dwelling much on its crippling background and current challenges. Drawing its pride from this humble environment, the university considers this reasoning applicable to the society that should transform itself through education. It then uses this opportunity to explain the social imbalance of the South African people due to disparities in wealth and offers a solution. In offering this solution in which it is going to be both the driving force makes its brand more admirable. It tells about its contributions and achievements to the world. These contributions enable it to claim high local and global rankings. From the poor background, UWC is positioned as an encouraging enterprise for academic business and research. The university’s branding process shows an interdiscursivity practice that includes hybridised different discourses and semiotics, which are both informative and promotional in nature. It pays particular attention to strategically market itself by putting an emphasis on certain areas of faculties and discipline research.

### 7.2.4 Repurposing sports as a selling accolade

As repurposing semiotics is situated in reproduction and reception of the artefact (Prior and Hengst, 2010) tracing the semiotic activity and resources across chains for subtle remediation in this case also shows that UWC does not mediate all its resources anew. Instead it takes up the materials at hand and simply puts them to present use. The result is therefore a production of altered conditions for branding discoursal strategies. Apart from the academic related possessions, UWC also shows the social life through sports related resources that it has. It is noteworthy that in the narrative, the university is not hesitant to show what it has. It grounds its brand identity in selective truth by choosing the most prominent and attractive resources and traits. That little is portrayed in a satisfactory way in which there is a balance between stating, praising and acknowledging that it may not be good enough, hence, there is room for change. The speech reads:

*We have soccer academy here with seven teams, which are in lower league, but it’s beginning to make progress. We have six sports field on the campus, we have a stadium with about 4000 seats and we look to modernise this stadium but it is quite
nice so that we can use it at night. It has a good rugby field on it. We have an **Olympic size covered swimming pool** and heated so it is the Southern swimming development in South Africa.

The possessive verb *have* is used here to highlight the university’s sports asserts. All these possessions are described as huge enough to accommodate not only the university population’s needs but also the country. For instance, the swimming pool is described as being the *Olympic size*. The *soccer team* as has more progressing seven teams, and there are *six sports field, a stadium and a good rugby field*. All these are mentioned as selling points for UWC. The university ensures that the students’ recreational needs are catered for. As these possessions are being mentioned, there are images of these resources in visual motion in the video to augment what the rector is describing to the viewer. This can be further seen in the video on YouTube or the UWC website. There is also a double mirroring of UWC through the words and images being resemiotised not only to showcase the university but to also advertise it and at the same time brand it to the public. The images are well combined in the video to recreate a landscape of the university in the virtual world, whereby the viewer does not wish to go and see the physical space as the virtual world is showing the same. In this case, the resemiotisation of the university’s resources into the virtual world enables the viewer to be able to consume the UWC brand without necessarily visiting the real world. This enables the university to reach many people from all over the world.

### 7.3 Summation of UWC brand using growth in solidarity and academic excellence

A very interesting theme that the university carries throughout is that of continuous innovation. It gives room for continuous growth, as there is a clear message that, when the students grow academically, the university also grows. Just as the university was a struggle site during apartheid it now calls for continuous cultivation of academic freedom and success of the people in the country and the world at large. Ironically, this growth and solidarity were fostered by apartheid and the rector cleverly calls for all the involved parties to help rebuild the shambles of South Africa, a resolution, which even echoes Nelson Mandela and other struggle cadres’ call to reconcile and rebuild the country in unity and peace. This rebuilding is indicated in the speech below:
South African reality is that 90% of its people are poor as consequently with which no redistribution from the 10% to the 90% can make any great difference to the lives of the people. The only way for South Africa to advance is to accept that the power that it has lies a lot in that 90% that 90% must take this country to make it great. UWC is trying to do exactly that on the basis of that past as part of 90%, it is now competing with the very best universities in this country and Africa. If this is possible for us, that’s the mark that our country must follow because then it is possible for you. When you invest in UWC, you must invest in that belief of that 90% and with help of friends based on that 10%

Although this speech echoes the South African reality, UWC does not only identify itself as part of the 90% but it also seems to be using this part to take ownership by wanting to recruit the 90%. The 10% of the population can then come in as donors in order to enable 90% and the university realise their goals. Taking at face value, one might think that UWC is just stating factual information. This again is another strategy that UWC uses to sell itself. The ideology this message carries is that of UWC becoming the educational business platform, the motivator and the role model. The society should thus draw its energy from UWC’s educational resources and that way the country will be flourishing.

It also becomes a motivating institution and which is ready to carry the whole country forward if it is used as a stepping stone to the greener pastures. The university uses the metaphor of nation building to signal how it contributes to the society through education. The graduation event is resemiotised to show this metaphor in which, by making the society participate in the academia at UWC, South Africa and the world at large are transformed. The university seems to be aware of possible criticism in the way it is advertising itself. Therefore, in trying to cushion itself from this, it does not egoistically brand itself as world class. This could be perceived as the subtle way of the university wanting to make sure it gets the clients it requires to continue functioning and also stakeholders who are willing to donate and help it continuously realise its dreams of being a place of quality, of growth, and knowledge through education. This nation-building theme is used to both reveal its excellence and as a woe to the donor who can assist the university to accomplish its goals.
This part also signals a total shift in identity: from that of an oppressed institution to that of a big player that is addressing and redressing the past social ills as caused by the apartheid regime. UWC subtly takes ownership of this role, as if it were a government, to assure the majority that things are possible if they work with it as an academic institution for it would help them realise their dreams and at the same time transform the country. This stance puts UWC on an international arena as it attracts other nationals to come and study in it and at the same time emulate UWC’s ideas of being successful through hard work and to focus not necessarily on material possessions, on growing socially and intellectually. It is through this national building that again, UWC attract the possible donors to help in its continuous growth. It is evident that UWC positively finds a new way of speaking about itself, as both a product of apartheid in which it embraces and recreates this crippling past in a special way. By so doing, it gives itself, a unique brand that, among other things means it has stood against all odds and has a promising future.

UWC’s rector diverts to offer an analysis of South Africa’s economic situation in which he indicates that the majority of the people are poor whereas the minority have decent lives. This caption shows how life is in the country, and UWC as a university offers solutions to the country as a whole by stating that people (the society) have to continue fighting the inequalities that the past brought by working together as partners. In this caption, he uses UWC as another metaphor of development where people can come to learn and transform their lives and also where the wealthy 10% can help redress the past by helping the majority to make a difference in their lives through education. The brand UWC then paints for itself is that of a gigantic vehicle that is going to make sure that the country is moving forward.

This is a selling aspect, especially when the university gives a conditional statement that evokes the society’s problems and quickly offers a solution in which it is the rescuer. This part reads:

*The only way for South Africa to advance is to accept that the power that it has lies a lot in that 90% that 90% must take this country to make it great. UWC is trying to do exactly that on the basis of that past as part of 90%, it is now competing with the*
very best universities in this country and Africa. When you invest in UWC, you must invest in that belief of that 90% and with help of friends based on that 10%

This part of speech is accompanied by a recontextualised image of UWC’s recreated semiotic graduation landscape as shown in Figure 7.16 below.

Figure 7.16: UWC’s recreated graduation landscape

Within this graduation event, the university chooses to highlight the theme of nation building through the banners that are hung around the campus. This banner reads BUILDING THE NATION, ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, DRIVING THE COMMUNITY and AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY. Here, it is evident that the university’s brand is neatly tied around academics and the community. The name and the crest are also resemiotised to continuously mark the brand and this visual repetition makes the university unforgettable to the audience. As the rector rolls off the branding messages, the images are subtly used to instil into the audience the image of the university and all that it stands for. The audience are hooked onto this emphasis. This video therefore carries information that serves a double function to inform and sell the university as a brand. The parents of the students are also seen here as being part of the university.

This image can be read in two ways as a full portrayal of the graduation ceremony and as having been particularly chosen to make the audience understand the branding message that the university is conveying. It also communicates an assurance by the university that once
they join the university the parents become part of it as their children journey through their academic success. It becomes the ground on which the community and the university mark and celebrate their mutual achievements. Therefore, the university subtly reveals the nation-building theme in which the community is not portrayed as playing a role by sending their children to university, but rather the focus is on the university creating possibilities for the community. This point is clearly evident in the banners’ messages as highlighted above. Therefore, unfortunately, the parents and by extension, the community are only portrayed as being passive, as much as they have played an important role.

Aligning itself to the past struggle, UWC acknowledges that it is also part of that 90% which suffered many social ills it is now trying to address by participating and offering that society an equal opportunity to compete with others. It uses its own success as both an assurance and a condition that to be able to be successful, the 90% can study at UWC whilst the government and the 10% support it. This becomes clear when the rector says: *When you invest in UWC, you must invest in that belief of that 90% and with help of friends based on that 10%*. This last part can also be read as a direct call to the investors who are encouraged not to just give UWC the resources it needs, but rather by a business transaction in which UWC offers an assurance that they will not lose if they invest with the university. This way, UWC proudly avoids the possibility of having to portray itself as a weak brand; it sees itself as a university that is continuously seeking growth and, therefore, it unapologetically begs for support.

The competence of the university is shown through the resemiotised video clip of the graduation event. The students that are captured here belong to the faculty of Economic Management Studies (EMS). These are the students that are to work in the financial sector in which the university knows it can garner support. What seems like a simple graduation event is actually used to speak volumes of sourcing funds from the interested stakeholders. This same simple graduation event is also at the same time used to woe the prospective students to study at the university. The university is able to do all this by using semiotic remediation, in which the images and events are resemiotised and recontextualised for branding purposes. This also shows the advantage of painting its historical background to reveal its new brand as a university that is on the forefront of addressing the social inequities through education. It assumes a more favourable and powerful brand identity that is well connected to the society at large. The resemiotised graduation video and images are shown in Figure 7.17:
These students are metaphorically used to aid the university’s direct image and connection to the business world. UWC shows the business world that it is a reliable institution that is able to off load competent graduates. In this regard, one can clearly see that the university is well aware of its role as an academic institution. This subtle choice is a deliberate choice to make this link and reveal its partnership with the world at large. The students are also seen here as well equipped individuals that are to help make the difference and transform the society. They are however seen as the extension of the university, and this is also where the university draws its pride.

Even the rector is seen in Figure 7.18 below playing another different role within the university to show authenticity of what UWC does. Whilst in the video, he is the brand ambassador, in this clip, he is the rector attending the graduation event capping the students and he is also posing as the main speaker.
These images also resonate with the economic related message the rector is conveying. This scene also takes the viewer to the reality of the success UWC is talking about. The rector and the graduation event are resemiotised to articulate the admirable brand. This part concludes the speech as if to, again, present the factual information of the achievements UWC offers. This event highlights the achievement of being a UWC student, and can also be seen as being in line with Tutu’s speech of having the sky as the limit for the students who would join UWC. This is undoubtedly attractive and will make the brand sell. The semiotics used here come to authenticate the claims the rector is claiming in the branding video, to show the audience that it is truthful. At a university, students are expected to graduate and using this clip to showcase this graduation event as a by-product of what it means to be at UWC makes the university admirable. This graduation video is also subtly reused here to augment the UWC brand.

The last clip concludes the video by providing further the crest carrying the contact details as shown in Figure 7.19 below.
The university provides its website address as the contact details. The audience is encouraged to visit the website for more information to further woe them to apply at UWC and enjoy what is has promised as a brand. This is the same as the goods being advertised in the business world. The consumers are directed where to get them or where to get more information about the products and services. The university has established itself fully on the website. Therefore, the audience do not need to visit the university’s physical landscape to verify or seek information; they only need to visit its virtual world to get more information without necessarily have to visit its physical landscape. This is evidence that the university has gone hi tech and is no longer just confined to the South African community as it was during the apartheid era. It is now open to the international community as well. This also signals the flourishing metaphor the university has used to describe itself. As is evident in the analysis, although the university is growing, it still shows signs of struggle. However, by being open to the international world, UWC will continue to grow.

7.4 Summary of chapter

This chapter has shown a thorough analysis of UWC’s branding video, and has unpacked the different resources used by the university as its brand building blocks. The chapter has shown how UWC creatively uses its poverty stricken background as a strong metaphor to reveal a strong brand in the new South Africa. This includes how it refashions the discourses of its stigmatised origins and repurposes them to build an attractive brand. The chapter has shown how it uses this metaphor of poverty to both tell a UWC experience and sell the brand
at the same time. These kinds of articulations are hand in hand with the government’s call for transformation and redressing the past so as to have an equitable society. Therefore, the chapter reveals how UWC also regards itself as a development metaphor for South Africa as it continues to draw from its poor background to convince the world that nothing is impossible.

The chapter has also shown how these politically correct discourses both serve as a sign of lack and burden rather than South African history at large, rendering itself as a university in need of catching up with of the other universities. This iron of sanitising its crippling history and discourses of state and nationalism brings in questions as to whether this HBU can learn to speak of its future brand in which history is disregarded. At the moment the resemiotised history positions UWC as an able university that has managed to flourish against all odds.

Having said all this about UWC, the following Chapters look at how the other two universities have recreated positive brands in unique and competitive manner for local and global markets.
CHAPTER EIGHT

SEMIOTIC REMEDIATION AND BRAND DIGITALISATION AT SU

8.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the kind of semiotic chains that have been used to accentuate the brand of SU in the branding video found on the university website links and You Tube. It looks at how SU has reframed and repurposed cultural artefacts, architectural designs and social discourses, to mention a few, to reconstruct itself as having moved from being at the centre of apartheid ideology to an equal opportunity institution with world class facilities. The result is a production of altered conditions for how to read and understand the semiotic resources associated with SU. In branding itself, SU, through a careful selection of semiotic materials at its disposal, has sought to transform objects and cultural artifacts from negative aspects to positive aspects of a new and inclusive brand identity.

8.1 Digital art as a brand semiotic tool

As every institution is unique and its identity comes from its own roots, personality, strength and weaknesses (Van Riel, 1997), SU portrays itself as a very positive brand through the use of digital art, which is highly hypermediated, to package its brand information. This differs from the other two universities, which use the direct address by human beings. Digital art, with the aid of sound effects to support the movement pace of the brand semiotics, is used as the main vehicle that transports all the information and services that SU offers. This virtual reality, which SU draws on for its uniqueness can be read as its cultural metaphor for the ideal academic institution that regards itself as highly rated. By doing this, SU is able to remove itself from the historical politics in which it was created and choose to share the academic side only.

Therefore, distinguishing itself from UWC, which foregrounds its historical background and uses reality to showcase brand, SU uses static and more academic PowerPoint style with different resemiotised discourses and images (cf. Iedema, 2003) to present a beautiful brand. Thus, whilst UWC draws on the historical struggle, which is typical of political discourse, SU uses the PowerPoint, an academic mode to convey its brand to a wider community. It
uses a combination of art, pictures, written words and instrumental music to highlight its brand and try to convince its clientele, especially students, to study with it. The video carries simplicity yet it is of high quality and speaks volumes of the seemingly untold stories about the university that makes it attractive. The video is organised in a way that is simple and is presented as if it is an animated PowerPoint presentation that is constantly clicked to show the complimentary elements that are treated as the building blocks that define excellence.

Just as for UWC and UCT, in Chapters Seven and Nine respectively, the SU video shows hybridization of different discourses, semiotics and modes to construct a sellable unique brand. The video starts by showing a clip in which the crest of the university carrying its logo, name and slogan (see. Chapter Five) are repurposed to introduce the branding video. From the onset, the university is able to distinguish itself from the rest by foregrounding its identity as an Afrikaans-based institution that is now more accommodating. This accommodation is highlighted through using the notion of multilingualism, in which Afrikaans and English are paired to articulate its brand. This is shown in Figure 8.1 below.

![SU’s crest, logo and slogan](image)
It is noteworthy to mention that the inclusivity used to introduce and describe the university to the audience is shown in the two main languages SU uses with Afrikaans as the more dominant language, as shown above. This can be seen from the way the languages are ordered and given to the reader. Whichever way the viewer reads it, Afrikaans is clearly indicated as the main language, thereby painting an Afrikaans university brand. This is augmented by the slogan, which also starts in Afrikaans. It reads as Jou kennisvennoot. Your knowledge partner. (see Chapter Five). The university uses repetition (cf. Osman, 2006) to highlight both its name and slogan. It makes it unforgettable to the viewer. What is of interest is also the fact that the university brands itself as a knowledge partner, where the viewer is invited to befriend the university so that together they can realize their joint potential. It puts itself on a same level as the client or donor- a stance that makes it admirable and accommodative. This on its own paints a good brand from the beginning. The video uses English as the main language. This can be interpreted to mean that in a way, the university is no longer catering for the few selected stakeholders in South Africa, but for all South Africans and the world at large, showing that SU is responding to the pressures of globalisation and marketisation at a global level.

Unlike UWC’s (direct) video in which its historical background is foregrounded by the rector, (direct) SU’s video is indirect. It also does not substantiate its claims with a lot of images and explanation, as is the case with UWC. SU does not dwell on the past. The absence of this history could also signal that it does not want to be known from its past but in the present era as a university that helps people realises their potential. It can be interpreted that the absence would otherwise detract from the beauty of the university’s brand. For instance, as shown in Chapter One, SU was created for the Afrikaans white students only. In the present era this university is still known as Afrikaans based university although it is now offering some of its courses in English, especially to the postgraduate community. Therefore, even of not much is said here in that regard, this history [which still persists] is backgrounded as an uncontested truth; SU has boldly advertised itself as having Afrikaans as its main language. Still, today, this university is known as an Afrikaans-based university in which many South Africans still feel restricted to attend. Recent protests by students by students also cite Afrikaans as one of the barriers that impede their academic growth.
SU can also be seen as trying to refute the negativity its historical past that might bring to its brand. Therefore, it subtly opts to use adjectives that signal meritocracy. This absence of voice and other seemingly relevant information about its origins speak volumes also. It is as if no one may even bother to ask why it has not mentioned this kind of history or reality; people will or should just concentrate on the given information. Instead of using many images that discursively articulate the university brand, the university brand team meticulously chose a few words and images that sum up all the brand materials as is shown in Chapter Five. It draws its strength from the fact that it is an institution that is strictly an academic knowledge partner as highlighted in its mission statement (see Chapter Five). However, given Van Riel’s (1997) argument that the university’s brand must carry its historical background, both positive and negative traits, SU’s brand can be seen as lacking, to some extent, as it subtly leaves what can be seen as negative. The sections below give a detailed analysis of the few chosen brand resources that are used to paint the SU brand.

8.2 Promotional lexical sets

As foregrounded in its mission statement (see Chapter Five), SU visually portrays itself as a very attractive university from the onset. In this video, there is an appropriation of the mission statement themes that reveal globalisation, marketisation and transformation discourses as the main elements used to build the SU brand. Together with different unique images and objects, the university strategically presents its brand in a video for a wider consumption by mirroring what it articulates in its mission statement. From the onset, SU unhesitatingly presents itself as a high calibre university and it uses promotional lexical sets not only to provide descriptions but more so to paint vivid images of unique facilities to the viewers. Colourful artistic and recreated pictures that bring an impressive and yet simple package of visuals, accompany the descriptive text.

This kind of marketing strategy, on its own, shows a powerful brand the university is painting to the viewer. The reference to the superiority is shown using the adjective excellence and a burning torch, as shown in Figure 8.2 below.
The flame on the torch can also signal fire, and that this excellence is blazing and in continuity. This is followed by other lexical sets that illustrate this kind of excellence, as if to offer factual information to the superiority it is painting. This excellence is clearly revealed throughout the video in form of different well-selected adjectives and accompanying images.

The first part of showing this excellence is rooted in identifying the university not as a South African or national university as is the case for UWC, but it rather indicates that SU is a globally relevant, innovative, research university. This is marked an: INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED INSTITUTION. Thus, UWC uses the globe to claim both the African and global identity. It acknowledges that it is a South African university by putting a star that indicates where it is found on the map, a place from which it operates and contributes towards excellence in the global village. The bold statements it is making are highlighted in capital letters as if to show confidence in what it is claiming. In this instance, the world map, atmospheric look and the torch are resemiotised to signal SU as an influential institution without having to explain it in words. This information is cleverly arranged in such a way
that the viewer cannot miss it and is bound not to be too analytical but work with what they are given.

Zooming on its local context as a South African university, it also indicates that it is ONE OF THE TOP 3 RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES where and, again in the world globe is indicated to cement the point that it is internationally recognised in whatever it does. The university subtly chooses a very powerful and attractive brand articulation method without having to be more descriptive. In a way, the viewer is captivated to read the SU brand. Sounds and jingles are used as the linking devices that help link each part that creates the unique brand. This linkage marks SU as a glocal brand. It continues to show what makes it excellent through highlighting its possessions, which are neatly and artistically presented as analysed in the following sections.

8.3 Corporatisation of campuses and faculties

As a way of highlighting what makes it an attractive university, SU presents its ten faculties in style. In comparison to the other two universities under study, it has more faculties. This definitely makes it the best brand with regard to being a satisfactory knowledge partner. It indicates it has 10 FACULTIES and four campuses. These four campuses are: SALDANHA, BUSINESS SCHOOL, TYGERBERG and the main campus in STELLENBOSCH as shown in Figure 8.3 below. The branding team cleverly and artistically uses the globe and the sky (which is signalled by clouds) to give an elevated brand the viewer cannot help but marvel at.
Figure 8.3: SU’s ten faculties and four campuses

This kind of positioning for SU, although too brief, ensures that only the relevant information is given to paint the superiority highlighted from the beginning. This is then extended to present the faculties that it has. Each faculty is clearly marked using different colours. Each faculty is also presented by different individuals, who, in turn represents different professionals within the given fields of study as shown in Figure 8.4 below.
The university does not concentrate on telling the students what they can study; but rather it concentrates on telling them what they can become in terms of professions. Thus, SU foregrounds the fact that it considers itself a direct business partner to business world. The pictures are subtly chosen with each signaling an idea of what the field of study is like. For instance, a teacher holding a chalk stands for the Education faculty. In the Arts related field, the viewer is shown an artist with instruments that are used in music. In Economic Science, a lady writing numbers. A scientist is shown holding a pipette in the Natural Sciences laboratory. A farmer is also busy on the fields as shown for Agricultural Sciences. This is done in all the faculties, and what is evident here is that the university resemiotises images of people and tools from different fields to signal the kind of professionals it produces. Therefore, it treats career opportunities and recognitions as endorsements of the quality of
academic programs at the university, as if by just being there, one will automatically have such jobs. This again speaks volumes of the kind of knowledge partner it is to the business world. This may also imply that SU is so well connected to the business world that its students will not have trouble getting jobs for what they would have studied. This is different from the other universities, which have branded themselves as just having graduates that are marketable and can secure jobs after graduation (cf. Osman, 2006:69).

The images are used to brand the university rather than to provide what the university teaches. This again augments the kind of brand the university is painting to the viewer. It is more about what the student is going to become when they join the university rather than what kind of education they would receive to become what they would like. The university subtly paints these pictures in black, and white as if to disguise some of its pictures of the portrayed professionals but a closer look shows that most of the pictures show subtle racial categorization. Although it tries to use all races to represent these fields, the dominant racial category here is that of white which also signals its dominant racial category amongst the students, in reality.

This shows a process of recontextualisation, which involves shifts in meaning and materiality, away from their previous instantiations (Bernstein, 1990: 60). In this case, the images are taken from other contexts and placed to identify professions that can be attained through studying in a particular field. This process primarily aims to maintain the processes of production and, thus, involves shifts towards technological or exo-somatic materialities. Therefore, a mere image is now recontextualised to become a part of the SU brand design through meaning making process of the branding material. In turn, technologies ensure that this process of transferring meaning from one mode to another achieves what Bernstein (1990:60) calls both “depersonalisation and power.” As such, through technologisation, Iedema and Wodak (1999:13), the brand team is able to alter discursive practices and images with “recontextualised meanings, resulting in the newly constructed background assumption redefining these resources” as part of the branding discourse.

All these faculties are later compressed and placed in the hands only as showing all that SU has (see Figure 8.5). The usage of hands as part of the semiotic material is shown to represent the faculties as a subtle reference for more information. In this particular instance, it shows the totality of the academic programs SU has that are relevant in the world as shown
by the arrows and also as an indication that each faculty has more information that can be accessed from THE FIRST YEAR ACADEMY. This is can be seen in Figure 8.5 below.

Figure 8.5: SU’s faculties in totality

The hands and the courses offered are placed in an artistic manner that indicates a lot of information that is not articulated. Again, the university does not pay much attention to revealing itself, but it wants the audience to be able to interact with it for more clarification on some of the information shown. Its metaphoric meaning seems to be more of an invitation for the audience to be part of SU and experience more of the brand it is painting. The university cleverly chooses its materials to briefly showcase itself.

A closer look at the hands shows that they are white hands disguised by the clear background of a cloudy sky. This is could be used to indicate its origin as a HWU which is now fostering inclusivity by sharing its resources as an academic partner to the world. The assurance that the prospective student will have help in choosing or understanding more of what is shown here can be read in two ways. The first interpretation, is that it is the traditional procedure that it is oriented in as an academic institution. The other would also be that when they come to the university, the students become part of it through assimilation.
This invitation to everyone can therefore be read also as a way of SU redressing its exclusionary past.

Given that Bolter and Grusin (1999) argue that media derive their identity from their relation to each other, SU makes use of art, pictures, written words and other objects to present the materials used to construct the branding video. For instance, looking at the materials used for this video, it is evident that the website content, the mission statement themes, logo and crest among other semiotics, are reorganised to reproduce the brand identity in form of a video. This echoes to Bolter and Grusin’s (1999:53) assertion that remediation is a manifestation of “the desire to get past the limits of representation and to achieve the real. The university brand team tried to authenticate the meanings in the brand articulations by using suitable images that evoke an emotional response. They achieve this through a double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy in which immediacy strives for authenticity, whereby the author gets eliminated from the medium. This therefore, enables the audience to delve into its represented world and treat it as real.

This kind of semiotic remediation enables SU to reorganise these semiotics for branding purposes in which the viewers are to read them as part of this university’s brand building materials, not as mere images. In other words, all the semiotic materials are resemiotised and repurposed for building the SU brand as an attractive university. In this way, as shown in Figure 8.5 above, each image is calculatingly placed to identify each faculty in a simple but yet meticulous to ensure that way that the viewer is able to read the meanings associated with a good brand for the university.

In the same way, the semiotic materials are repurposed through being packaged in the format of a PowerPoint presentation with many clicking functions that are embedded in the video. Therefore, some media are resemiotised to form semiotic remediation forms that are from camera to print, home page to a video clip inserted to the main video, and so forth. The media are also refashioned from their predecessors and other contemporary media. For instance, the images were captured, remade to be suitable to represent each faculty and, in turn, became part of the video material. In this way, each medium is also reformed to offer a more authentic brand experience through the video as a new medium. Within this medium, then, immediacy leads to hypermediacy”, as discussed by Bolter and Grusin (1999:19).
8.4 Accolades and possessions as corporatised brand tools

In similarity to UWC, SU also brands itself using some of its accolades and possessions. However, rather than focusing more on what it has, SU shows characteristics of being an old and traditional university, as noted above. In these branding messages, the university shows that it is more concerned and focused on reputation. This is one of the main distinctions evident between the SU and UWC. The main purpose of this video is to convince the client that SU is a good university more than to dwell on the narration about what it is popular for. Its popularity has nothing to do with its academic achievements as a university but it is about the services it offers. The academic programmes are described as innovative, and this innovation is clearly represented by the new technological gadgets.

Reference to quality programs that highly promoted shows an academic activity modelled on industrial production (cf. Mafoko, 2010). In similarity to the business world where companies advertise their goods and services in an attractive way, here, SU followed suit, as the programs are well packaged and presented as sellable services. This echoes Fairclough’s (1993) assertion that universities are behaving as if they were businesses in their discursive practices and activities. To clearly create the correct image, SU subtly defines itself using the essence of the institution is better. Instead of communicating to the audiences the performance of the university, the focus is on the type of education offered and the different facets of the university. This packaging of information that highlights meritocracy positions SU brand on a competitive advantage. Examples of this can be seen in Figure 8.6 below.
Figure 8.6: SU’s possessions

The university continues rolling off its brand by expounding on each point. The innovative programmes are also offered through EFFECTIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES and having STATE OF THE ART LABORATORIES. The university has made huge achievements, and yet the images shown in the video show simplicity. The audience is taken for granted to just believe in SU and what it is saying without any need of proof. This stance also shows the confidence SU has in its brand and that it does not see any reason to try and give the audience authentic proof of what it is claiming. The university uses low modality (see Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006), whereby it distances itself from the narration, and someone is seemingly just giving information by clicking the slides. The audience is meant to believe what is shown without questioning. They have to share this perception as the truth of what SU is. This interpersonal function of modality makes the viewer part of the construction of what SU is without questioning. The university is presented as a place of success, and the pictures just seem to augment the statements without much illustration of what this success, beauty or excellence holds. In this case, even the fact that reality is in the eyes of the beholder is nullified, as they are rather expected to believe these accolades. Looking closely at the images, one realises the artful beauty is more appealing than what is being portrayed. The attention here is more on the use of the technology grouping these images and the messages that accompany them.
The images of the people in the video simply represent the particular profession that can be a result of studying in each of these faculties but what SU is painting as outstanding has to be believed. The appearance of the university therefore, here, does not count but it is stated. What is stated is also written in upper cases and in highly saturated colours to indicate where the focus of the brand is directed. The images are ethereal, as they are less saturated, and this way the audience is meant to read the humbleness in them as the colour is idealised so as to tone the brand that SU is painting. This mixture of colour illumination and the shades of its absence, as is in the images, create a balanced tone of the naturalistic depictions of meritocracy. SU’s brand is, therefore, a turbulent mixture of real and ethereal. The images also carry more of the informational value of what is articulated whereas the salience is placed more on the words that are more informational and promotional. The framing is also clearly marked to show this emphasis.

The video uses the old and new visual literacy in which the visual communication is augmented by images as replicas of reality (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). To the audience who are not familiar with the university, this challenge of decoding what is presented in the pictorial images makes them want to know more about the university. Figure 8.7 below further shows some of the possessions SU prides itself in.

![Figure 8.7: SU’s additional possessions and activities](image-url)
Each possession is clearly presented as remarkable to show the high quality of international standards. This reveals the prestige-advertising genre joined together with an academic discourse to give a positive brand. There are also elements of a global discourse in statements such as it has “WORLD CLASS CHOIR” and “TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED.” The campus is described as VIBRANT and TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED with 16 SPORTS CLUBS in which rugby is portrayed as the main sport. This lexis describes the university in a very appealing manner. The audience are more likely to be drawn to these articulations than to the images than to the images that accompany them. All the same, the images are more of a representation of what the university is referring to rather than the salient and highly saturated images that are normally used in advertising to enhance the product or brand. The audience are made to believe rather than to see. This is shown in Figure 8.8 below.

Figure 8.8: SU’s vibrant campus
These images are also repurposed to show a holistic brand. For instance, the VIBRANT Campus picture is the main picture used on the homepage as analysed in Chapter Five. The NEELSIE STUDENT CENTRE and 27 RESIDENCES images form part of its semiotic landscape. These images and their modes are recontextualised and repurposed within the video to strictly showcase a classy SU brand. The manner in which the images are shown just gives a glimpse of what the university looks like. It is however noteworthy that this does not make it less attractive. Even though the images are not highly saturated, they still show a beautiful campus. There is a clear connection between what is in the words and what is articulated in the images. For instance, the purple line in the first image above seems to highlight the person running to show one of the activities that this section includes. In this way, the audience is encouraged to look at the video as an integrated text that is signalling a powerful brand. The promise is rather in the factual information.

8.5 SU redressing through diversification

The double theme of redressing and globalisation is shown through promoting multilingualism and multiculturalism as part of branding. SU continuously tries to erase the old identity as a monolingual Afrikaans university to a multicultural dispensation as captured in the image below. SU concludes its video by assuring the audience that it is a home to everyone regardless of their race, culture, and origin. Stretching its invitation to everyone, it boasts of being a VIBRANT MELTING POT OF CULTURES, as shown in Figure 8.9 below.

![Figure 8.9: SU as a vibrant melting pot of cultures](image-url)
A closer look at the image shows the hands of a white person being linked to black and fairly light hands. What is striking in this image is the fact that the two white hands are linking two of the other racial groups that were historically barred from studying at the university during the apartheid years. Each is accompanied by unwritten expressions signalled by the sign of speech boxes. The fact that this part is written A VIBRANT MELTING POT OF CULTURES neutralises what this image really represents. In the general sense, it could be interpreted to mean that SU is now able to accommodate students from all over the world. This thus, denotes SU as an active player in the world filtered with globalisation. It also works as a way for the university to redress the past by indicating that it is also addressing the social ills that were perpetuated by apartheid, in which it was one of the institutions that were used to discriminate against the other racial groups. However, the refreshing thing about it now, is that it is open to everyone. The subtle way SU expresses this makes it unapologetic. This subtlety also enables the university to distance itself from national politics and stand as an academic institution that is inclusive. By saying it is a melting pot; it shows that people come from these different backgrounds to the university because of its accommodating brand. This makes it more admirable regardless of the fact that by melting other cultures, SU’s old identity remains the dominant one. The chosen semiotic materials help SU blur its conserversation of both its identity and culture.

Looking at this image, one can still see the unsaid parts for instance, that white students are still the dominant racial group at the university despite the fact that it is now accepting those from other racial groups. The melting pot also signals that when these racial groups join SU, they do not necessarily abide by their cultural practices but they assimilate into the university life and culture, which still resemble its historical identity as an Afrikaans-based institution. The students therefore are expected to conform to its cultural practices not necessarily that they are able to exercise their own cultural practices at the university. When cultures are melting they do not create pluralism but solidify to make one main culture. Although one can simply look at it as an acceptance by SU to be more accommodating, it is the kind of accommodation that is worrisome rather than one that can be celebrated.

The following clip shows this amalgamation of cultures when the student is again reminded that YOUR FUTURE STARTS HERE at SU identifying itself using its name and slogan, which start in Afrikaans followed by English. The last part of the video, in Figure 8.10,
again, shows the subtle brand SU is portraying as a university that is now accommodating the different racial categories in the South African context.

Figure 8.10: SU’s crest, logo and slogan repeated

These two dominant languages will diffuse the cultural differences, with which the students and other stakeholders come with. These two languages therefore, are proof that the university is really trying to accommodate all South Africans and also to link with the world. That part of using Afrikaans as the main language and English as another option, signals the fact that SU realises that it needs to internationalise its brand and be able to attract stakeholders outside the country. Overall, it is evident that SU is a predominantly Afrikaans based university, which carries a very powerful brand that also offers attractive packages to the students. Through using images that carry unsaid ideologies, SU is able to present a powerful brand that fulfils various melodramatic functions of branding the university and win over clients.

8.6 Summary of chapter

This chapter has shown how SU meticulously has crafted a prestigious brand with self-praising statements that seemingly disguise its previous identity. It is a brand that is drawn
on meritocracy highlighted by the adjective *excellence* from the onset and augmented by highly complementary statements. It, however, uses humbleness to tone down on being boastful about its highly recommended brand. A closer look at the way SU has packaged its information clearly shows that it wants to be seen as a university of high standards. It unapologetically does not want to be stuck or to be remembered for its unpleasant past but it instead focuses on just being an academic institution—a move that enables it to articulate an identity that is rooted in the African context and yet globally functioning. In articulating its brand this way, SU actually highlights the possibility of creating a brand that is not entangled in the historical events but one that strictly articulates an academic identity. Even a closer look at the university’s blurred images show it is a beautiful campus. The way these images are compressed shows also that the university does not want to clearly highlight them. This seems to show humility but on one hand and on the other, it shows confidence and even subtle boastfulness since it possesses these resources among others. Therefore, in order to view more, the audience may need to visit the university’s webpage or its physical context. This is also a good branding strategy, as little information is given as a way of grabbing the clients’ attention, so that they may want to know more about the SU brand.

The following Chapter looks at UCT’s branding video.
CHAPTER NINE

SEMIOTIC REMEDIATION AND BRAND DIGITALISATION AT UCT

9.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the analysis of UCT’s video and shows how UCT, through semioticisation and remediation, has managed to package semiotic materials to build a world-class brand. Using notions of immediacy and hypermediacy (Bolter and Grusin, 1999), the chapter shows, how UCT remakes itself as an African university at the centre of world-class research, offering opportunities to all, including the previously marginalised groups. Although framed in the South African transformation discourses, the video uses technology and marketisation genres to appeal to an international market.

9.1 Inclusivity and meritocracy as the main brand value of UCT

UCT distinguishes itself from the rest through glocalisation, in which it strategically claims the South African, African and international contexts at the same time. The branding materials in the UCT’s video show a glocal brand that is rooted in the African context. This clearly echoes the identity UCT revealed in its mission statement, as shown in Chapter Five. Unlike UWC, which uses its previous rector as the brand ambassador and the previous chancellor as a source of historical authentication, UCT uses a media celebrity and some of its students to present its brand. In revelation of the glocal brand, UCT cleverly lines up selected students from different racial groups, who are used to depict the opening message in the video. They are all captured mirroring prospective students who might be in contemplation of where to study. These images are motioned to show what the speaker is saying and there is a double mirroring of the speech and the images. The speech and the images are shown in Figure 9.1 below.
The classification of these images is ideologically done in the sense that the first picture shows a black woman followed by a coloured woman and then a white man. This subtly depicts the past, in which the non-white racial groups were not allowed to study at this HWU. Therefore, the onset shows the promotion of inclusivity as a powerful branding tool. These individuals are also used to construct an admirable brand for the university. The opening of the speech starts with a repetition of the word *decisions*, to grab the attention of the viewer on one hand, and also on one hand, to signal that the students in the South African context have choices in where they would want to study as compared to the past. The brand ambassador diverts by assuring the viewer that she understands the challenge of making such choices, as she can relate to similar experience in which she considered to study at UCT and *never regretted it*. These articulations reveal a strong interpersonal relationship the speaker is trying to establish with the viewers. The speaker builds a rapport and an emotional tie with the viewer, who has been invited to know more about the
The university. The gestures and a warm smiling face used of the speaker are evidence of this relationship. UCT also repurposes its crest logo and slogan, which again signal the inclusivity UCT is using to brand itself with (see Chapter Five).

After tying this relationship with the viewer, the speaker reveals her influential position as a celebrity, Nathalie Becker. This is a powerful strategy; as she diverts to introduce herself and chooses to showcase some of her carrier paths as a celebrity, she is also able to accentuate the UCT brand that is associated with her as a celebrity. Communication modes, such as, the radio, television, and magazine, are well known for business branding in which even business products and services choose celebrities as good brand representatives. Mentioning her career activities in these modes makes the viewer more interested about the university she is ‘selling.’ This introduction is shown in Figure 9.2 below.

![Figure 9.2: Natalie Becker’s professional images](image_url)
The speaker is given an identity that heightens the viewer’s curiosity and makes the viewer want to know more about UCT and this celebrity as well. The choice of the images shown indicates a deliberate swifting of what is deemed relevant for branding purposes and how they such semiotic resources are recontextualised and repurposed for building an appealing UCT brand.

The authentication of the brand ambassador and the university is done through the connection between the text and the visual images. This brings in the semantic ties and forms the basis of cohesion in the branding process. This connectedness (cf. Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996/2006) between the images and the text is achieved through augmenting the verbal and a variety of authentic images to make the viewer believe what is being said. This intersemiotic complementarity between the verbal and visual modes is well constructed throughout this video and helps show a strong and unified brand.

UCT’s architecture, such as, Jameson hall building and background scenery is used to present an attractive brand. The photographer included the scenery of beautiful mountains that are part of Cape Town’s attractive sites to showcase the university. The choice of words used to describe the university is indicative of a high-class brand UCT is portraying. For instance, the university is also described as the country’s most beautiful varsity, among other things, as shown in Figure 9.3 below.
The tourism discourse structures and resources UCT has at its disposal are also used as branding resources on one hand and also proof of its global connection with the world at large (cf. Thompson, 2000) on the other hand. Globalisation is thus also realised as a marketing brand and identity resource, and not as simply an economic or cultural ‘reality’ (Thurlow and Jaworski, 2003). The materials are constantly sanitised not only as South Africa’s tourism industry resources, but also as part of the surroundings resources UCT takes to modify its brand.

UCT also uses the alumni made of the most successful people it has interacted with to build a very attractive brand. Therefore, just like UWC that has the opportunity to brand itself as a national university, UCT finds an opportunity to amass all the wealthy resources it is associated with to brand itself to the wider community. This is further shown in Figure 9.4.
below, where it includes some of the prominent people within the South African context who are well known for their business or carrier successes.

Figure 9.4: UCT’s alumni as part of the brand

However, it can be noted that having all these prominent people as the its former students does not necessarily guarantee UCT the status of an excellent academic institution. These resources are used as credentials based on ex students and the people's known experience and alumni to solely market the university. Furthermore, the notions about the benefits of elite universities with their components of meritocracy, individual academic achievement, and high-performance competition are not likely to be part of most people’s lived
experiences but can be experienced through secondary sources. Therefore, in this case, a prospective can only associate to these prominent people through enrolling with UCT.

Although a few people experience these elite schools directly, popular media, from films to newspapers, present elite universities as the model for higher education. Just like other brands in the world are advertised mainly using celebrities, UCT uses the model to present its brand. UCT also uses other well-known celebrities within the country who were once its students to portray an attractive brand. By association only prospective students would dream to become like these celebrities. A brand attached to these prominent people automatically sells more than that which is not. Therefore, UCT adopts this business kind of brand attachment to compete in the world, not only as an academic institution, but also as an able business partner promising the prospective employers that it is able to offer them fruitful future employees. This kind of elitism makes UCT predominate and compete favourably both in the country and the world at large. Whilst UWC relates to the people who fought for the liberation struggle, UCT chooses the business route, which is not only a South African affair but also that of the world at large. UCT, in this way, positions itself in a neutral manner as a university that is positioned in the African context, but directly feeds into the world market. Its brand articulations are more in line with a global university brand rather than a national one, as is the case for UWC.

9.2 Repurposing of academic courses as commodities

The strength of the universities as academic institutions lies in the type of courses they offer to the students. UCT prides itself in the main six faculties it has and presents them in a very attractive and detailed manner. In similarity to UWC and SU, UCT concentrates on both describing and justifying service (see Osman, 2006) by telling students what they could become if they study there. The courses are highly complimented, and even the particular careers highlighted for each faculty are of high calibre as if it were automatic that by studying at UCT, the students will be highly marketable. These articulations are not mere assertions of what UCT offers, but the kind of a professional it can possibly groom. This focus thus, makes the UCT brand admirable. Each faculty is presented in a descriptive manner followed by particular semiotic resources that augment the brand of the university as highly competent and productive. These faculties are as shown in Figure 9.5a below.
Figure 9.5a: UCT’s six faculties

UCT also resemiotises food industry discourses in particular, the restaurants, where the menus for starters and main course meals. In this regard, UCT offers the undergraduates who are referred to as starters - the main learning areas. Each faculty is uniquely presented using different colours, and it is symbolically represented in architectural images. Therefore, the genres found in the food industry are remediated here to enable UCT to articulate a favourable brand.

Each of these faculties is presented in both informative and promotional ways. UCT authenticates these faculties by drawing on real images of the industry in which the students can go and work. Consequently, instead of dwelling on detailing the nature of its courses, it explains more on the end result, which is the job the student can get after studying. This kind of articulation shows the kind of branding that is modeled along the business world. Therefore, here it can be said this branding is not restricted to the academic world only. It goes to the extent of portraying UCT as a reliable partner to the business world. This is shown in Figures 9.5b and c below.
There are Commerce, where the courses and programs are aimed at equipping you to participate in the global economy. So if you are aiming to become an accountant, economist, manager or big shot business person, this is where you want to go for.

The faculty of engineering and the built environment offers a wide array of exciting new programs in the field of engineering architecture, geomatics, construction and property. It enjoys an outstanding international reputation for its high-quality graduates and groundbreaking research. By joining these professions, you will be contributing to built-in future of the next generations.

Then there is the faculty of Law, no need to tell you what you will be studying here, but I can tell you that it is the oldest Law faculty in SA and has produced many leaders in this field. The constitution is the foundation of our democracy so having a law degree opens up all sorts of careers both in SA and abroad.

Figure 9.5b: The first three UCT faculties
The university uses prestige and marks its graduates, courses and partnerships with the world as outstanding, groundbreaking, driving force in the world. Here, the brand team is able to make a semiotic chain from showing the physical building of the faculty rooted from its semiotic landscape, to the virtual world, and also to looking at the possible careers the students might want to pursue as shown in Figure 9.5c above. By briefly focusing on the qualifications and the relevant skills the students can get instead of giving more information on the nature of the courses, the university aligns itself as a business partner to the business world in which it aims to produce well-rounded graduates the employers will be happy to
employ. Graduates’ employment prospects and earning power are clearly highlighted through emphasising on the advantage of studying at the university.

In presenting these courses, it also resemiotises professional people in particular jobs as a way of showing the prospective students what they can possibly be. Therefore, resemiotising the corporate world in this case strengthens the university’s brand on one hand, but, on the other hand, it also shows subtle manipulation as the university does not concentrate on the resources it has but imaginatively links itself to the corporate sector as an equal partner which produces well rounded graduates that will gain access to the private sector after just studying at UCT. This is also a double brand articulation to the prospective employers of its current students and to the interested prospective student. In this way, UCT is able to endorse the value of its services (cf. Osman, 2006) and at the same time maintain a very strong brand. This links with the identity it portrays in its mission statement as a university that is active on both the African and global levels.

Students are encouraged to study at UCT if they are to be successful. This success is presented as if it were automatic that when the students have finished studying at UCT they would automatically gain access to the business world. The importance of these messages suggests future employability and future earning as the key issues when students make their choice of tertiary education. The availability of information about graduate future employability and future earning may be interpreted as the university giving an assurance as many graduates are concerned that their investment in time consuming and costly education could be rejected by the community; or that their future earnings may not be able to perform their filial piety. It further assures the student that they will be guided on how to choose their courses, a move that makes the UCT brand easier to consume, as it has all the information needed. The student is left with no questions. Figure 9.6 below shows self help guidance should they need it. It also shows some of the materials used in guiding the students to make their career choices.
Using social discourse that is more conversational and having all of its resources packaged in this video, potentially shows the indirect influence of ‘emotion’ in the student decision-making process. In addition to the above, the importance of the message on graduates’ employment prospects and graduates’ earning power clearly suggests the influence of materialistic and affluent lifestyle of possessions and wealth in the global society at large. The university, here, stands as one of the vehicles that are helping shape this lifestyle by offering academic training in a comfortable, competitive and well-resourced environment. This may make the students pursue a materialistic lifestyle and its other rewards. Therefore, this would easily make them to choose UCT as their academic destination for academic pursuits; it will not be easier, then, to assimilate into this competitive world.

9.3 Co-curricular activities and support services as part of the brand

In similarity to UWC and SU, UCT also draws on the student to resemiotise services and co-curricular activities at the institution as part of the brand identity communication. Distinctively, it presents to the prospective stakeholders especially students a well-rounded institution that covers both their academic and social lives in a very attractive way. The importance of including all its services as part of the branding process undoubtedly helps students in their decision-making process and makes the university’s chances of getting
desirable clients high. It uses all the resources that it could possibly include to present a well-rounded campus life. This can be further seen in Figure 9.7.

The other services offered include transport, counseling, accommodation and advice, orientation programs co-curricular activities, student’s associations, affordable tuition fees and course flexibility in term of course duration and course mix. In a country that is well known for crime, after a few reports on foreign tourists being attacked and killed, the university safeguards its brand in a South African context, where crime is prevalent, by assuring the clients that safety measures is one of the key support services that it offers. It defends its brand as a very safe institution.

The importance of the messages of safety within the institution and the availability of student support services are given as surety that the institution is able to cater for the clients to live a harmonious and peaceful student life in South Africa. This is because the student support service provides the necessary social and practical support to make the student feel at home. The collective and hybrid manner the university used to brand itself allows new students to quickly acquire trusted or perceived information to reduce uncertainty.

9.4 Financial aid as both a redressing and selling strategy
It is without doubt that in this way of branding itself, UCT shows an attractive and expensive brand, and it rectifies this problem by stating that the university is aware of financial hardships the clients might have. UCT is cognisant of the disadvantaged clients and finds it useful to highlight that it offers financial aid. This is regardless of the fact that this kind of funding is mostly available only to the selected South African community members rather than to those coming from the African region and the international community at large. This kind of positioning also shows that universities, in general, borrow business discourses and practices in their operations. For instance, in this case, the student is now regarded as a client that goes to UCT to “shop” and pay fees, and if they cannot afford it, just as the business client (who can get discounts, lay byes and sometimes free bonuses), the student can win a bursary or can qualify to be given one. Figure 9.8 below shows how UCT continues to convince the clients to be part of UCT regardless of their financial situations or constraints.

Figure 9.8: UCT financial aid
This is also a way of UCT redressing the past inequalities. This kind of funding is a government based funding offered at universities to enable disadvantaged students to pursue tertiary education. In this way, UCT kind of holds the redemption (cf. Haas, and Fischman, 2010) of this disadvantaged student, as they are now able to study at the most beautiful academic institution in the country. Whilst this kind of inequality can be addressed differently by the previously disadvantaged universities as UWC above, UCT’s stance of addressing the economic inequality echoes Blommaert’s (2003:611) assertions that in terms of globalisation, “inequality [and] not uniformity, organises the flows and the particular nature of such flows across the globe, they travel across, structurally in different spaces and will consequently be picked up in different places.” This is also supported by Shi-Xu’s (2005) when he asserts that discourses are not uniformly consumed in different contexts.

Therefore, for UCT’ s branding purposes, financial aid comes also with a good assurance that these prospective students can now get into one of these top universities. This kind of market competition resolves the tension between access and quality. However, it tries to convince the students why they should choose UCT as their academic institution. When presented with such a vibrant university brand, students are likely to compete for positions in the university that will give them the best economic advantage. Universities also compete for the best students and staff to have the best educational product for which they can then charge the highest tuition fees, secure the most alumni contributions, and win the largest research grants and contracts.

9.6 Authentication as a persuasive strategy

UCT brings in live experiences and events that are repurposed and circulated as a way of showing its authenticity. These events are interesting as they are also similar to the familiar events used in television reality shows. The brand team dialogically voices and embodies the current students and copies different events and student interactions to produce a representational atmosphere of the university. This shows that semiotic remediation is closely tied with indexical orders and chronotopes (see Blommaert, 2005; Hanks, 1990; Prior and Shipka, 2003; and Silverstein, 1993; 2003). UCT repurposes the current and previous students as part of the branding discourse. It shows how they routinely navigate multiple representational worlds or indexical fields on the one hand, and also how such
situated interactions link to the past and present to accentuate UCT’s brand on the other hand.

Even the main event of ushering the new students into the university is resemiotised, here, to show the fun aspect of UCT's brand. Through representational articulations, the discourses of academic, social and economy are blended to form a hybridised video in which a lot of different modes are also hypermediated. Figure 9.9 shows the orientation event being portrayed as one of the fun and memorable events that makes UCT a good brand.

![UCT's orientation program](image)

**Figure 9.9: UCT’s orientation program**

The speaker draws on her previous experience to present some of the activities that make UCT’s social life more enjoyable. Besides using discourses that are less informal as a way of showing an equal relationship with the clients, the university also does very well to bring authenticity in its branding video. This also shows the notion of inclusivity as a way of redressing its past social ills. Figures 9.10a and 9.10b below show the kind of interactions that make UCT students build social networks with others.
Figure 9.10a: UCT’s social activities

Highlights of my three years at UCT where do I begin? Apart from my rich learning experience from my great lecturers, there was the great social life. I can tell you that being a student at UCT is an absolute plus and being part of a truly African and international community is awesome. I established friendships and networks that will last a lifetime.
The speaker’s experience at UCT is still tied with what is happening there presently. Thus, this consistency or longevity helps make UCT’s brand stable. The current students, sporting and societal events are also resemiotised to help accentuate the brand and make it more authentic. This is further elaborated on in the following sections.

Persuasion is done using different events, students’ interactions, semiotics and games that are recontextualised in this video to tell a UCT brand experience. It is also done through using current students who are telling their life stories, as shown in Figure 9.11 below.
However, a closer look at the video and how the students are portrayed, one can see that the students are responding to specific questions that are created to sell the university brand. Nonetheless, these students help augment the UCT brand being portrayed in the whole video. They provide the authenticity of the university brand. The students are diverse and this is also a subtle way of the university showcasing that it is now inclusive. In addition, there are more none-whites in this part of the video clip. This can be interpreted as another way in which UCT subtly shows its diverse nature as a part of building an acceptable brand especially in the South African contexts.

Prospective students can use this selected information to make a decision of studying at the university. This part therefore, helps to ‘neutralise’ the white majority as it were; now the other racial groups can also study at the university. The students describe the university as the best in both social and academic terms. The life previous clips showing the social aspect
or life at the university presents a lot of white students to the extent that the viewer may start to think that they are the dominant racial group. Therefore, UCT subtly manages to present a favourable brand, especially to the South African community. It is also ironic that the white student presented here cites the social life as the reason the prospective students should choose UCT as their academic institution. The image above on social activities shows white students as the main participants in the reality shows during orientation and extracurricular activities. This can be interpreted as also another way of showing the UCT brand on one hand and also the white clients (given that these activities are white-dominated in real life especially in African contexts) it is trying to attract on the other. Most of the students’ responses show also how they relate to the university’s perceived brand identity as a merited university.

The testimonial statements are also used to effectively persuade the clients as the current students as some of the brand consumers, are narrating their true experience of the university life. This enhances authenticity, trust and credibility of the brand promotional claims that the university team has articulated throughout the video. The current students together with the brand ambassador in this case bring in what Askehave (2007:728) terms “positive external evaluation”.

Both UCT and SU show that they do not have to rely on contextual and social parameters for their institutional brand model to be effective as competition works in all places and times. Therefore, they draw on meritocracy as the main strategy to paint successful, thriving and attractive brands. Through digital hypermedia, the universities seek the real by multiplying mediation so as to create a feeling of rich experience, which can be taken as reality. Both of these moves are strategies of remediation. In the video, students’ social activities and events within the universities are used as brand markers or resources that shape attractive brands. Seeing real students within the universities makes the viewer believe the virtual reality as real or experience the university context through the virtual world rather than the real physical world. As such, what can be seen is that the world is being compressed by use of Internet. Internet is very cheap, and through it, the universities’ brands can be advertised, not only on local and regional scale but also on a global scale.

To conclude this video, the speaker still retains the meritocracy that UCT associates itself with. In this positive aspect, it solicits for response and gives its contact details for more
information for instance, if people would like to make enquiries about such things as admission. The clients are also redirected to the UCT’ website links in which they can continue to interact with university of its virtual world or through telephone calls as shown in Figure 9.12 below. This way, even the branding materials are continuously circulated in different modalities and the university brand becomes popular.

![All in all UCT can be summed up as phenomenal experience that helped shape who I am today. It has also given me the opportunity to start a great career and make good bucks... Now does anyone have a question of about where they should study? Thought not, but if you do, keep watching and I will put up the contact details for you to take down. I must run now but remember studying at the University of Cape Town equips you with the tools to make the most of the life challenges and unlock many of its opportunities. Chao!](image)

**Figure 9.12: UCT’s contact details**

This continuously shows how the university is always engaged in recruiting and selling itself through more channels of media. Branding, in this case, becomes an unending process that will, without any doubt, enhance the university brand and its growth.

### 9. 7 Summary of chapter

This chapter has shown how UCT has strategically packaged imageries and resources to uniquely present an attractive brand in its branding video. Through semioticisation and
remediation, the chapter has also shown how UCT is able to brand itself as an accommodative university to both the local and the international community.

In comparison to SU and UWC, UCT subtly brands itself by using all the resources at its disposal to present a well-rounded brand that is rooted in meritocracy and authenticity. It has used semiotics ranging from mission statement themes, logos, crests, slogans, alumni, celebrities, current students and sports, just to mention a few. Unlike the other two universities, UCT adequately packages its information for branding purposes that reveal strong academic accolades. UCT’s video is more hybridised and shows how rapid development of multiple semiotic resources, new digital media in contradiction or correspondence with the traditional media is invoking the double logic of immediacy and hypermediacy in their efforts to remake themselves and each other (Bolter and Grusin, 1999). In these lenses, the chapter has, therefore, presented the kind of strategies, semiotic resources and modes that the university marketing team has used to accentuate the UCT brand for a global consumption.

This chapter has therefore shown how UCT an attractive brand which signals institutionalised and corporatised brand in the transforming South African contexts. The technologisation and globalisation processes enable the university to recreate and manipulate and repurpose its resources to portray a positive brand.

The following chapter looks at how the students at the three universities under study perceive their universities’ brands, as is partially shown in the videos.
CHAPTER TEN

STUDENTS’ INSTITUTIONAL BRAND CONSUMPTION

10.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the three universities’ students’ evaluations of the branding materials in order to explore the students’ perceptions of the institutions. Using the elements of CDA as part of the broader critical multisemiotic discourse analysis, this chapter presents the ideological complexes that come to be structured and restructured, articulated and rearticulated within the institution for both construction and consumption of the brand. In these lenses discourses can be seen as tactical elements or blocks operating in field of force relations whereby there is the existence of different and even contradictory discourses within the same strategy (cf. Hall 1988:55-6).

10.1 UCT’s brand evaluation using video as stimulus text

According to Johnstone (2004) semiotic codes found in space index particular localities, show different levels of territorial and societal stratification including identity claims, power relations, and their contestations. In turn all of these practices involve territorial claims, spatial segregation or encroachment and the categorisation of social actors into in-group members. The sections below show the students through watching the videos and relating to their experience perceive their universities as brands.

In chorus to the prestigious brand UCT paints in its video, the students at UCT also made comments that are in line with the university as a desirable brand. Following Keller’s (2008) four types of judgments with respect to the brand, UCT students also rate their university brand using the judgement of its quality. Most of the students just like those captured in the video confirm that UCT is a great university they are all proud to be part. The excerpts below indicate this:

UCT 1: Proudly UCT. Of the many disciplines it teaches, I can find my own and am being trained to excel in it…

UCT 2: Yes because of the facilities
These students describe their university in a very positive way echoing to what is articulated in the video as having many disciplines, facilities, many opportunities, and many activities, well resourced and make the learning meaningful experience. The other students describe it as a home and great platform to connect with other people. UCT students also show the importance of material resources in brand rating. They describe their university as well resourced (see UCT 4) Discursive branding practice as highlighted in the video highlight a high quality lifestyle for the students. As such the students as consumers are also legitimatising the brand UCT is painting by attesting to experiencing a good brand.

In similarity to the UWC and SU below, most of the UCT students also show that consumer’s willingness to assign personality characteristics to the universities as brands (cf. Aaker, 1997) and look at brands as if they were human characters (Levy, 1985) indicates that consumers can have relationships with brands.

Most of these students also acknowledge that they use some of the branded materials such as clothing among others to show their loyalty and attachments to the brands:

**UCT 5:** I use the branded clothing, I am proud to show that I belong to the UCT community where I go

**UCT 4:** Career service guide, campus handbook, to get to know more

**UCT 3:** I [use] merchandise- the hoody, I like it.

Just in the same way universities branding discourses are recirculated as indicated in Chapter Five, the students become vehicles in recirculations of the brand to a wider community for consumption. Being proud and loyal to this high quality brand will without doubt help in the brand enhancement and consumption. In this case, it is evident that the university brand team is conscious of how to make its students loyal and assertive of the brand. On the question whether the university is showing reality as they experience it in their daily dealings around
the universities, the students mainly acknowledged what is shown in the video is real. However, a few students indicated that although it is accommodative, there are still some imbalances in terms of the racial ratio just as shown in the video in which the university is still dominant. They also felt that the university must continue celebrating this diversity. The extracts below show this:

UCT 1: yes because it is very accommodative to everyone regardless of colour although ratio not balanced… they should acknowledge that the background of their students is different

UCT 3: I cannot think of any at the moment…maybe to keep celebrating diversity in their brand.

UCT 4: More presents in media platforms perception[s] are important in branding also market to the world generally not only to young people.

This kind of brand interpretation shows that “texts are also consumed differently in different contexts” (Fairclough, 2007:79). Whilst some students are satisfied, others think the university can do more on addressing diversity issues as raised by UCT 1 and 3 above.

The issue of diversity raised by UCT 1 and UCT 3 also shows that even the students are aware of the national socio-political discourses in which UCT is trying to address redress. These comments also demonstrate that the students feel that the university can do more about these imbalances to come up with a true picture of the post apartheid open academic institution. Other students indicate that the university should try to capture attention for even older students such as postgraduates as it seems to focus on the young people only. However, as shown in the video above, UCT addresses a wider audience although the focus is on the ‘starters.’

Looking at these comments, the UCT students are generally satisfied with their brand and unlike the other two universities in which the students refute some of the ideas and materials presented as part of the brands. Therefore, the university used material that is familiar to the students who also seem to positively consume their university brand. The following sections concentrate on SU’s student perceptions of their university as a brand
10.2 SU’s brand evaluation using video as stimulus text

Similar to UCT above, most of the SU students showed emotional satisfaction of being part of the university and how they view themselves (Clark, 2005). They also characterised the university in the same way it has been evaluated in the video. The international students commented SU as a good institution in which they feel accommodated. Quality brand image is necessary to attract prospective students (Keller, 2008). The students echo to the way the university portrays itself as a well known brand appropriately and effectively fulfilling the brand promises articulated in the video. Therefore, overall, satisfied students perpetuate the brand promise. According to Keller (2008), brand imagery depends on the extrinsic properties of the product or service, including the ways in which the brand attempts to meet customers’ psychological or social needs. The international students emulate the brand and seem satisfied with the way SU brands itself and their true experience of being students at the university is not regrettable. This is shown when they acknowledged being proud of their university brand:

SU: 1 Yes I have adapted well here as an international student and the classes are at a standard.

SU: 2 Yes it is cool uni [varsity] with a vibrant student life. I am an exchange student and have felt welcome here. It’s easy to get to know how people and a chilled atmosphere

SU: 4 Yes I find it more hospitable to international students, the international office orient you well

In these remarks the students also try to quote some of the compliments used to describe SU thereby legitimatising the brand as having truth-value. The students acknowledged the university’s superiority remarks in passing brand judgments. To some extent then SU authentically creates a good brand and the students as its clients show satisfaction. The same applies to some of the local students at the university who assertively acknowledged the richness and accommodating nature. They were all proudly SU students and commented positively about their university. In their comments, they say

SU: 3 I think so, good institution everything is here don’t have to fetch resources elsewhere.

SU: 7 Stellenbosch University focuses on the holistic strategy experience. The academic, culture and sport. Standards are high and Stellenbosch is held at high esteem.

SU: 6 Yes this is my home, it’s more than a university, Stellenbosch for life.
I am proudly ‘stellenboschian’ embracing the various spheres of student life - socials, sports and firstly academics.

The evaluation of the students on this video also show that the university is to a certain extend able to brand itself to desirable standards. However, as analysed above, SU’s video carry unclear messages that are sometimes not matching what is being stated. The excellence is rather articulated more and shown less. Some of the respondents in the interviews raise concerns as to why the university uses art to disguise its real brand. This brings to the fore, the argument that as much as organisational identity is a socially constructed concept which draws on different discourse such as social, academic and economical discourses, it is not always a social construction of what all the people can regard as meaningful and real as cited by Bauman (1996). The students raise concerns as to why the university did not make use of clear and authentic images that highlight what it has. The following excerpts are indicative of these remarks:

SU 3: No bring reality pics of buildings…they must not just describe they must bring pics to grab attention.

SU 4: Partly the beginning is not interesting dull materials used background music not appalling. Too much emphasis on academic not on environment…It should show reality. They must put environment resident, and student centre should show.

SU 5: Yes partly, they don’t show reality that people can relate to…very equipped and rich [but] they should use reality but they [pictures] are not real and do not reflect reality…It is diverse but we stand alone culture wise but [there is no] integration. Why put all nice stuff and not the negative. People are not friendly to international vs. locals…Write both in English and Afrikaans even on buildings to make it user friendly. Their video is for public consumption.

As Stensaker (2005) posits these brands are increasingly tested and contested especially when they use images that are not rooted in reality, the SU students feel that the university hides the true brand identity of the university by using the digital art where some of the images are blurred or do not reflect reality of the university. Just as Stensaker (2005), the students also argue that the university needs to create images that match their organisational identities. SU5 brings in arguments that are relevant for a South African context in which the country is trying integrate and move towards authentic transformation. This student added that:
SU 5: No [I am not proud of SU] there is minimal integration of races, why do they insist on using Afrikaans? And I don’t even know what the buildings names mean.

Therefore, in terms of inclusion, some of the students commented that the university seems inclusive in the sense that it is attracting different racial groups from the local and global contexts but they felt is not really accommodative as raised in the video especially the part where SU identifies itself as a culture melting pot. These points reveal the hidden meaning of SU as a melting pot of different cultures. The students find themselves in an academic institution that uses a minority language as its majority language. This way the students are forced to make efforts to understand and function using this language or risk failing or not enjoying being part of this university. These student evaluations on SU’s branding discourse go hand in hand with the argument that CDA puts the voice of the powerful into question in order to divulge hidden needs, interests, and dominant social relations that serve self-interests, maintaining social inequality and injustice (cf. Weiss and Wodak, 2002; Fairclough, 1993; 2003; 2007). In this case, it helps the students as the marginalised group of the university to be conscious of their voice as legitimate and be heard through sharing their brand perceptions in answer to the branding discourses used by their university. In this case, they are able to delegitimise some of the university’s branding claims and open more debates that may help the university transform further in a way that is more inclusive and a true reflection of eradicating the remnants of social inequalities left by the apartheid rule.

Here the student, SU 5, reveals that the university’s inclusivity is on face value, it is not true in practice. Despite the university’s efforts of trying to enrol students from different ethnical backgrounds, the students acknowledged that they still interact in closed circles such as the international vs. locals alone. The university is also blamed for strengthening this separation through using Afrikaans as the main language that would obviously leave the international students at a disadvantage in terms of social integration. These socio-political discourses as is the case for UWC and as currently seen in UCT protest (see Chapter Six) are still seen permeating these South African academic institution and may take long to eradicate or address in effective ways that will benefit everyone within their contexts should they continue on building branding discourses that are more self-serving than serving the public.
Bringing in the students’ discourses to evaluate their institutions also shows how the university as a powerful institution (cf. Fairclough, 2003) is able to brand itself using “information and images that combine neutral information with information intended to create emotional ties between various stakeholders and a given institution” (Stensaker, 2005). Some of the students also felt excluded in the video as the university did not show them as part of it or left out as not important yet they are the main stakeholders the university needs to keep on functioning. They recommended that the university should also consider using even the academics in the video to make their brand claims more authentic and lively. The students indicate that:

SU 1: They should use their academics which is how a uni [versity] should measure effectiveness and impact …more talk about student life more variety/diversity of students, more lively not so animated.

SU 2: Yes they use their academics and sports, which are the key players… but must put more about student life and happenings [be] cause that is a big part of what SU is about as well.

SU 3: Yes though more can always be done to market the university globally and nationally continue to promote SU’ s logo and visions not only on campus but all around town and in local schools and workplaces.

SU 4: Yes, sports for example at Stellenbosch is already a major form of material to brand itself…give more notice about the home of institution not only on first slide.

Most of them agree that some of the images used by the university are real but they are not presented in an attractive way and recommended that more can be done to enhance the material in the video which some of them described as dull. The university also shows little about its brand markers that are minimally presented. Brand markers such as the crest, logo, and slogan of the university, are only used on the first and last slides in the video to the extent that in between it is difficult to recognize that it is SU’s branding material.

The students’ perceptions may to some extent hold institutions responsible for images that are not rooted in reality and as (Stensaker, 2005) points out they can be damaging not only ethically or legally but may also lead to poor student attraction (Levitz et al., 1999). As value is created in a consumer’s mind as a result of a brand’s superior quality, the social esteem
the brand provides the SU’s students bring in positive criticisms that can help the university to revamp its branding video and include the students as part of what US is all about. This way, boosts consumer trust in the brand and self-identification with the brand (Aaker, 1996; 1991; Keller, 1993; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007) is more inevitable and will in turn make the university more powerful and inclusive.

In addition to UCT and SU students’ commentaries, the following paragraphs focus on the evaluations of the UWC students.

10.3 UWC’s brand evaluation using video as stimulus text

In similarity to UCT and SU students, UWC students were also asked to comment on the brand imageries featuring in their branding video. In terms of quality and loyalty to UWC, most of the students responded to be proudly UDUBS (a phonetic coinage they use to name it informally). In their comments, they all acknowledge being benefiting a lot from the university. Their responses show that the students also appreciate the university as an institution that is helping them to be better people that are going to competently face the business world. The participants show sentimental attachments to the brand as they experience it during their studying journey. Their responses are:

UWC 1: Yes I am proudly UDUBS because UWC has groomed me to be the person I am today i.e. educationally and professionally and through all the services that the university offers

UWC 2: Yes, this is one of the few universities that are for previously disadvantaged I am proudly UDUBS because we’ve come a long way and achieved a lot

UWC 3: Yeah, I am proudly UDUBS. I have learnt a lot and I am still learning. I am improving myself academic and professional knowledge and qualifications and I will become a more useful member of the society that I was when I came here…

UWC 4: In a way that I am living my dream and I believe that I will achieve my goal with the support I get from my lectures and tutors

These comments show the emotional connection the students have to the university as an academic brand. Through revealing their pride and other emotions in brand consumption, they evaluate the university as a very influential institution helping them improve their lives. As Fairclough (2003) argues that institutions can play the role of a contributor because of their power and knowledge to position social objects or subjects, [such as students in this particular case,] and practices by defining what should and ought to be the case. As the
UWC students consume and legitimatise the brand, it is indicative that they are also drawing on the brand the university is painting to create their identities and possibly branding themselves too as products of UWC as they explore the world. A good example is when UWC 1 says:

UWC 1: Yes coming from poor background with Bantu education background, UWC gave me an opportunity to further my studies in order to get a chance of uplifting myself in order to get a chance of uplifting myself

The students’ comments here resonate with the rector’s speech in which he portrays UWC as a university that is helping the 90% to be successful. The student shows loyalty to UWC and shows gratitude of being part an able university. This kind of brand identity creation has social, discursive and narrative options available to both the people or the institution in their attempts to self-name, self-characterise, and to claim social spaces and social prerogatives” (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004: 19). As such, it is evident that ideologies of such discoursal judgements and brand constructions guide people into the manner they use linguistic resources available at a particular time to index their brand identities. The students and the universities in this case create the new ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983; Hall, 1990) within these universitescapes.

The other students also resonate with the rector’s speech and recreate the historical discourses to admire the progress that the university together with the disadvantaged are making in the transformation era. The following excerpts indicate this:

UWC1: Yes, this is one of the few universities that are for the previously disadvantaged, I am proudly UDUBS because we’ve come a long way and have achieved a lot.

UWC 7: Yes, I am. I am proud to be part of a university that fought for diversity. I am proud to be a representative of this university.

This also indicates that the university is able to influence the customers as an agent of change as it works together with the people to continuously fight the inequalities that were imposed during the apartheid era. These discourses circulate and recirculate within the university and the South African community and become part of the material people draw on to create their identities. This echoes Mautner’s (2005:106) argument that academic
entrepreneurialism goes beyond mere commercialisation as it is a pervasive institutional transformation, targeting staff and students and aiming to achieve in them not just behavioural but also cognitive and emotional changes. The students’ comments show that they are part of the institution branding discourses as clients on one hand, and as contributors on the other. It is through their engagement with the students that the universities gain popularity and cultivate their reputations.

Therefore, brand consumption can also be perceived as a powerful social tool that consumers employ in their quest for self-identity. More specifically, Fournier (1998) demonstrates that the brand is an active relationship partner. Consumption of the brand contributes to the brand’s positioning and inherent meaning and, correspondingly, consumption of the brand contributes to the consumer’s construction of self. The students in this case also index their identities through the historical connection during apartheid. Therefore, accepting UWC as a university that is really making them to transform their lives from the shackles of the oppressive past shows how the consumers use brands to construct the self in seeking to understand the relationship between them and the university as a brand.

This echoes Ahuvia’s (2005) suggestion that the consumer’s relationship with a particular possession or product is of great importance because of the way that relationship expresses connection to other people. By consuming their universities’ brands as admirable the students also define and communicate who they are. Brands therefore provide more than a functional value, and the meaning of the brand for consumers becomes essential to understand (Cooper, McLoughlin, and Keating, 2005; Levy, 1959). As the students get education in these universities they assign their brand identity by association to these academic brands.

Marketing strategists create brand personalities to appeal to different consumer segments (Aaker, 1997; McEnally and de Chernatony, 1999; Sirgy, 1981). Just like humans, brands can potentially include personalities that differentiate them from other brands (Plummer, 1985; Sirgy, 1981).

Although all the students are content with UWC, a few raise concerns that show being disgruntled.
UWC 4: I am proudly UDUBS, however I feel that the coloured race formed UWC and we do not get enough recognition in terms of SRC, [even] bursaries are [for] majority black people.

UWC 3: However, I could be more proud and the sense of belonging to UDUBS could be greater if I felt that xenophobia is less and less institutionalized here. If foreign students were more appreciated (in many different ways, e.g. getting scholarships like their counterparts in the likes of UCT, SU and other universities), this would be a better place for foreign students. So I am proudly UDUBS but not in all ways.

Racial struggles still remain as even the non blacks who were racially categorised and were not happy with such categorisations are seemingly reclaiming the past struggle to address the current inequalities within the institution. This UWC 4 seems to retain the old identity that the university is trying to refute or neutralise. It also shows how different students within the university make sense of their world within the institution and find ways to resonate or to find ways to speak back to the discursive practices. UWC 3 on one hand also draws on some of the social ills such as xenophobia in which the non-white South Africans attack the foreign blacks accusing them for taking their jobs and other resources. As articulated in the video, UWC shows how it is part of 90% that needs to be catered for in order to make education accessible to the once privileged, UWC 3’s concern reveals this struggle in which the university is not able to cater for everyone as compared to UCT.

What can be deducted from this is that the university is still struggling with racial and diversity issues as some of the students show that they are not fully recognised. However, this also reveals that as the university tries to address some of the inequalities caused by the apartheid regime, some of the people especially students as its clients are not fully satisfied. The challenge then for the university is to try to continuously address these inequalities without creating much tension. As it rightfully brands itself as a national university, the students seem to bring discourses that are relevant for the continuous transformation of both the university and country at large.

Following Fairclough’s (2003) argument that institutions can operate as embodiments of power, play an imperative role in the process of social change, here UWC is seen recycling the struggle to continue as the basis of its transformation. The students in consumption of such brand articulation become associated with them as their true lived experience. This way the university plays the role of a contributor to the powerful transition of the country through
education and positions the students as customers that are to be loyal to its identity as they will in turn use such discourses to identify themselves as UWC associated brands. In so doing, the students even help the university to legitimatise its branding articulations as common sense assumptions (cf. Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, as (Hall, 2003: 27) contends through forms of language games, UWC, metaphorically speaking, legitimatises and foregrounds national identity rooted in the struggle to accommodate the masses of people to their subordinate place.

Despite positively evaluating the brand through the video, UWC students also feel that although the university cleverly placed good materials to showcase the brand, a lot can be done to enhance the brand through this video. They say that the materials:

UWC 3 …are attractive. Yes. However more materials should be (have been) employed to capture the complete (or close to complete) gamut of the university’s academic and co-curricular resources and facilities. For instance, they should pay homage or appreciate the curricular resources and facilities. For instance, they should pay homage or appreciate the presence of foreign or international students who constitute a very high percentage of postgraduate students. The same goes to the teaching staff as well. This diversity should be highlighted as strength. Instead, me thinks it is being veiled. Why? … Elaborating more on the materials offered that way it can catch more people’ attention… More involvement by students.

UWC 1: Some, not all, a whole lot more could have been used…

UWC 2: Not really, I feel like the residential areas were left out along with the festivities that take place at UWC.

Generally the students suggest that university needs to add more materials that capture what they call the true UWC brand. Their perception of what UWC should look like is far from the projected brand identity. Students are more centred on the way things look like in the presence rather than referring to the past, which they are not well informed and feel left out, as they are not from that dispensation. It is clear that UWC has overlooked the importance of showcasing the students as the part of the brand in which it could repurpose them as brand ambassadors as well as good source to get easy feedback that would fruitfully improve the brand. For instance, as UWC 3 above indicates the university must try to show evidence of diversity by acknowledging the international students that are very important for the global
growth of the university. Even in these excerpts, students seem to also understand the notions of localization and globalisation in which they feel their university is still deeply rooted in the past and does not seem to see its strengths. Some of the students also feel that UWC need to also include its students, campus activities and other materials such as the student residential areas as part of the brand to make it lively (see UWC 1). Another comment that is indicative of this is:

UWC 3: what if other people for instance students and lecturers also had a role to play in marketing UWC? Why can they not have a few minutes talk about UWC as well? Or it is only the rector and chancellor who can be trusted to do that? They should also use some former students who have made it...every faculty should be mentioned... I feel unappreciated, unacknowledged or even alienated as a foreign African national studying at UWC. In addition to that, I do not do natural sciences. I am a social scientist, in the Arts Faculty. Some other faculties as well as departments have also not been mentioned...

In this analysis, it is clear that by critically examining the kind of discourses the students are bringing, it is evident that CDA gives voice to the oppressed or the subordinated. The University only focused on three faculties as the main ones it excels in. This raises concerns from the students who are not studying in these fields as they feel excluded and treated as unworthy to be part of the brand. The fields of study that UWC chose are regarded as the most important learning areas in this world. This is because professionals in these fields are scarce and the academia is encouraged meet the high demands of the business world. The students who are not in these ‘special’ areas of specialisation are aware of this social construction that causes their exclusion. Bringing this to the forefront, the students are able to challenge the status quo in which UWC is playing a role. Moreover, as much as UWC metaphorically speaking legitimatises and foregrounds national identity rooted in the struggle to accommodate the masses of people to their subordinate place, the students seem to delegitimise some of the material used and call for the current students being included as part of the brand. This kind of shift of not only looking at the prestigious instances and resources may help the university to have another way of speaking about its brand in the post apartheid Africa that is not deeply rooted in the past. This is because as much as it looks admirable to be able to draw its brand as a weak university that is finding its strength in the new era, the ‘poor man’s’ discourses are also restrictive in a way to the people who come from richer backgrounds and may use UWC’s strong assertiveness to the humble beginnings
as unattractive. This also echoes Fairclough’s (2007) assertion that discourses should be formulated to cater for people from different backgrounds because they tend to interpret discourses differently regardless of sharing and interacting in the same context.

10.4 Summary of chapter

This chapter has shown that most of the students in the three universities under study are loyal and they are proud of their universities as academic brands. UCT’s students did not have much to recommend to the branding team to enhance or improve their branding video. These students as clients seem satisfied. Conversely, despite the fact that most of the students at SU and UWC are happy to be part of their universities, some of the SU students felt that the university should try to brand itself showing reality. One of the respondents commented that the university should draw on real images and that it should be inclusive in practical sense as it insists on using Afrikaans as its main language. This way, it still excludes others. This puts SU as powerful institution on line as it divulges hidden unmet needs, interests, and dominant social relations that serve self-interests, maintaining social inequality and injustice. In this case, the student feels marginalised. In similarity to SU, UWC students also brought in socio-political and economic discourses in their concerns of brand imbalances.

The analysis has revealed the students’ perceptions on their universities branding discourses and uncovered ideological and exercise of power knowledge and relationships. This also echoes to the operational assumption in CDA that discourse takes place within society, and can only be understood in the “interplay of social situation, action, actor, and societal structures” (Meyer, 2001:21). Through brand consumption the students are able to comment on what is being said against what they are experiencing in the same contexts. In this case, the students both reproduced or denounced several sentiments against or in support of their institutional brands.

The following chapter presents the conclusions and implications of the study.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

11.0 Introduction

This chapter has two sections. The first section comprises the summary of the main arguments, findings and contributions of the study. The second part contains the recommendations and possible areas for further research on branding in higher education institution.

11.1 Objectives of the study

This study has set out to investigate how the South African universities in the Western Cape Province brand themselves in the face of globalisation, marketisation and technologisation forces. This included investigating the kinds of branding strategies, and mobility of branding discourses and semiosis across the modalities used by the universities to attract their clients. Using the CMDA analytical tools, this thesis analysed the branding data collected at UCT, UWC, and SU (see. Chapters, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten) to show how each university is able to create unique and attractive brands. As shown in the analyses chapters mentioned above, the universities found it mandatory to brand themselves to the local and world community as excellent business knowledge institutions. The central ideology depicted in the branding strategies and material shows that the universities are no longer locally bound but are all aspiring to be well known internationally. The following sections present a summary of the main objectives of the study.

11.1.1 The kinds of semiotics used for universities’ brand imagery and awareness

The universities used a lot of branding material that range from mission statements, logos, homepages, their semiotic landscapes scattered with artefacts, linguistic resources to banners. Branding material also include the institution’s architecture, scenery, celebrities, and students, branded crockery, and clothing material.
11.1.2 Deployment of multiple semiotics and distinct brands meanings

The second objective was to find out how multiple semiotic materials are deployed to create distinct meanings in the brand positioning process of the universities. The results have shown that the universities use both online and offline branding as the main media. Online branding helps the universities to be more interactive in their brand marketing as they are able to reach out many clients who are also able to respond to the universities. Whilst offline branding seems more to inform the clients about the universities’ services, the internet is both marketing medium and a sales channel in e-branding and the importance of trust and relationships seem even more important in the virtual world than it is in the real world. E-branding extends beyond the traditional focus of positioning, advertising, promoting catchy logos and slogans, to creating internet institutions that can deliver more by resemiotising different resources as evidence that the universities are able. Regarding e-brand building strategies, it is arguable that the transformational impact of the internet has indicated a revolutionised and competitive brand landscape and brand building environment for these universities, which were once isolated not competitive during the apartheid era.

Due to technologisation and globalisation, there is now massive communications around the globe linking different people from different town, country, region and the world at large. The mobility of people necessitates the need for mobile communications too. Therefore, the universities under study also find it necessary to reach people who are within these different spaces through different social networks. The content of their messages is also reformed to have a double logic of both providing information and promoting the universities. In Fairclough’s (1993) words, the universities are succumbing to have information that has both telling and selling functions thereby behaving as if they were businesses. Besides telling and selling the researcher notes that the messages also try to captivate and entertain the audience and in this way they are certain that the prospective clients do not miss their intended messages. The social networks become the proper vehicles to deliver the message where they also get circulated and recirculated to reach different clients. This kind of consumption through recirculations helps the universities’ brands to be known not only at a local scale but also at a global scale. Different forms of the one material are circulated in different media and spaces for a wider consumption. For instance, printed brochure is also found on the websites in different locations within the virtual world of the universities.
The communication vehicles include Websites, YouTube, Twitter, Face book, Television, social and academic events such as graduations, open and orientation days, and other promotional events. This increased commercialisation does not necessarily mean that the universities wish to be treated as businesses but are seemingly using it to gain popularity and attract more students and funds from different stakeholders that are interested. The use of the electronic social media becomes an advantage to the consumers as the universities do not wait for the clients to visit them in their physical environments but can access them through the virtual world. Even the universities have portals to interact with both the current and prospective students. This is even cost effective. Examples, in this case will be the universities portal links that provide information about entrance requirements, application and registration to name a few.

These institutions “sell” courses to students and “provide” services, much like a corporation would. On their websites, the universities have lexias which when clicked would direct the egordist to different links that are both informational and promotional. The universities have links such as information on the university, faculties and courses, current and prospectus students, research among others. Each of these sections is multimodal in nature as they use both words and images to relay particular messages to the consumers. This ‘hybridised communication blurs boundaries of genres (Fairclough, 2003). This research also adds that the genres are not only informative as Fairclough (2003) points out but are also used for communicating strong and attractive brand identities. Such revelations echoes to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), and Iedema (2003a) claims that the idea of inclusive interpretation of texts is to account for the new realities of how discourses can have multiple meanings and purposes in different contexts.

Following this idea, the universities brands are creatively centred on their ability to attract students, attract, recruit and retain quality staff. The brands are therefore strengthened through building qualities of the education or service they are perceived to offer, such as showing their relationship with their local communities and relationships with funders. All these make strong brands strong that in turn provide universities with sustainable, competitive advantage. The idea is not to just to send brand messages but also to talk about experience as part of the brand so as to live up to the brand promise. The brand articulations also show that these three universities are branding themselves attractively because: they need students to choose to pay for their studies within their contexts, foreign organisations to
choose them for partnerships, highly rated staff members, alumni to give back and get support from the government, and international community.

11.1.3 Branding through circulation of different discourses and indexicality

The third objective of the research was to investigate how the different discourses and semiotics are circulated across a variety of modalities and contexts, to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process. The universities deploy multiple semiotics in different strategic positions. The universities create beautiful brandscapes both on the virtual worlds and their physical landscapes in which they creatively combine different semiotics to showcase their brands. They also circulate their brand materials such as their logos, crests and names on vehicles, clothing and crockery (see Chapter Five). In this way, the people who use these materials or visit both their physical and virtual worlds are able to consume and recirculate these brand materials. This helps the universities to redeploy these branding materials for wider consumptions in a convenient way. In their branding process, the universities highlight different activities to promote their physical landscapes and visibility on websites. These activities include registering with main search engines, placing banner advertisements with several high traffic sites, undertaking complementary offline advertisements using viral marketing techniques, which encouraged websites and the clients to pass on a marketing message to other sites or users, creating a potentially exponential growth in the message’s visibility and effect.

This shows collaborative strategies between the universities and the clients. The branding resource investments and superior delivery across a range of marketing mix areas help in building successful brands. The results in this study show that the universities are using different forms of old and new advertising media to relay their institutional brand promotional messages to reach their target audience. This media include the print media of brochures, word of mouth testimonials, alumni, social chat rooms such as Facebook, Twitter and You Tube to mention a few. Events such as open and orientation days are also used to showcase the brands and these events are resemiotised in different media and even posted on the university websites so as to reach a wide audience from all over the world. In this case, the universities are able to promote and showcase their brands to their South African communities within their physical vicinity and reach the regional and international
community online. The initial form of face-to-face contact provides the potential student with the opportunity for tangible (social) interaction. The universities circulates these events to show authenticity of their brands as communication wise it is important for the client to be sure who says it and when, how, and where it is said. It also explains the expressed importance of representative agents in disseminating university’s information in these universities. The discourses and semiotics are circulated in different contexts and modalities such as the semiotic landscape, video, branding events, on websites, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. This also includes being recirculated in different materials and sites. For instance these semiotics are circulated on the abovementioned modalities where they are shared and reshared by different people during interactions. In making their branding videos for an example, they draw on different kinds of resources such as artifacts, buildings, logos, crests, welcoming messages, mission statements, and historical, transformational and promotional discourses.

11.1.4 Maintenance, reconstruction and repurposing of institutions’ structures

The fourth objective aimed to investigate on how the institutions’ historical, cultural, and social structures are maintained reconstructed and repurposed through the branding process. The two HWUs seem to subtly maintain their historical and cultural social structures by making them as the main identity markers. For instance, SU’s linguistic branding material reveals that Afrikaans is still the main language as it was during its formation ways. To show that it is open to the other people who cannot identify with Afrikaans, it neutralises this identity by including English as a second language of both teaching and learning and also for communication and branding purposes. Its landscape is branded mainly in Afrikaans as can be seen on some of its buildings analysed in the Chapter Six. It also uses the historical artefact of Jan Marais its benefactor during the apartheid regime. Using him in the branding discourses, show the kind of brand SU is painting on one hand and how it keeps its historical identity.

The same applies to UCT a historically English based institution; it adds isiXhosa and Afrikaans languages of the Western Cape Province to show inclusivity to both the local and international communities. Additionally, the statue of one of its benefactors Cecil John Rhodes was placed in a strategic position in which the UCT’s identity has been embedded.
During the course of writing up this thesis, it was removed under protest from students who saw it as a symbol of oppression and lack of transformation at UCT (see Chapter Six).

UWC a HBU also uses the statue that denotes the historical struggle in which the people especially women were oppressed but fought hard to be able to educate their children. Both UCT and UWC also have Mandela’ head statue and banner respectively to mark both the past struggle and the post apartheid South Africa. UWC also uses English as the main language and refutes its past-imposed Afrikaans identity. Therefore, as analysed in Chapter Six, the universities sanitise the signs of the past and privilege to build favourable brand identities.

11.1.5 Portrayal of universities’ brand identities through imagery

The results show that all the universities aim to brand themselves as attractive and able universities with the two HWUs claiming the prestigious identities that make them the ports of Africa to the international community that is interested in studying in the continent. Using notions of globalisation and internationalisation discourses they position themselves as able universities that open doors for the South African community to interact with others. Having these linkages highlighted in their branding process show that their brand identities are multifaceted and are not only painted as global universities as is seen with big Western universities. These South African universities paint rather brands that are glocal in nature and encompassing the local, national, regional, continental and international linkages and interactions. This way the notions of globalisation and internationalisation are relocalised to form strong effective brands.

11.1.6 Students’ brand approvals and disapprovals

Objective six was to find out how the students as ‘customers’ consume the branding discourses within and across the three universities. Looking at student brand evaluations, the researcher has found out that the students in the three universities are generally loyal and proud of their universities as academic brands. UCT students as clients seem satisfied and are in chorus with their university’s branding messages and are proud to be part of the university. Despite the fact that most of the students at SU and UWC are proud to be part of
their universities, some of the students felt that the universities should try to brand themselves showing reality and more resources that give wholesome brand images. This divulges hidden unmet needs, interests, and dominant social relations that serve self-interests, maintaining social inequality and injustice. In this case, the student feels marginalised. In similarity to SU, UWC students also brought in socio-political and economic discourses in their concerns of brand imbalances. It is ironic that although UCT students are seemingly satisfied, the students’ Rhodes Must Fall and ‘Fees Must Fall’ campaigns as mentioned in Chapter Six, shows some of the deep rooted problems within the the university and branding process itself.

11.2 CONCLUSIONS

The results in this study show that the universities are using different forms of old and new advertising media to relay their institutional brand promotional messages to reach their target audience. In addition, in as much as the universities use these old and new forms of advertisements, they also draw on the old identities and the new ones. They repurpose different semiotic materials for branding process. For example, the proud history embedded in the buildings, mission statements, logos is recreated to produce attractive brands. This media include the print media of brochures, word of mouth testimonials, alumni, social chatrooms such as Facebook, Twitter and You Tube to mention a few. Events such as open and orientation days are also used to showcase the brands, as they are resemiotised in different media and reposted on the universities’ websites for wider consumption. In this case, the universities are able to promote and showcase their brands to their South African communities within their physical vicinity and reach the regional and international community online. The initial form of face-to-face contact, which provides the potential student with the opportunity for tangible (social) interaction, is therefore modified online. Some of the signs such as selected architecture and scenery together with other semiotic material are also deterritorialised from the brandscapes and reterritorialised to accentuate and sell the brands on the universities virtual world links such as the homepages, Twitter, Facebook to mention a few (see Chapter Five). This calls for both local and global consumption as the brandscapes are continuously repurposed in different modes as main markers of the brands.
In addition, taking more advantage of internet, they also create videos to carry their branding messages to the world at large. Their videos showcase their preferred strategies, resources and styles in branding their universities. The different strategies used in compiling the videos include; historical refashioning, reference to celebrities, famous places and artefacts, economy world and superiority as signs of authentication, to mention a few.

This kind of refashioning within the medium is a special case of remediation, which helps to understand the semiotic representations in the construction of brand identity. The icons bring with them prestigious discourses that the universities associate with, in enhancing their brand identities. Hypermedia applications are always explicit acts of remediation: they import earlier media into a digital space in order to refashion them, but through digital hypermedia, the universities seek the real by multiplying mediation so as to create a feeling of rich experience, which can be taken as reality. However, the reality of the particular brand identity interpretation depends on the viewer's experience and consumption as also indicated by the students.

Therefore, the thesis has shown how the universities use the twin logics of immediacy and hypermediacy in their efforts to remake themselves (cf. Bolter and Grusin, 1999) and their environments to attract potential stakeholders. From the analysis, it is evident that this kind of tool for branding an institution blurs between information giving and selling. Through digital technology and hypermediacy, the universities are able to showcase their multiple semiotic resources and multiple acts of representation that make their brand identities more visible. Different media are incorporated to make the videos and their intended brands meanings. This remediation of the media is the main strategy that helps the universities to present themselves; and their brand consumption is undoubtedly huge as a lot of people from different countries can also access them.

This thesis has also shown that the universities are interested in their incorporation into the processes of globalisation, commodification of heritage, and aestheticisation of both their academic and social life as branding materials. The ideological shift of the universities’ displayed brand imageries from what they stand for as academic institution, to how good they are in this field, feeds into the capitalist propaganda, which facilitates universities’ brand identities as icons of consumption. This ideology seem to result in practices that create unequal subject positions among the universities both at a local and international level as it
alienates the underprivileged universities such as UWC to try to compete with the HWUs from an unequal footing.

The universities are all adopting a transformation that tries to eliminate the segregation in higher education institution as it was during the apartheid era and align with the inclusive higher education that promotes internationalisation through education. In these branding processes, the universities also become the link between the country and the world at large as by having different nationals within their environments promotes mobility of people and knowledge. Due to globalisation and latest technologisation, time and space are shrinking the world into a community where people are able to interact easily regardless of the geographical distance. The universities are also adapting to the culture of consumerism and the market economy that perpetuates an excessively materialistic and exploitative view of living. Their traditional identities as mere universities are replaced by more corporate like brand identities in which the universities are obsessed with making sure that they are well known for who they are, what they have, lastly what they do. Just like the customer is able to make choices among different brands in the business world, it seems the universities also have to make sure that they communicate their brands so that they get clients.

To start with, the level of competition is incomparable due to their historical origins and benefits. The seemingly good drive towards transformation, redressing and internationalisation processes filter into these academic contexts differently. Therefore, the relentless drive to commercialisation in market economy from an unequal footing, places the HBUs on a competitive pedal where there are always trying to catch up as shown in the analysis of UWC. However, the universities are branding new institutional identities through recreations of unique institutional missions, social, educational roles, academic qualification and programs, and organisational structures and practices. They all also show positive redress of the historical burdens of South African higher education highlighting inequities such as, financial aid to the students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The thesis has also shown that the universities are trying to be open educational spaces. For instance, SU-a former Afrikaans language based university now aims to attract more students from different backgrounds and English speaking communities. This thesis has also shown that the demise of apartheid and segregated universities in South Africa has prompted the universities to redefine, brand and align themselves to the local, regional and
international communities. This way, they become more inclusive and adopt new repositioning strategies in the post-apartheid South Africa.

Undeniably, the main problem revealed in this thesis is the discrepancy of effective branding trajectories that adequately supports the historically disadvantaged institutions to be on the same competitive ground with the historically white universities. UWC as a university is able to brand itself using the little it has but UCT and SU have vantage points over UWC. For instance, as shown in the analysis, the HWUs’ locations on its own enable them to draw on rich semiotic resources as branding materials. Despite the fact that the main positive transformative success is more evident in the deracialisation of students, the challenges of inequalities of geographical locations and life styles remain (cf. Odhav, 2009).

Moreover, diversity disguises some of these inequalities. This sees HBUs battling to justify their continued struggle to move away from the imposed identities in the past and realign themselves to the more global favourable and functional identities (Bawa and Herwitz 2008). This is also true for HWUs as is the case with UCT (using multilingual as a brand marker) and SU (identifying itself a cultural melting pot in the video). They use diversity as means to neutralise their original identities as HWUs and as a branding strategy.

As forces of globalisation allow the universities to brand themselves, the acceleration of information and knowledge revolution poses new demands, opportunities and risks to universities especially in their branding process as the inequalities are continuously visible. The universities are more concerned on making themselves known and more responsive to the educational needs of the socio-economically diverse South African populace and the mobility of student and academic community as global citizens. The focal point for each university seems to redress the legacy of the past on the other hand and aim to embrace the future in a global world on the other hand. As such, development between the HWUs and HBUs remain uneven with the former simply adopting modern facilities and top researchers while the latter play catch up through developing their own institutional capacities through building modern infrastructure. The forces of globalisation do not make it easy either as the inherited inequalities on development, cause massive differences in wealth among the universities and citizens accessing resources in these universities. Therefore, as Lalu and Murray (2012) argue, even the ironic emptying of the HBU’s apartheid identity and historical struggles into the discourse of nationalism and globalism, poses new challenges for
how to speak of their current and future identity. However, all the universities contribute in significant ways to the reproduction of the whole racial social order. Certainly, traces of resistance are present as can be seen in the brand articulations or use of semiotic resources, which reflect the historical struggle during apartheid or try to hold on to the past. This is further confirmed by the students’ protests within the universities as highlighted in the previous chapters.

11.3 Implications of the study

Each university under study has managed to compile branding discourses and semiotics that aim to make the university attractive. The universities are adopting corporate strategies to project their imageries. Their branding discourses are also an indication that these universities are repositioning themselves not only as local academic institutions in the South African context. They are seemingly obsessed with painting more competitive brands that are glocal in nature. Given their historical background, these universities transform their original identities through branding and their competitive edge in this regard makes them more visible. However, the discrepancy of their ability to highlight positive brands lie mainly on the resources they have to showcase these brands. Universities such as UWC are also entangled in between addressing their historical burdens on one hand and making themselves attractive. The universities such as UCT and SU brand themselves with much ease and are undoubtedly able to manipulate their resources to construct competitive brands.

Pretending that the inequality situation in these universities will correct itself is futile as it is evident that cultural dialogue and communication based on equity are necessary in order to avoid widening the gap between the contexts of higher learning in South Africa. This, in turn, can also limit the negative effects of having sub standard universities imagery that continues to shape the apartheid social ills. Therefore, in response to the forces of globalisation, internationalisation, it is recommended that the South African universities and stakeholders work towards rethinking new ways of collaboration with each other and together face the world with a united front.

This can be done if the historical burden is made light for the limping universities. Instead, boasting as oldest universities as is the case with UCT and SU will not be a point of marketing but rather what they are doing as part of the country’s transformational move.
UWC may find it easier to boast of being the promoter of freedom and as a close friend to the government in the new South Africa. The universities’ branding is filtered with boasting either using the privileges of the past or the shortages and creative achievements in the presence. Therefore, there is a need for these universities to move away from the past political backgrounds and relook into themselves as academic learning institutions that can genuinely serve the country. In this way, they will stop moving with the marketisation and globalisation tides and refocus on recreating themselves as players in the intellectual community with interest of the people at heart rather than becoming fixated on creating affluent brand imageries.

This thesis has also demonstrated how institutional brand communication is not simply a matter of explicit lexical self-description and attribution, but also pertains to an organization’s use of semiotic features and patterns, such as particular metaphors or types of modalities. It has shown how the universities’ brands are being corporatised and enacted in different modalities. Consequently, these universities’ branding strategies also reveal particular governmentality, where they simultaneously align to the regulation of the local and global to influence stakeholders who draw on their corporate brands as symbolic and cultural resources to constitute individual subjectivities. Continuing scrutiny of how these institutional brands are semiotically enacted is therefore also a means of maintaining examination of the kind of transformations within which the institutions are operating and competing.
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APPENDENCES:

Appendix 1: Stellenbosch University Mission Statement and Vision

The raison d’être of the university of Stellenbosch is to create and sustain in commitment to the academic ideal of excellent scholarly and scientific practice an environment within which knowledge can be discovered, can be shared and can be applied to the benefit of the community.

With this vision statement, Stellenbosch university commits itself to an outward-oriented role with South Africa, Africa and globally. Stellenbosch University:

• is an academic institution of excellence and a respected partner
• contributes towards building the scientific, technological, and intellectual capacity of Africa
• is an active role-player in the development of the South African society
• promotes Afrikaans as a language of teaching and science in a multilingual context... (extract from the Strategic Framework)
Appendix 2: The University of the Western Cape Mission Statement

The University of the Western Cape is a national university, alert to its African and international context as it strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa, and to responding in critical and creative ways to the needs of a society in transition. Drawing on its proud experience in the liberation struggle, the university is aware of a distinctive academic role in helping build an equitable and dynamic society. In particular it aims to:

• advance and protect the independence of the academic enterprise.
• design curricular and research programmes appropriate to its southern African context.
• further global perspectives among its staff and students, thereby
• strengthening intellectual life and contributing to South Africa's reintegration in the world community.
• assist educationally disadvantaged students gain access to higher education and succeed in their studies.
• nurture and use the abilities of all in the university community.
• develop effective structures and conventions of governance, which are democratic, transparent and accountable.
• seek racial and gender equality and contribute to helping the historically marginalised participate fully in the life of the nation.
• encourage and provide opportunities for lifelong learning through programmes and courses.
• help conserve and explore the environmental and cultural resources of the southern African region, and to encourage a wide awareness of these resources in the community.
• co-operate fully with other stakeholders to develop an excellent, and therefore transformed, higher education system.
Appendix 3: University of Cape Town Mission Statement

UCT aspires to become a premier academic meeting point between South Africa, the rest of Africa and the world. Taking advantage of expanding global networks and our distinct vantage point in Africa, we are committed through innovative research and scholarship, to grapple with the key issues of our natural and social worlds. We aim to produce graduates whose qualifications are internationally recognised and locally applicable, underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice. UCT will promote diversity and transformation within our institution and beyond, including growing the next generation of academics.

Foundation statement underpinning the mission statement:

Our research-led identity is shaped by a commitment to:

- academic freedom as the prerequisite to fostering intellectual debate and free inquiry;
- ensuring that research informs all our activities including teaching, learning and service in the community;
- advancing and disseminating knowledge that addresses the key challenges facing society – South African, continental and global;
- protecting “curiosity driven” research;
- nurturing and valuing creativity in the sciences and arts including the performing and creative arts;
- stimulating international linkages of researchers and research groupings;

We strive to provide a superior, quality educational experience for undergraduate and postgraduate students through:

- providing an intellectually and socially stimulating environment;
- inspired and dedicated teaching and learning;
- exposure to the excitement of creating new knowledge;
- stimulating the love of life-long learning;
- the cultivation of competencies for global citizenship;
- supporting programmes that stimulate the social consciousness of students;
• offering access to courses outside the conventional curricula;
• attracting a culturally and internationally diverse community of scholars;
• guaranteeing internationally competitive qualifications;
• offering a rich array of social, cultural, sporting and leadership opportunities;
• providing an enabling physical and operational environment.

In advancing UCT as an Afropolitan university, we will
• expand our expertise on Africa and offer it to the world;
• extend our networks on the continent, along with our global connections and partnerships;
• promote student and staff exchanges and collaborative research and postgraduate programmes;
• engage critically with Africa’s intellectuals and world views in teaching and research;
• contribute to strengthening higher education on our continent.

We strive to provide an environment for our diverse student and staff community that:
• promotes a more equitable and non-racial society
• supports redress in regard to past injustices
• is affirming and inclusive of all staff and promotes diversity in demographics, skills and backgrounds
• offers individual development opportunities to all staff;
• is welcoming as a meeting space for scholars from Africa and around the world.
Appendix 4: The three universities’ videos

UWC’s Video (access on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpZ88fiKhfQ)

UCT’s Video (access on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaRqL_CiirE)

SU’s Video (access on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4ACtpqicXw)
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PhD THESIS

Date: 6 October 2011

Study Title or Topic: Globalisation and Higher Education Branding in Western Cape Province Universities in South Africa

Researcher: Lynn Mafofo, PhD candidate, Linguistics Department, University of the Western Cape

Purpose of the Research is:

• To investigate the kinds of semiotics that are used by the universities to highlight their brand imagery and brand awareness
• To find out how multiple semiotics are deployed to create distinct meanings in the brand positioning process of the universities
• To investigate how the different discourses and semiotics are circulated across a variety of modalities and contexts, to reinforce particular orders of indexicality in the brand positioning process
• To investigate how the institutions’ historical, cultural, and social structures are maintained, reconstructed and repurposed through the branding process
• To find out the sorts of brand identities the universities aim to portray in the imagery and brand awareness campaigns
• To find out how the students as ‘customers’ consume the branding discourses within and across the three universities
• To investigate how the notions of globalisation and internationalisation are localised to form strong effective brands

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question or choose to stop participating at any time.

Withdrawal from the Study: You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Should you decide to withdraw from the study; all data generated as a consequence of your participation will be destroyed.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and, unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or
publication of the research. Your data will be safely stored and only the researcher will have access to this information.

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _______________________________ consent to participate in the study entitled: *Globalisation and Higher Education Branding in Western Cape Province Universities in South Africa* conducted by Lynn Mafoko. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. I have the right to withdraw from participating at any point. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature ____________________ Date ____________
Participant

Signature ____________________ Date ____________

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE
1. Are you proudly UDBS/UCT/SU? In what way?

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand? Because it wants to be recognised internationally.

3. Are the materials used to showcase UWC brand attractive to you?

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment: Yes, their logo is very attractive and represents the diversity of students.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   I am proudly UCT. I like the learning environment and it is well resourced to make the learning experience meaningful.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand? I think it is meant to attract more students.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UCT brand attractive to you? Merchandise is one of the most attractive materials that truly can be branded. Other than that, print material can still be used to demonstrate the logo.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment. Yes, it is making use of that people will have access to and feel the need to be connected to the material because they belong.

5. Can you relate to some of the materials, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided. I can relate to it because it speaks the reality. On merchandise, it is all about looking branded and belonging. Average document material is impactful.


7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? I can think of any advice. Maybe to keep celebrating diversity in their brand.

THANK FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? in what way?
   Yes, it is a great platform to connect with other people and the learning.

2. Why do you think the university is shown casing its brand? So that people can know that it is a high-quality learning university.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you? Yes, through career guide office.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? comment - Yes, it is clear and accessible.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   No, I thought I just wanted to do communication and my course had more but that was not clear on the material.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   No, career centre guide.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? More presence in media platforms. Perception is important in branding. Also, not that the world generally not only to young people!

THANK YOU YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   Usually UCT.
   Of those many disciplines it teaches, I can find my work and be
   inspired to excel in it. It is the discipline (languages) I
   chose for law, that it includes studies on African languages.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its
   brand? It wants to be known as a University in Africa.
   It wants to attract research topics from graduates.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UCT brand attractive to
   you? Yes.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand
   itself? Comment. Yes. Online services make it modern and
   relevant with technology. African culture, diversity, history, etc.
   Make it a university that speaks to the idea of
   change needed in our mentality.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at
   the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   At times, I relate.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   Almost all.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at
   this
   university? They’re doing a great job. I can’t query.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UGB/UCT/SU? In what way?
   Yes, I am mainly because all my tertiary education is from UCT, it became a home.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?
   To attract more students, locally and internationally.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UCT brand attractive to you?
   Yes, they are. They show a world-class university.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment.
   Yes because it is getting the job done.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   I use the branded clothing. I am proud to show that I belong to the UCT community where I go.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   Keep up the good work!

Thank for you your participation!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? in what way?
   Yes, because I believe UCT offers many opportunities for its students and many activities that we can engage in.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand?
   Because it wants the world to know what it is about.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   I think they are very much so. It is visually professional, yet fun and attractive.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? comment.
   Yes, because its educational and fun. put it all together.

5. Can you relate to some of the material? do they speak your reality? at the university? please comment on the ones provided.
   Yes, they do speak my reality.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   The fact that the University name is written in 2 languages.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   With the feel not there is nothing that should be changed about the brand. It is perfect.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/US? In what way?
Yes: Coming from poor, black, disadvantaged background with limited education background. UDUBS/UCT/US gives me an opportunity to further my studies in order to get a chance of uplifting myself.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?
Yes: Video, the Vice-Chancellor and Rector show case different faculties and explain their achievements in effect the University's participation in different codes and community involvement.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UDUBS/UCT/US brand attractive to you?
Yes: Any one who wants to develop himself or herself as a person and the community that he or she comes from I think would love to be part of UDUBS/UCT/US.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Yes: Diversity, yours looks like staff and they also have the students.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided. Yes: The library of high standard which is user friendly.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why? Computer labs, they are so need in order to function.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? Showcase cases the staff have their competence, achievements of the staff teams.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDBS/UCT/SU? In what way?

I am proudly UWB because I am a student here at UDBS and I feel this university is the most diverse of all universities.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?

So that more people can find out about UDBS, so that people may see exactly what this university is about and what happens here as well as the diversity that it shows.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?

Yes it is, it shows that the university accepts you for who you are and nobody can become an intellect. And it shows we are a diverse university and whatever you create or not, you can still learn more and become successful.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Why?

In my opinion yes the university but I think they should involve more students and get people to see what the university is about.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.

Yes they do. It is shown that you do not need to be rich to become an intellect and further your studies. The resources and material which is available is helpful and good sources.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?

Most of the materials are useful and the history, most of the materials are useful and help research and quality life.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?

Use more diverse cultures and more students in the branding and let them speak about their experience as well as their expectations.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   I am proudly UDUBS for the fact that everyone can be themselves without prejudice from fellow students.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand? They need to show how much the university has changed (in a good way) since the apartheid.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you? Yes.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment. Comment on the video. They could have shown more input from students and staff.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   No. The facilities are not as good as they are perceived on the video.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness materials do you use and why?
   The swimming pool - helps me stay fit. The library - helps with research.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? They can show more of the students and staff as they are the ones keeping the university alive.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   I am proudly yours however I feel that the coloured race formed UWC and we do not get enough recognition in terms of sec. I wish there were majority black people.

2. Why do you think the university is short caseing its brand?
   It is important to show case so that people can see what UWC deliver if they consider to send a child or send their children. They can be proud to speak about the successes that UWC produce.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   Yes, it shows the facilities UWC have and it looks impressive.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? (Comment)
   Currently technology is taking over and majority of people use social media. Therefore it is good to brand themselves through media. It will attract more of the younger generation.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   Not always. I am occasionally but no one will invite students to populate. A lot of students do not know about events as.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   - Swimming pool email
   - Library very nice atmosphere
   - Library

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   They need to start making UWC aware on campus and not only through emails.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proud of UDSBS/UCT/SU? In what way?

- UDSBS provides more like everything that is needed by a student.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand? Because this university is absolutely great.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you? Yes, very attractive.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment: Yes, of course, because everything that is about the brand is covered in practical reasons.

5. Can you relate to some of the materials, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided. Yes, because UDSBS have computers, libraries that are rich, sports, etc. It also have residences though the Rector has not mentioned it.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?

- Library, Staff development programs, Res-life, Computers, etc.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? Include information about residences that we have and the activities that Res-life host.

- Include the money for transport for the students who come from far away, there is a lack of transportation is normally not enough and how are they planning to increase.

- Include the role of students organizations, etc.

UWC is great.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way? ...

        Yeah. I am proudly UDUBS. I have learnt a lot and I am still learning. I am improving myself with academic and professional knowledge and qualifications, and I will become a more useful member of the society than I was when I came here. However, I could be more proud, and the sense of belonging to UDUBS could be greater if I felt that xenophobia is less and less institutionalized here. If foreign students are more appreciated (in many different ways, e.g. getting scholarships like their counterparts in the likes of UCT, SU and other universities), this would be a better place for foreign students. So, I am proudly UDUBS, but not in all ways!

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand? ...

        By giving itself a reputation, that of a symbol of (‘proven’) positive change in the country, it is putting itself in a good position to attract more students and funders. I think the university hopes to influence more people to come and study here, or send their children or even spouses to come and study here. It also seems to be mobilising prospective funders to support the institution.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you? 

        They are attractive. Yes. However, more materials should be (have been) employed to capture the complete (or close to complete) gamut of the university’s academic and co-curricular resources and facilities. For instance, they should pay homage or appreciate the presence of foreign or international students who constitute a very high percentage of postgraduate students. The same goes to the teaching staff as well. This diversity should be highlighted as a strength. Instead, methinks, it is being veiled. Why?

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment...

        To a greater extent, the materials the university is using to brand itself are not incorrect (inappropriate). I would say that they are instead insufficient. A case in point is the fact that UDUBS is being portrayed as (only) a poor man’s university. It should be more inclusive. Rich people too should be free to attend. This helps strengthen its diversity. However, I am not sure if this will not take away the next poor person’s opportunity to study at UDUBS. Nevertheless, this poor man’s discourse, as much as it is emancipatory in nature (purpose, and practice), could be a bit problematic. Has the university done a research that has established that every student comes from a humble background? Perhaps, it would also help if some former students who have ‘made it in life’ were to give testimonies, to assert the fact that, indeed, UDUBS has played a role (and keeps doing so) in transforming the nation.
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   Yes, I am proudly UDUBS because of what it has done but the fact that it appears in the top 10 rankings of SA universities is impressive.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand to attract people and investors?
   Because it is a well-known institution and attracts potential students and investors.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to your opinion? Yes.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment. Yes, it uses what it excels in like sports, as well as sport stadiums and swimming pools.

5. Can you relate to some of the materials they are talking about? Please comment on the ones provided. Yes, everything they are talking about is real like a pool and the stadium.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why? None.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? They should not just go on and on about how it was disadvantaged, I do not see the difference.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   I am proudly UDUBS student in a way that I believe I will be able to achieve my dreams as a dedicated and hard working student.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand worldwide would be attractive and appealing to use their product in terms of achieving their goals and dreams?

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UDUBS brand attractive to you because they are useful and are an advantage to the student?

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment: Yes, people who see the materials of the materials will be attracted to them and the correct materials are the tool to help students and attracting more tocourses.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   Lectures and tutorials help me towards succeeding my work as well as the library also helps me stay in my work because it's where I collect my information related to my work and a space where I can study.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   Library for my work and the technology provided to make my work look up to standard as of a student.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? They need to make more space for students who wants to live and consider those who really need it.

THANK FOR YOU YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   Yes, proudly UDUBS. It is a diverse university which
   allows one to perform to their best abilities, and
   gain one with multiple opportunities. It offers amazing
   support and helpful resources when needed.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its
   brand? To offer academic support and to produce
   a large number of graduates. Presents the opportunities
   they offer also contribute to this.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to
   you? Yes, the resources that are showcased
   attract me more and more to the university.
   Particularly the facilities.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand
   itself? Comment: Yes, they showcase things that are
   of interest to students, namely the academic
   sporting and social student council facilities.

5. Can you relate to some of the material? Do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   Yes, finally the academic facilities e.g. the library
   The materials which are dear but not the one I use

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   The library - To satisfy gathering information
   Computer lab - To print out research

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this
   university? They should showcase the residence as well as
   the bus stops for off campus students.

THANK FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do you speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?

7. What advice do you give to the branding officers at this university?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?

   Yes, I feel more hospital.

   Undergraduate student, the world of the orient you need.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand? 1 to 5 stars.

   To research in reach all.

   In a wider common language.

   Before as international univer.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you? Yes.

   The beginning is not

   Interesting, still materials used.

   Background music not appealing.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment.

   Emphasis is an academic.

   Not an experience.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.

   No. It should align reality.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?

   [Blank]

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? They must build environment.

   Redo, and student contact.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UOUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   
   1. I think so, good institution, everything is so here, don't have pool or source elsewhere.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?
   to grab attention for students

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   Yes, hidden meaning, don't want shock because it is old.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? Comment.
   No, bring reality piece by piece.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   Yes, we are diverse, can am proud to be a student.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   Hats, backpacks

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   They must put just describe how it is, bring price to grab attention.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   - Yes, I have adapted well here as an international student, and the classes are at a good standard.
2. Why do you think the university is so successful at casing its brand?
   - A plethora of study subjects available for pursuit.
3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   - Have not heard much about it.
4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? comment.
   - Yes, they use their academics and location as a basis and measure the effectiveness and impact of their brand.
5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   - Students are very study oriented and there is very little talk about more student diversity.
6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   - They are very study oriented and that is why I choose to study here.
7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   - More talk about student life, more diversity/diversity.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDU8S/UCT/SU in what way?
   Yes, I am this is my home it is more than a university, it's a community for life.

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?
   To promote growth and to show what it has to offer.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   Yes, they are because of the background image, the choice of university, good reputation, and being from school.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself?
   Comment: yes, sport for example or blackboard is already a major brand material to brand itself.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   I think 9/10 major brands something in not sure if the sport is involving and captivating.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   I use 9/10 because it's very common to wear and I'm a part of that.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university? I think we need more about the name of DUT building.
   I think we need more to show.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   Embracing the various spheres of student life – social, sports and firstly academics.

2. Why do you think the university is showcasing its brand?
   To gain a better reputation among the youth and older generations.

3. Are the materials used to showcase the UWC brand attractive to you?
   Yes, we are.

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? comment
   Yes though more can always be done to market the university globally and nationally.

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   Theology - important to study our Creator and learn what He wants us to do.

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   Social media - so popularly used by everyone to keep connected and grow socially.

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   Continue to promote SU’s logo and vision not only on campus but all around town and in local schools and workplaces.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!
1. Are you proudly UDUBS/UCT/SU? In what way?
   [Comments: SEE: UPE@N VOCUS. UNIVERSITY FOCUSES ON THE HOLISTIC STUDENT.]
   [Comments: 310]

2. Why do you think the university is showing its brand?
   [Comments: AT A MORE ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE IMAGE.]
   [Comments: TO SHOW] I is] [Comments: THE UNIVERSITY [MORE ACCESSIBLE.]]

3. Are the materials used to showcase the brand attractive to you?
   [Comments: YES. I FEEL THAT USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHOW IS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE.]
   [Comments: THE USE OF A VIDEO IS BETTER THAN OTHER METHODS IN WRITING.]
   [Comments: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA; THE VIDEO WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE.]

4. Do you think the university is using the correct materials to brand itself? [Comments: YES. I SEE THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO IS MIGHTY EFFECTIVE.]

5. Can you relate to some of the material, do they speak your reality at the university? Please comment on the ones provided.
   [Comments: YES. I SEE THE MATERIALS MIGHT BE RELATABLE TO STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY.]

6. Which of the materials used in the brand awareness do you use and why?
   [Comments: PRIVATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION - A MEMBER AND PREVIOUSLY A LEADER.]
   [Comments: LIBRARY - ADVICE PROVIDED.]

7. What advice on brand enhancement can you give to the branding officers at this university?
   [Comments: THE BRAND SHOULD BE PROMINENT THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSITY.]
   [Comments: BRANDS SHOULD BE PROMINENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER PLATFORMS NOT ONLY YOUTUBE.]

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!