# MODERNITY'S UNIVERSITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
# A Cosmo-uBuntu critique

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**Abstract:** Centered on the experience of Eduardo Mondlane in three universities in the United States, this article highlights the importance of universities to assume a social responsibility stance that is critical of its philosophical foundation and roots itself on perceptions of human beyond the current cartesian ethos. Conceptually, the article centers its discourse on the divergent conceptualizations of human drawn from humanism and uBuntu, as foundational differentiators of perceptions and practices of justice and social responsibility. Theoretically, it leans on a critique of modernity and humanism by presenting uBuntu and Cosmo-uBuntu as alternative philosophical and theoretical lenses for problematizing and explaining justice and social responsibility. Methodologically, it draws from reflexivity, hermeneutics (especially, textual criticism), and archival documentary research. Its purpose is to inspire universities to engage in reflexivity about their social responsibility claims and to encourage an intentional commitment to social responsibility that is informed by exterior to modernity theorizing.

**Keywords:** Cosmo-uBuntu, uBuntu, Eduardo Mondlane, social responsibility, universities

### A UNIVERSIDADE DA MODERNIDADE, JUSTIÇA SOCIAL E RESPONSABILIDADE SOCIAL: UMA CRÍTICA BASEADA NA COSMO-UBUNTU

**Resumo:** Centrado na experiência de Eduardo Mondlane em três universidades dos Estados Unidos, este artigo destaca a importância das universidades assumirem uma posição de responsabilidade social que é crítica da sua base filosófica e se baseia nas perceções de ser humano para além do *ethos* cartesiano atual. Conceptualmente, o artigo centra o seu discurso nas conceptualizações divergentes do ser humano extraído do humanismo e do uBuntu, como diferenciadores fundamentais de perceções e práticas de justiça e responsabilidade social. Teoricamente, apoia-se numa crítica à modernidade e ao humanismo, apresentando uBuntu e Cosmo-uBuntu como lentes filosóficas e teóricas alternativas para problematizar e explicar a justiça e a responsabilidade social. Metodologicamente, baseia-se na

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reflexividade, na hermenêutica (especialmente na crítica textual) e na investigação documental de arquivo. O seu objetivo é inspirar as universidades a envolverem-se na reflexividade sobre as suas reivindicações de responsabilidade social e a incentivarem um compromisso intencional com a responsabilidade social que é informado pelo exterior à teorização da modernidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Cosmo-uBuntu, uBuntu, Eduardo Mondlane, responsabilidade social, universidades

L'UNIVERSITÉ DE LA MODERNITÉ, LA JUSTICE SOCIALE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ SOCIALE: UNE CRITIQUE COSMO-
-UBUNTU

**Résumé:** Centré sur l'expérience d'Eduardo Mondlane dans trois universités aux États-Unis, cet article souligne l'importance pour les universités d'assumer une position de responsabilité sociale qui critique ses fondements philosophiques et s'enracine dans les perceptions de l'homme au-delà de l'éthique cartésienne actuelle. Conceptuellement, l'article centre son discours sur les conceptualisations divergentes de l'homme puisé dans l'humanisme et l'uBuntu, en tant que différenciateurs fondements des perceptions et des pratiques de justice et de responsabilité sociale. Théoriquement, il s'appuie sur une critique de la modernité et de l'humanisme en présentant uBuntu et Cosmo-uBuntu comme des lentilles philosophiques et théoriques alternatives pour la problématique et l'explication de la justice et de la responsabilité sociale. Méthodologiquement, il puise dans la réflexivité, l'herméneutique (en particulier la critique textuelle) et la recherche documentaire archivistique. Son but est d'inciter les universités à s'engager dans la réflexivité de leurs revendications de responsabilité sociale et d'encourager un engagement intentionnel envers la responsabilité sociale qui s'inspire de la théorisation extérieure à la modernité.

**Mots-clés:** Cosmo-uBuntu, uBuntu, Eduardo Mondlane, responsabilité sociale, universités

## Modernity's university, social justice, and social responsibility: a Cosmo-uBuntu critique

A university can serve as a birthplace of ideas that feed its surrounding community by nurturing the flames of activism, conscientize it about issues of justice, or by transferring knowledge that breeds apathy towards the *status quo*. The last decades have witnessed a pervasive tendency for universities to align their mission and teaching (at least at the level of integrating in the syllabi) to social justice and for universities and their respective faculty to claim militancy for social justice with some engaging in actual militancy through protests, lobbying, building, and participating in social movements, writing, etc. (Lynch et al. 2010; Patton et al. 2010). More recently, universities, academic societies[1], and academics in general are taking on social responsibility as another dimension of their service to communities and the world at large. The

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[1] For instance, the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) adopted "Social Responsibility within Changing Contexts" as the theme for its 65th Annual Meeting (see https://cies2021.org/cies-2021-conference-theme/).

former was inspired by liberation theology and, as an academic movement, by Paulo Freire (1968/1972). The latter is likely inspired by corporate uses and misuses of the term and the fact that universities are modernist functionalist institutions operating under the same principles as corporations, thus might feel the obligation to explain their different approach to social responsibility, especially amidst the conundrum of claiming to fight injustice while operating as for-profit capitalist entities. Juan Luis Segundo argues that, "to be relevant, theology simply must respond to the questions that the poor are asking" (Dempster et al., 1991, p. 47). This is not, by any means, to reduce the mission of the church to social action but to help the church understand that evangelism is not a matter of oratory but of praxis and proxy. In the same vein, I argue that to be relevant and socially responsible, universities must respond to questions that the impoverished and disadvantaged are asking. This is not to reduce the mission of the university (and education) to social responsibility but to help universities to understand that education is not a matter of oratory but of praxis and proxy.

Admittedly, this is not an easy responsibility for the university, as an institution. Part of the struggle is incited and nurtured by the university's embracing of a humanist perception of human and a commitment to functionalism, given the fact that the hegemonic model of university (i.e., Western) is a modernist enterprise. Therefore, since social presupposes the human, it is imperative to highlight the distinction in perceptions of the human springing from humanism and uBuntu as follows:

Descartian logic, which constitutes the heart of Humanism (especially, as manifested in Cartesianism), attests to the decision-making process in conceptualizing and understanding the essence of being human. In Cartesian terms, the mind discovered itself, defined itself, and made sense of itself and the life it leads. This, in contrast to the body, which is rendered (almost) meaningless in regard to understanding existence. (Cossa, in press-a)

On the other hand,

In uBuntu world, as opposed to humanist world, existence is not reduced to thought but to the perception of being that is contingent on, and inseparable from, fellow humans. Moreover, uBuntu focuses on the whole being and manifests in the communal, known in Swahili as ujamaa (Nyerere 1966); whereas Humanism focuses on the creative power of the human brain and manifests in the individual. I argue for the absence of 'individual' in uBuntu, using as a premise the motto itself and African spiritual cosmologies (Mbiti 1995). When translated literally, the motto means 'a person is a person unto persons' (not others), thus rendering both the singular and the 'othering' obsolete by not allowing the definition of personhood through self/individuality. (Cossa, in press-a)

Moreover, I (Cossa, 2020, pp. 34-35) have argued that,

The concept of *the other* is a result of Modernity's exclusivist perception of itself. No matter how humane the project of Modernity portrayed itself, its foundation in a Cartesian perception of the human, the Kantian hierarchy of race (Eze, 1997), the de Vitorian Christianizing of *the other* (Vitoria, 1962 [1539]), and the tenets of structural

differentiation and cultural rationalization on which they are all anchored (Schmidt, 2010), prohibited it from reaching any sense of global justice and participating in a global education project that was based on equitable participation of all humans.

As a modernist and functionalist entity, the university has found it very difficult, and I venture to say, impossible, to execute justice in its truest sense. How can the university execute justice in its truest sense if it embraces and perpetuates a humanist understanding of *human* and its accommodation of hierarchies of humanness based on intellect, gender, race, national origin, etc.; holds on to requirements such as standardized tests; colonial languages (e.g., English, French, Portuguese, and German) as languages of instruction; continues to be Western in all its orientation with a predominantly white and/or male population of students, faculty, and administration; promotes Western cognition, ontology, axiology, and epistemology over those of fellow humans and, holds on to rankings and hierarchies based on Western standards of what it means to be a world class university (Salmi, 2010), scholar, student, and administration.

In essence, universities seem to miss the fact that claiming social justice and social responsibility does not imply living a social justice lifestyle or carrying out social responsibility and, consequently, impacting our community with such. Universities are comfortable talking about social justice and social responsibility, to some extent and within comfortable philosophical settings, yet they are not bold enough to confront themselves about how our humane core has been tempered with by misconceptions of the essence of justice and, therefore, of liberation. In a time when social movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall, landless workers movements, immigrant rights movements, etc. are comprised of community members, students, faculty, and university administrators, it is imperative for universities to play a much more proactive and intentional role in realizing their social responsibility toward fostering justice. However, to take that bold step, universities must question their own philosophical and theoretical foundation – modernity, humanism, and functionalism – yet doing so threatens their relevance and perpetuity. This allegiance to the overarching philosophical and theoretical systems at the expense of justice is the conundrum that universities have faced since their inception into the times of colonialism, slavery, and present-day coloniality.

## A note on methodology

This study is based on a critical documentary analysis in which I analyzed primary sources (e.g., correspondence and interviews), as well as a variety of other primary and secondary sources, about Eduardo Mondlane. The archival data consisting of correspondence between Mondlane and Herskovits and the interviews conducted with Marshall Segall were collected

intermittently from 2011 to 2017[2]. I analyzed each document in the context of its history taking into account the date of authorship and events around the date, the reasons and intentions of the author implicit in the text, the disposition of the receiver (e.g., student, teacher, monitor, colleague, etc.), and the meaning attributed via an interpretation of the documents in general. Moreover, I was intentional in using original primary texts – including only certified and unforged copies – by acquiring them from reputable institutions (e.g., Northwestern University Archives).

Validity was established by means of internal evidence to determine the authenticity of the documents and external evidence to determine the historical context and meaning of the documents. Specifically, drawing from historical criticism (1917) and hermeneutics (Dilthey & Jameson, 1972), I established validity by means of two main stages of hermeneutical inquiry (i.e., internal and external criticism). *External criticism,* which is also known as lower criticism, is a tool used by historians and exegetes to determine the validity of a document, particularly a document with some sort of historical significance. It is the first of two stages of inquiry and pursues inquiry regarding (a) authorship; (b) originality and accuracy of copy; and (c) the nature of errors. *Internal criticism,* which is also known as higher criticism, is the stage of inquiry in which the researcher engages with the meaning of the text rather than the external elements of the document. More than in external criticism, engaging in internal criticism requires domain specific knowledge. In this stage, the researcher and exegete engage in *positive criticism,* which attempts to restore the meaning of statements, and *negative criticism,* which places doubt on what external and positive criticism have established as reasonable findings. Here the researcher and exegete combat both *aesogesis* (i.e., reading unintended meaning into text) and untrustworthiness. While positive criticism simply attempts to ascertain what the text means by analyzing its statements within a context (i.e., literary, historical, geographical, etc.), in negative criticism, the historian (a) conducts tests of competence; (b) identifies gossip, humor and slander; (c) identifies myths, legends and traditions; (d) conducts tests of truthfulness; and (e) discredits statements[3].

## Modernity, humanism, and social responsibility

Fr. Michael Perko (personal communication, spring 2003), my former professor at Loyola University Chicago, argued that the single most important question to be asked in our analysis of American higher education is "whose culture gets transferred?". This question has become a

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[2]  For details about Herskovits and Segall, see the section entitled *A Scholar and the Struggle for Liberation in Mozambique.*

[3]  For another explanation of this approach, see Historical Criticism, 1917. For another example of the use of this procedure, see Cossa and Epstein (2016).

source of reflection for me when critiquing our current education systems and has become an integral part of my critique of the modernist education we inherited from humanism. Culture is the mirror to our ontological and axiological perceptions, thus adopting or assimilating into a culture means shifting ontological and axiological allegiance. The architects of modernity seem to have understood this fact; so, the creation of culture based on universals seemed inevitable if they were to dominate the masses (regardless of who they perceived to be the *masses*) and, eventually, the world.

Social responsibility, perceived or portrayed as an ethical framework, is not new to education; after all, to educate for citizenry and modernize society by transferring what we consider to be the desirable culture is a noble social responsibility, albeit its relative nature. As a testament to cultural transfer through education and its link to social responsibility, we ought to recall that a key foundation of American education is found in the "Ole Deluder Satan Law" (Farrand, 1929), which states the following:

> It being one chief project of the old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures (...) it is therefore ordered, that every township (...) shall appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read.

In this context of learning to read the scriptures, it was the social responsibility of educators to teach male children to read the bible so that they would not be deceived by Satan. Consequently, these children would grow up to be good citizens. This equating of good citizenship with the Christianizing mission was characteristic of the launch and cementing of modernity, not only in the Western world but everywhere else where Europeans were to set foot. Consequently, like schools in general, since their inception in the middle ages (de Ridder-Symoens, 2003), Western universities have always aimed at producing "good citizens", but such has been defined by, and confined to, a modernistic and humanistic framework; thus, leaving out a wide range of (exterior to modernity) populations, unless they assimilate. In such a context, good citizens are expected to keep the system functional by perpetuating hierarchies and injustices in the name of livelihood, competition, and progress and development.

In my lectures, since the early 2000s, I have often used the metaphor of the sausage factory to describe functionalism in the context of how it explains the role of educational institutions. More recently, I have been intentional in distinguishing educational institutions by modernity's design and the alternative exterior to modernity educational institutions, real or (re)imagined. According to Durkheim (2013), functionalism is both about building a citizenry that keeps society functional through an adequate filling of hierarchically differentiated roles and fostering social solidarity. The educational system, therefore, makes sure that people are trained to fill these hierarchically different roles and ensures that there is a reasonable level of social stability. Since

in functionalism the system comprises input-process-output (Easton, 1957), in the metaphor of a sausage factory, educational institutions (e.g., schools and universities) are the "process" that filters, trains, and channels students (the meat or input) toward a functional end (the sausage for consumption or output). Those students who are destined to lead will be leaders, those destined to serve will serve those who lead, and those who are destined to fail will fall through the cracks into an abyss of inutility or deviance. In sausage factory lingo, the good meat will be processed into a sausage but there will be meat that will be rejected because it is not good enough, meat that will be channeled through the low-quality pipeline to produce grade "C" sausage for the poor, meat channeled into the mid-quality pipeline to produce grade "B" sausage for the middle class, and meat channeled into the high-quality pipeline to produce grade "A" for the upper class. The ultimate justification is that there is sausage for everyone, thus the factory is fulfilling its social responsibility to feed all people regardless of class. In other words, modernity's three tenets of personal individuation, structural differentiation, and cultural rationalization help justify, spread, and sustain a social responsibility that does not address the systemic issues grounded in functionalism.

When social justice and social responsibility fail to see the nuanced manifestations of injustice perpetrated and perpetuated by the university's commitment to modernity and humanism, it puts itself in a very difficult position to execute justice because it embraces values that make it hard for justice to manifest by operating within modernity and humanist intrenched legal systems (Matsuda, 1987). I have argued elsewhere (Cossa, 2021) that,

> because of the reductionistic premise that law equals justice, it makes sense for those pursuing justice to have faith in the law. However, what we often miss is that the law is tied to humans' ontological and axiological lenses and results from the intention, deliberation, compromise, and action (praxis) of a small powerful segment of any given society.

Furthermore, we seem to pretend as though we do not see the inherited coloniality in the law of the nation-state configuration and the international law that regulates relations between the so-called nation-states. For instance, the fact that such legal systems in the nation-state and the international justice bodies do not represent African, native Australian or native American national laws but override such laws, at best, as customary laws, should make us suspicious about the hegemonic conceptualization of global citizenship. Yet universities pride themselves of training global citizens. As much as so-called democratic processes and Herodotus' principle of "equality under the law" (Herodotus, 1920/1994/ca. 440 B.C.) are aspired to or claimed as factually operating and effective, it is clear from history that true democracy and "equality under the law" are relative and utopian at the nation-state and global levels – otherwise, we would have won the battle against injustice through *de jure* rulings. While *de jure* ruling gives rights of

citizenship to most, if not all, humans of some social groups continue to enjoy *de facto* privileged citizenship status over humans belonging to other groups.

## A scholar and the struggle for liberation in Mozambique[4]

The contentious issue around global citizenship is not new. Africans who came to study in American universities (and other non-African universities, for that matter) have experienced this sense of not belonging and not being advocated for by universities. Eduardo Mondlane serves as one such example – one who could be regarded as a global citizen, but whose reality was that of one whose citizenship was denied under the law both in Mozambique and in the United States, albeit being a Mozambican by birth, a student and then a faculty member in American universities.

Marshall Segall met Mondlane at Northwestern University as a classmate and later invited and encouraged Mondlane to take on a faculty position at Syracuse University where he (Segall) served as Director of Eastern African Studies. During our interview on May 17, 2011, Segall claimed that Syracuse University was the only university in the United States of America to give "leave of absence" to a faculty member to lead a revolution. Furthermore, according to Segall, Mondlane "was dedicated to bringing independence to the people of Mozambique... I can't say for sure, but this [characteristic of determination to bring independence without being typical rebel] must have influenced FRELIMO's direction and the eventual divisions within it".

Segall bore witness to the fact that Herskovits, whom he said was the founder of the first African Studies program in the United States of America[5], organized a seminar on Africa and chose as the venue for the seminar a building whose donor did not allow Jews and Africans to enter the building. Herskovits was Jewish, the theme of the seminar was "Africa", and some of the students were Africans (including Mondlane) and African Americans (including Segall). The president of the university was opposed to the use of the facility until Herskovits threatened to withdraw the grant funds from the Ford Foundation. According to the archives of Northwestern University (The Presidents of Northwestern, 2009),

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[4] This section draws from the following chapter, which was first published in Italian: Cossa, J. (2011). Al di là del "mito": Un ritratto di Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane negli Stati Uniti d'America. In Luca Bussotti e Severino Ngoenha (a cura di), *Le grandi figure dell'Africa lusofona* (pp. 43-57). Aviani & Aviani.

[5] See also, Northwestern University. (n. d.). *About Melville J. Herskovits: Libraries – Northwestern University*. Northwestern University Library. https://www.library.northwestern.edu/libraries-collections/herskovits-library/about-melville-herskovits.html

Miller's presidency also saw violent protests from the late 1960s. While he was forging to deal with groups of student activists who wanted to confront him directly, he was able to avoid the extreme conflicts that were rising in many other schools. Although Miller was personally conservative, he defended the rights of faculty members to embrace whatever political position they wanted during that time... regarding the dynamic times the university was experiencing during its leadership, he said, "Only when men cease to seek and find new truths, and civilization becomes static, there will be no transition. And there will certainly be no universities either". (n. p.)[6]

Mondlane seemed more focused on academics than politics, but it was his exposure to African affairs during classes and discussions in lectures and related activities that concrete interest in the liberation of the African continent emerged. Perhaps this merging of interest and the witnessing of the power of education as an instrument for *conscientização* (Freire, 1980/2018) informed FRELIMO's *Campanha de alfabetização de adultos* (Nandja, 2013). Herskovits might have been very instrumental in Mondlane's process of transition to politics, based on his description in the reference letter he wrote to support Mondlane's application for the master's program at Northwestern University (Herskovits, 1952a). Herskovits described him as someone who honored his invitation to discuss the problems of Portuguese East Africa at his seminar on contemporary Africa, which had as its audience advanced graduate students – master's and doctorate – and a group of professors discussing contemporary problems on the continent.

Mondlane's role as a revolutionary begins to unfold clearly after his graduation. In a letter he wrote to Herskovits on 9 September 1957 (Mondlane, 1957c), after completing his doctoral studies and taking a job at the Trusteeship Division of the United Nations, Mondlane informed Herskovits of his very good friend Mr. Joseph Biroli-Baranyanka[7] whom, according to Mondlane,

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[6] This text was taken directly from the exhibit in the Archives. A digitized version of this text can be found online at http://exhibits.library.northwestern.edu/archives/exhibits/presidents/miller.html

[7] According to UN records (1961), Joseph Biroli was brought before the United Nations General Council for hearings (see https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/810207?ln=en). Additional evidence of the Alfred Marzorati Study Group can be found on The Rockefeller Archive Center (1957) as part of a collection of interviews. Other records about Biroli show that in 1949 and 1950 a group of illustrious native figures visited Belgium for the first time and that part of the benefits was the education of several members of the middle class and young people in Belgium (Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi Information and Public Relations Office, 1960). Other traits I could find were in relation to (a) the fact that one Joseph Biroli, one of chief Baranyanka's two sons who co-founded the Parti Démocrate Chrétien (PDC), which fought close struggles with Ragwasori's party, UPRONA (l'Union et du Progres National; Lemarchand, 1970), a rivalry inherited from the hatred the Hutus had for his father due to the Belgian favoritism he enjoyed as chief; Lemarchand, 1996); (b) the fact that Biroli-Baranyanka had an academic background in Belgium, although the institution cited by Lemarchand (1970) is *L'institut universitaire des territorre d'outre-mer*, instead of the University of Louvain. Lemarchand tends to extol Joseph Biroli, stating that he attended Oxford and Harvard to assert his intellectual superiority over his political rival Ragwasori. Mondlane, on the other hand, provides more details about the Oxford Institute where Biroli was completing his PhD at the time and the nature of business at Harvard, "he came to this country [United States of America] at the beginning of this summer for the Harvard University Institute of International Economic and Political Sciences".

was the son of an important and supreme head of a region of Ruanda-Urundi[8]. The letter was accompanied by a document entitled "A Study Group of Congo African Problems: An Introduction to the Principles and Programme of the Organization" describing the political agenda of the Alfred Marzorati study group, named after a former Belgian administrator in Africa[9]. In the document, the group expressed interest in a smooth and passive transition process, the freedom of Africans, and the creation of a new political relationship through constructive programs; this as an alternative to what the group designated as "the desire of African peoples to take their destinies into their own hands. Two objectives characterized the agenda: the creation of the study group and the development of leaders of the future. It is likely that some ideas of this group influenced Mondlane's political perspective, or just resonated with the ideas that he already embraced, as the group aimed at the inclusion of Belgians and Africans, as well as individuals of any race and religion. It would not be surprising if the academic and Christian appeal were part of the reason for Mondlane's enthusiasm about Biroli-Baranyanka, according to which[10]

> our intention is to make a contribution to the growth of mutual understanding between the various groups in Africa and to the proper appreciation of the complexities of particular problems we face on the continent. Our perspective is at the same time African and Christian – a harmony between the African and the West, which we are committed to protecting against the dangers of communism or any other invasion of freedom from democracy. (Mondlane, 1957c)

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[8] *Rwanda-Urundi* was a Belgian suzeraint from 1916 until 1924, Class B Mandate of the Society of The Nacoes from 1924 to 1945 and then Territory of the United Nacoes until 1962, when it became the independent states of Rwanda and Burundi (Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi Information and Public Relations Office, 1960). *Suzerainty* is a territory in which the overlord exercises his domain. *Suzerano* it is said of the sovereign of a State with respect to those of other States that, enduring under conditions of apparent autonomy, render him vassal or pay tribute to him (see "Dicionario Priberam da Língua Portuguesa").

[9] In his request to the Rockefeller Foundation to fund the Study Group (Rockefeller Center Archive, Interviews: KTW, September 26, 1957), Biroli argued that "Fellowships to Africans to study abroad tend to develop personal loyalties above and beyond large institutional grants".

[10] Part of my assumption extends to the fact that Mondlane's association with Biroli-Baranyanka, as a Christian and with (American) democracy as a political line, is also reflected in the faith that Mondlane later deposited in the Rev. Urias Simango, although later he suspected the same of ambition for power, and Matthew Ngwengere, although this was perceived as a spy during Mondlane's political career (Manghezi, 1999). Incidentally, Biroli was executed in Burundi on 16 January 1963 for having been implicated in the murder of Burundi's Prime Minister Rwagasore on 13 October 1961. Ned Munger argued that Mondlane was strongly influenced by the West and Christianity, and Luís Serapião (1985) argues that Mondlane was a nationalist who maintained strong ties with the West. Mondlane incidentally accused the Angolans of the MPLA of hiding their spiritual-material connection with the United States behind an "anti-Americanism" (Manghezi, 1999). Accordingly, this position changed only after the "Bando de Argel" (Pinheiro, 1979) influenced FRELIMO's policy to be anti-West in favor of Marxism-Leninism.

The study group's intention was very clear, both theoretically and ideologically and in practical terms – the higher education of Africans in the United States of America was perceived as the solution for Africa in the face of "the dangers of communism" and the inevitable growth of the masses' discontent with colonialism. In January 1968, then-Dr. Eduardo Mondlane appeared as one of the guests to speak at the symposium to examine "Violence" organized and funded by Northwestern University students. Speakers comprised intellectual and leader-activists of various social movements: Charles Hamilton, Stanley Milgram, professor of Psychology at the City College of New York; Ernest Chambers, barber and spokesperson for black *militancy in* Omaha, Nebraska; Staughton Lynd, professor at Illinois State Teachers College; Vincent Harding, President of the History Department at Spellman College; James Lawson, vice president of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a religious pacifist organization, and former adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Robert Theobald, author; Leslie Fielder, author-critic-educator; and Bosley Crowther, a former New York Times employee. It is likely that Mondlane participated in other earlier symposia – in 1964-65 the theme was "Rebellion"; in 1965-66, "Diminishing Man"; and, in 1966-67, "The New Urgency" – and that such would have influenced him. Mondlane's session in the 1968 symposium was on the theme "Violence as an Outlet" and argued, as president of FRELIMO, that the use of violence in a revolution is accepted only when it is imperative.

A year earlier (i.e., in a letter on April 10, 1967) Mondlane acknowledged to Gwendolyn Carter that the rare opportunity they had at Northwestern to be influenced by "hard-headed" teachers who forced them to look at the basic facts of human behavior was being useful in the close armed struggle, which is further evidence that the atmosphere of northwestern university's program influenced Mondlane for a political career that culminated in his vision and role in the liberation of Mozambique.

Mondlane influenced the community of Northwestern University, Oberlin College, Syracuse University. Influencing the community that we interact with is not necessarily extraordinary, but it is inevitable. What highlights the nature of Mondlane's influence on the communities with which he interacted is the complexity with which he navigated his rolls of family man, Christian, intellectual, political, and revolutionary. Comparing him to Martin Luther King, Jr., Reverend Crane (1969) lamented the fact that Mondlane's stature was not adequately captured; he argued that "the fact that he chose violence does not diminish his stature as a Christian or protagonist of freedom (…) He felt deep solidarity with all members of the human race". Wendell Bell (1990), who was Mondlane's professor at Northwestern University, acknowledged that Mondlane had a huge influence on his interest and faith in the cause of the Caribbean. Bell admits that, in hindsight, Mondlane prepared him to be receptive to the possibility of political freedom in Jamaica and testifies that Mondlane worked without ceasing to mobilize support in the United States of America for the release of his country from Portuguese domination. Bell acknowledges

that he was conscientized by Mondlane's political activities and moved by his moral conviction and dedication to the cause of Mozambique, although his meetings with Mondlane were more about the latter's progress in his studies in Sociology. In a college resolution held at Oberlin College, Mondlane was remembered as "a strong, intelligent, eloquent, and brave man – a man of higher character and ideals. Dedicated to the cause of freedom for his own country, he was in every sense of the word a citizen of the world". William Minter (2008) characterized Mondlane as having had a ponderous presence, more *in the sense of aura*: "Mondlane was exceptional in the variety of his contacts and powerful presence, gaining respect from hundreds of Americans who eventually became involved with the liberation of Africa"[11]. In memory of Mondlane, Syracuse University created the Eduardo Mondlane Brown Bag Series as an integral part of the Africa Initiative program, which was led by Dr. Horace Campbell, at the time I started this research. The initiative is a testment to the respect that Mondlane enjoyed among his colleagues at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Program of Eastern African Studies, who in 1969 created a fund called "The Eduardo C. Mondlane Memorial Fund". Marshall H. Segall and Robert F. Stephens signed the document that marked the beginning of this fund whose statement by the then former dean of Maxwell School, Dr. Stephen K. Bailey, stated in a near-mythological manner, "his death removes from the world scene one of the most balanced, articulate, responsible, and forcing champions of human freedom of the twentieth century" (The Eduardo C. Mondlane Memorial Fund, 1969).

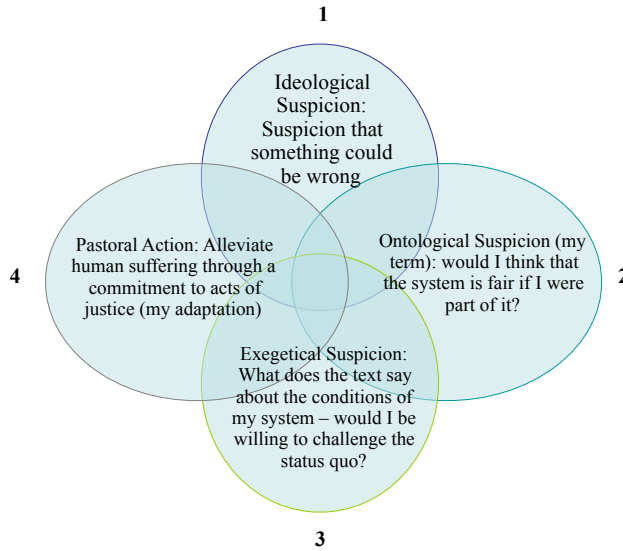## African universities and theorizing for social responsibility

This paper argues that social justice is a steamy issue in academia and activism. Those interested in the wellbeing of others often resort to discourse about social justice as a means to speak for those who for some reason have been marginalized or whose voice has been silenced. Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutierrez has been an ambassador of the marginalized among academics and activists. In his and other advocates lingo, the marginalized populations are labeled voiceless, almost as to say that they are "without voice" – scholars and activists are often unclear as to whether this implies that the marginalized have never had a voice or that their voice, that once was, is now extinct. However, Gutierrez has clarified his mission as follows: "My goal is not to be the voice of the voiceless. The goal must be that the voiceless have a voice, to be agents of their destiny" (The Brandeis Hoot, 2014). Academics seem to have not polarized over the perception of "whose voice" or over the categorization of marginalized people or over

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[11] Alumni News & Notes, In Memory of Eduardo Chivambo Mondlane '53: 1920-1969. http://www.oberlin.edu/alummag/oampast/oam_spring98/Alum_n_n/eduardo.html

conceptualizations of poverty, as much as they have polarized over adequate representation of people's needs and a way to bridge them into mainstream society, at least at the socio-economic level. In other words, they often seem to agree on who is voiceless, poor, and/or marginalized. Nonetheless, Gutierrez's explanation suggests that the "voiceless have no voice", thus need to have a voice; rather than asking of us the fundamental question as to whether, or not, we have made enough attempts to listen to the so-called voiceless. I argue that all humans have a voice but not all are listened to (not just heard as in a sound being heard, but actually listened to). Therefore, it seems imperative to me that we continue to ask ourselves questions about 'voice of the voiceless' as an instrument toward justice.

Furthermore, to speak of the voice of the voiceless implies that the voice is representative of the intentions and wishes of the voiceless, but with the multitude of voices around one issue can there be an accurate voice of the voiceless? Also, with the multitude of issues around one voice, is there not a danger of neglecting the intricacies of key issues of individual sub-groups? Are we not patronizing the voiceless by implying that they ought to have a voice to be attended to and accepted as humans with dignity? What is the legitimacy of a voice that supposedly speaks on behalf of the voiceless? Are we assuming homogeneity in thoughts and intentions of the voiceless just as we are of the voice that presumably speaks on their behalf? Do all people who supposedly speak for some category of voiceless do so with accuracy? These are some of the questions that can be asked to probe into social justice as a concept, an idea, a movement, and everything that it might be classified as. Ultimately, social justice is rooted in the very understanding that one is human; an understanding that evokes uBuntu. uBuntu does not undermine the importance of social justice informed by Gutierrez's "voice of the voiceless" and Segundo's hermeneutical circle (1976; see Figure 1) nor does it undermine calls for social responsibility fashioned after modernity. However, it calls into question the latter and, in partnership with the former, redeems living beings to a condition of selflessness – to not be satisfied or realized less there is a merger between those labeled as *the other* and *the self* by modernity and humanism. This calling into question of the former and the partnership with the latter have been misunderstood by the rest of the world (in this case, Latin America, and the West) as lack of a theorizing on which Africa's perception of justice is rooted. It is noteworthy that uBuntu has carried Africans through various attempts at both physical and epistemological genocide (Cossa, 2020) and this new knowledge frontier seems to offer Africa an opportunity to recall, reconstruct and re-assert her theorizing about justice.

FIGURE 1

**Segundo's Hermeneutical Circle**

**1**

Ideological
Suspicion:
Suspicion that
something could
be wrong

Pastoral Action: Alleviate
human suffering through a
commitment to acts of
justice (my adaptation)

Ontological Suspicion (my
term): would I think that
the system is fair if I were
part of it?

**4**

**2**

Exegetical Suspicion:
What does the text say
about the conditions of
my system – would I be
willing to challenge the
status quo?

**3**

**Source:** Original adaptation

The undermining of Africa as a locus of theorizing about justice lies on the fact that due to her limited *de jure* and *de facto* independences and the inherited colonial modernistic models, the African university rapidly moved from a locus of political freedom into a locus of neo-colonialism and daily epistemological violence (Vázquez, 2011) perpetrated on students and faculty, which offers very limited avenues for Africa's complete liberation from colonialism. Ironically, the African university offers a decolonializing (my term) possibility through critically engaged activist faculty who maintain a state of "woke" amidst the subtle coloniality and violence. I have argued elsewhere that "the modernistic educational systems we inherited continue to serve as vehicles for perpetuating modernity's domination in all social systems because their theorizing and perpetuation happen during schooling years" (Cossa 2020, p. 41). My key argument sits on the premise that the university is enslaved to modernity, as its master, and the promises inherent in modernity (Cossa, 2018). This condition breeds daily violence as it violates Africans' ontology, epistemology, axiology, cosmology, and existence as fellow humans on the cosmos. Therefore, a living philosophy and theory of justice in and for African universities might benefit from African cosmology and perception of the human (i.e., uBuntu) and from *Cosmo-uBuntu*, a new theorizing (exterior to modernity), as

the voluntary embracing of uBuntu as a foundational value system in our participation in planetary conviviality; that is, the embracing of 'uMuntu nguMuntu ngaBantu' as our perception of humanness and a worldview that informs our conviviality, without forcing universality. In this value system, personhood applies to all humans and precludes individuation, classifications, and hierarchies (e.g., racial, gendered, ethnic, geopolitical, etc.). (Cossa, 2020, p. 34)

Both uBuntu and Cosmo-uBuntu can provide us with a soulful non-violent reckoning with the coloniality and colonializing propensities appended in progressive revolutionary theories emanating from the critical theories that have paved a way to valuable yet superficial political liberations in Africa because such theories were not conceptualized by Africa, thus failed to see the appended coloniality that followed them in their noble political sojourns in Africa (Cossa, 2020). A rooting in uBuntu and Cosmo-uBuntu ought to steer African universities away from reactionary rage (by de-raging) in order to philosophize and theorize also at a moment of soberness when apathy and complacency tend to settle in, inspire it towards cutting dependency from philosophies and theories of modernity (by de-linking)[12], and undoing the center-periphery binary by doing away with the concepts and labeling of center and periphery (Cossa, 2020, p. 39). In philosophizing through uBuntu and theorizing through Cosmo-uBuntu, violence is not met with modernistic non-violence means as a socially responsible response but with the African understanding of human through fellow humans, which means that violence of any kind threatens the essence of our humanness by othering and dehumanizing the victim and, consequently, stripping the perpetrator of their humanness, their uBuntu.

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[12]   "the refusal to submit national development to the imperatives of 'globalization'" (Amin, 1987, p. 435).

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