

# RESEARCH AND TRAINING PROJECT ON THE HISTORIES OF UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Professor Saleem Badat

Research Professor, History Department  
University of the Free State

18 April 2024

## Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
1. Purpose of the Research Project	5
2. Aims of the Research Project	5
3. The History of Universities Book Project	6
• Aims of the Book Project	
• Objects of the Book Project	
• Framework of the Book Project	
• Questions for Research for the Book Project	
✓ Empirical questions	
✓ Analytical questions	
• Work Plan for the Book Project	
4. Other Research Questions	12
5. Publications	13
6. Research mentoring and training	13
7. Conferences, Seminars and Workshops	13
8. Personnel	13
9. Infrastructure	13
10. Governance	14
11. Finance	14
12. References	14

## Executive Summary

Despite universities having a long history in South Africa, arising in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, no scholarly book exists on the historical origins and development of universities in South Africa, and especially one that examines the purposes, roles and functions of universities in South Africa and how they have changed over the course of two centuries. In so far as institutional histories of universities are concerned, there are some histories on individual, largely historically white, universities, and some books, articles, and papers that focus on specific issues during particular periods at certain universities. Alongside, there are commemorative, largely celebratory publications on some universities and potted accounts of the origins and development of individual universities.

The proposed Research Project on the Histories of Universities in South Africa has three interrelated research goals. The first is to produce a rigorously researched, well-written, peer-reviewed, scholarly book that analyses the purposes, roles and functions of universities between 1829 and today. The second research goal is to promote, support and to undertake, ideally in partnership with various universities, rigorous, critical, peer-reviewed histories of individual, and especially historically black, universities in South Africa, as well as different groupings of universities (historically white, historically black, traditional universities, universities of technology, comprehensive universities). The third research goal is to stimulate research on historical aspects of key issues related to universities – such as taken for granted core concepts, domains such as research, teaching and learning, community engagement, the origins and development of disciplines and fields, the academic development movement and student activism

The Research Project is important for six reasons. First, it would contribute to the historiography on South Africa in general, and on higher education in particular. Second, it would address a major lacuna in the literature on higher education and universities in South Africa. Third, it would illuminate the relationship between the origins and development of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, and the specific origins and development of universities in South Africa, and how, in what ways, and to what extent colonialism and apartheid shaped, and in turn were shaped by, universities. Fourth, universities are increasingly under focus for their historical relationships with slavery and other forms of oppressive and exploitative social relations. The nature and extent of these relationships need to be analyzed and reckoned with, alongside whatever positive contributions they have made to social equity, justice, and democracy; a historical approach could be of considerable value in the assessment of universities. Fifth, detailed research and books on the historical origins and development of universities in South Africa could shed light on contemporary questions, such as the difficulties that universities face in going beyond their inherited legacies and transforming their institutional structures, cultures and knowledge and education programs, which were objects of critique, and a rallying cry of the student protest of 2015-2016. Finally, critical scholarship on the history of universities in South Africa that is unconcerned entirely with policy making could be as invaluable and have as great an impact, if not greater value and impact, than scholarship on higher education that sets out to deliberately inform policy making. That is to say, all research on

social and economic issues is potentially policy related and relevant, on condition that the research is imaginative and rigorous.

Beyond its research goals, the Research Project has other complementary goals.

These are

1. To publish the results of the research in the form of peer-reviewed books, book chapters and articles.
2. To promote scholarly engagement on questions of concern to the research project through seminars, workshops and conferences, and
3. To contribute to redressing the current social inequalities in the composition of the academy and knowledge creation through cultivating high quality scholars and researchers from historically disadvantaged social backgrounds by involving early career scholars, post-doctoral fellows and doctoral and masters students in the research project.

The coordinator of the Research Project is Prof. Saleem Badat, Research Professor in the History Department, University of the Free State. Prof. Badat has extensive knowledge of universities and research experience and has authored four books and some 60 book chapters and research articles. He has constituted a network of scholars who have penned histories of individual universities and in May 2022 convene a workshop supported by the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS). He has written to every university that does not have a monograph on its institutional history to encourage a partnership on producing such a history and constituting an archive on its institutional history.

## **Introduction**

Context, Philip Abrams writes “is not a matter of noting the way in which the past provides a background to the present; it is a matter of treating what people do in the present as a struggle to create a future out of the past, of seeing that the past is not just the womb of the present but the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed” (1982:8). There are two dimensions to ‘context’. One is social-structural conditions and the other is conjunctural conditions. The distinction between structural and conjunctural conditions (political, economic, social and ideological) “refers to the division between elements of a (relatively) permanent and synchronic logic of a given social structure, and elements which emerge as temporary variations of its functioning in a diachronic perspective” (Melucci, 1989:49). Put differently, structural features are relatively long-term, enduring and permanent; conjunctural ones may be more short-term and temporary, yet are inextricably associated with the long-term features. The “distinction allows one to separate the analysis of the [long-term] pre-conditions of action from the [short-term] factors activating specific forms of collective mobilisation” (Melucci 1989, 49–50).

If Abrams provides one reason for taking inherited structural conditions seriously, another reason is that “what we choose to do and what we have to do are shaped by the historically given possibilities among which we find ourselves” (ibid.:3). This means that institutions, organisations and people operate “within the framework of possibilities and constraints presented by the institutions of our complex societies”

(Keane and Mier, 1989:4). Paying attention to the historical conditions under which we function also means being sensitive to continuities and to discontinuities in conditions. This helps us to understand the *particular* conditions, problems and challenges that affect us. Here the concept of 'periodisation' is important "since it signals the possibility that the historical development of a society, or sectors of it such as the economy or polity, may be demarcated by periods which differ in significant respects from one another" (Wolpe, 1988: 19).

Social structures, institutions and existing practices condition social activity and initiatives for change – or in the language of higher education in South Africa, attempts to realize the 'transformation' of universities and higher education. To state that social relations and institutional arrangements 'condition' social action, however, is not to argue that they only constrain, in the sense that they make change initiatives and change impossible and automatically guarantee the reproduction of existing social relations, policies or practices. Structures, social relations, policies or practices are always the outcome of struggles and contestation between contending social groups and actors (Wolpe, 1988:8). Such struggles and actions can, and do, undermine, modify, and in certain cases even transform social structures, institutions and practices, and ultimately become the outcome of such actions. Thus, any sensitive social analysis must recognise the "relation of the individual as an agent with purposes, expectations and motives to society as a constraining environment of institutions, values and norms – and that relationship is one which has its real existence ... in the immediate world of history, of sequences of action and reaction in time" (Abrams, 1982: xv).

The relationship between action and structure needs to be "understood as a matter of process in time" (ibid.,: xv). Thus, even if certain activities and actions may not immediately and seriously erode or undermine existing structures, policies and practices, they could nonetheless weaken these in ways that compel those in power or authority to modify structures, policies and practices. In this process, new conditions and a new terrain of activity and contestation could be established which may be more favourable to the efforts of social groups and that seek more fundamental change (transformation).

Colonialism shaped the universities and higher education system that developed in South Africa after the early nineteenth century. One result was the implantation in South Africa of universities that in their academic organization were imitations of European universities, rather than universities that were organically *South African* or *African*. Another outcome was universities whose institutional identities, cultures, curricula, learning and teaching, and research were wedded to Western intellectual thought, modes of knowledge making, conventions, and practices. A further effect was that universities were by and large associated strongly with the reproduction of the colonial and apartheid social order, rather than with contributing to an equitable and democratic order. "Every South African university," the late Jakes Gerwel argued in 1987, "(had) a dominant ideological orientation which (described) the context of its operations" (Gerwel, 1987:77). He observed that "the ideology to which a university (related) (had) a correlative in some organized political movement," and was "linked to some ideological establishment" (Gerwel, 1987:77). The white Afrikaans language universities "stood...firmly within the operative context of Afrikaner nationalism, networking in a complex way into its various correlative institutions, whether it be educational, cultural, religious, economic or political;" similarly, the white English-language universities

functioned “within the context of anglophile liberalism, primarily linking and responding to its institutional expressions as in the English schools, cultural organizations and importantly big business” (Gerwel, 1987:77-78).

Post-1994, universities in South Africa have had to confront numerous issues that have become sharpened and made more urgent by the national student protests of 2015-2016. All universities have needed to address the question of their colonial and apartheid pasts, of their relationship with the state and dominant political institutions and organizations, and of being liberated from this past. They have had to consider fundamentally their conceptions of the meaning of a university, its social purposes, goals, roles, and functions, both in general, and in the specific contexts of South Africa and Africa. They have had to also contemplate how ideas, conventions, and norms associated with colonialism and apartheid have shaped matters such as teaching and research and the balance between the two, curriculum and pedagogy, the organization of degree programs, academic and institutional cultures, governance, and financing. In the post-1994 period, they have had to deal with global neo-liberal trends towards the corporatization and marketization of universities and the commodification of knowledge, local policy imperatives of expanding the student body, equity and redress, and declining state budgets. Universities have needed to confront, ultimately, what is entailed in becoming and being *South African* and *African* universities, in a constitutional democracy that proclaims upholding the dignity of all, guaranteeing the economic, social, and human rights of all, and a commitment to economic development and democratization of the state and society.

### **Purpose of the Research Project**

The proposed research project on the histories of universities in South Africa has as its principal purpose to inform policies and strategies for the transformation of universities and higher education in South Africa. An understanding of the origins and development of universities and higher education is important for grasping both the prospects and the barriers, challenges and possible limits of change.

### **Aims of the Research Project**

The project has six related aims that encompass the production and dissemination of knowledge and the training of more diverse and inclusive new and next generations of scholars.

1. To undertake research and produce a book on the *history* of universities in South Africa that considers and traces how important contemporary issues were understood and addressed *historically* in general, and at specific universities in South Africa.
2. To promote research on the histories of individual universities, historical groupings of universities and types of universities, beyond the histories that have thus far been produced or are in the process of being produced on select universities.
3. To stimulate research on historical aspects of key issues related to universities - taken for granted core concepts, domains such as research and teaching and learning, the origins and development of disciplines and fields, etc.
4. To publish the results of the research in the form of peer-reviewed books, book chapters and articles.

5. To promote through seminars, workshops and conferences, scholarly engagement on questions of concern to the research project.
6. To contribute, through involving early career scholars, post-doctoral fellows and doctoral and masters students in the research project, to the cultivation of high quality scholars and researchers from historically disadvantaged social backgrounds so as to help redress the current social inequalities in the composition of the academy and knowledge creation.

The research project will initially give effect to aims 1 and aspects of aims 4, 5 and 6 as they relate to aim 1. Activities related to aims 2 and 3 and those aspects under aims 4, 5 and 6 related to them will be pursued as and when additional funding is mobilised and secured.

### **The History of Universities Book Project**

The specific intention of the book on the history of universities is to analyse the purposes, goals, objectives, roles, functions, and objects that were defined for specific universities and for universities<sup>1</sup> generally, how and by whom they were defined, what conditions and ideas shaped the definitions, how definitions changed over time, and to what extent, in what ways, and why actual pursuits of universities differed from the stated ones. Put in another way, the question of the purposes that universities were intended to serve also raises the questions of whose purposes were those, how did those purposes come to be constituted, how were they shaped by place and time, and how and why did they change. The book will also provide an account of the origins, expansion, and development of universities during the colonial, segregation, and apartheid eras and the post-1994 period, and analyse both the historical, structural, and conjunctural conditions in the economy, polity and society, as well as the intellectual milieus, thinking, human agency, conflicts, and contestations that gave rise to universities, and shaped definitions of their purposes, goals, objectives, roles, functions, and objects.

The first university in South Africa, the University of the Cape of Good Hope, was established in 1873, but served purely as an examining body. Over the next 131 years, a number of colleges of postsecondary education arose, eventually becoming university colleges and full universities, so that at the advent of democracy in 1994 there were 36 universities, all public. After 1994, as part of creating a new higher education landscape, the 36 universities were combined into 23 universities, and two new universities were established. Despite a long history, no scholarly book exists on the historical origins and development until recent times of universities in South Africa. There are a few histories of individual universities, and some books, articles, and papers that focus on specific issues during particular periods at certain universities. There are also commemorative, largely celebratory publications on some universities, and potted accounts of the origins and development of individual universities.

A rigorously researched, well-written, peer-reviewed, scholarly book that examines universities in South Africa historically is important for a number of reasons. First, it would contribute to the historiography on South Africa in general, and on higher education in particular. Second, it would address a major lacuna in the literature on

---

<sup>1</sup> *The focus of the book is specifically on universities rather than the wider postsecondary system.*

higher education and universities in South Africa. Third, it would illuminate the relationship between the origins and development of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, and the specific origins and development of universities in South Africa, and how, in what ways, and to what extent colonialism and apartheid shaped, and in turn were shaped by, universities. Fourth, universities are increasingly under focus for their historical relationships with slavery and other forms of oppressive and exploitative social relations. The nature and extent of these relationships need to be analyzed and reckoned with, alongside whatever positive contributions they have made to social equity, justice, and democracy; a historical approach could be of considerable value in the assessment of universities. Fifth, detailed research and a book on the historical origins and development of universities in South Africa could shed light on contemporary questions, such as the difficulties that universities face in going beyond their inherited legacies and transforming their institutional structures, cultures, and knowledge and education programs, which were objects of critique, and a rallying cry of the student protest of 2015-2016. Finally, critical scholarship on the history of universities in South Africa that is unconcerned entirely with policy making could be as invaluable and have as great an impact, if not greater value and impact, than scholarship on higher education that sets out to deliberately inform policy making. That is to say, all research on social and economic issues is potentially policy related and relevant, on condition that the research is imaginative and rigorous.

#### Aims of the Book Project

In congruence with the stated purposes of the research, the principal *aims* of the research are:

1. To develop an appropriate theoretical framework for framing the description, analysis, and interpretation of the origins, expansion, and historical development of universities in South Africa.
2. To describe and critically analyse the origins of university education during the colonial period, including the interplay of structural, conjunctural, and intellectual conditions, and the ideas, agency, and actions that gave rise to and shaped the first instances of university education provision in South Africa.
3. To describe and critically analyse the development of universities during the segregation period, and the birth of new universities during the apartheid and post-1994 periods, including the continuities and discontinuities in structural, conjunctural, and intellectual conditions, and the ideas, agency, and actions that resulted in the rise of new universities and that shaped old and new universities.
4. To describe, critically analyse, and explain the social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions and objects that were attributed to universities generally, to specific groups of universities (English-language, Afrikaans language, historically white, historically black), and to individual universities at their origins, and over the course of their historical development.
5. To the extent that the social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and the objects of universities changed over time, to explain how, in what ways, to what extent, and why they changed, and with what consequences for different domains of society and for different social classes, strata, and groups.

In order to obtain answers to the questions of the social purposes, functions and goals of universities in South Africa, it will be necessary to explore some key themes.

Theme	Data
The social structure conditioning universities	Nature of ideological, political, economic and social conditions and race, class and gender structure
Contestation and conflict in society and higher education	Nature of contending ideological, political, economic and social forces and implications for HE
What are the discourses on why universities are needed	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students
What are the discourses on what universities should do	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students
Who is intended to attend universities/who attends	Student enrolments by race, gender and geography
Who are intended to be and are academics	Academic staff by race, gender and geography
Who are intended to be and are administrators	Admin staff by race, gender and geography
Who are the governors	Governors by occupations, race, gender and geography
Who are the financiers	Funders by occupations, sector (public/private/donor) race, gender and geography
What is to be taught and is taught	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students Curricula, disciplines and programs offered
What is to be researched and is researched	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students Questions and issues that are researched
Which, if any, communities are to be engaged by the university	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students Existence of community engagement activities
What do universities embody and express through their symbols	Names, architecture, crests, icons, names of buildings, gowns/clothing, and rituals that are associated with the university
What place and space dynamics are related to universities	Geographic location of institutions; literature on their links with their surrounds

### Objects of the Book Project

In accordance with the stated aims of the research, the *objects* of the research are to

1. Consider the international literature on the origins, expansion, and development of universities and higher education, and especially the literature that focuses on the social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects of universities and higher education.
2. Review the South African literature on the origins, expansion, and development of universities and higher education, and especially the literature that focuses on the social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects of universities and higher education.



3. Survey the relevant South African laws, regulations, law-making, policymaking, and policy documents related to the establishment universities in South Africa, and especially their purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and object.
4. Study selectively diverse literature in the form of autobiographies, biographies, magazines, commercial and popular media, and the documents and media of business, political, religious, cultural, and educational organisations that could have expressed views on the establishment of universities and their purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects.
5. Examine the political, economic, social, and intellectual conditions, and the ideas, agency, and actions that incubated and shaped the emergence, expansion, and further development of universities.

### The Framework of the Research for the Book

1. The 'framework' or more accurately 'conceptual framework' is akin to what Abrams terms a "problematic":
 

....a rudimentary organisation of a field of phenomena which yields problems for investigation. The organisation occurs on the basis of some more or less explicitly theoretical presuppositions - it is an application of assumptions and principles to phenomena in order to constitute a range of enquiry....[O]ne's problematic is the sense of significance and coherence one brings to the world in general in order to make sense of it in particular (1982: xv).

A conceptual framework makes explicit key assumptions and concepts, and is crucial for structuring and guiding research, informing the specific questions that are pursued, and for analysis and interpretation.
2. In light of the above, a key challenge of the research is to produce a theoretical framework that is appropriate for the description, analysis, and interpretation of the origins, expansion, and development of universities in South Africa.
3. Critical historical sociology could provide a fertile point of departure for the production of an appropriate framework.

Amongst its virtues is its emphasis on theory and concepts, and especially conceptual clarity, as necessary conditions for rigorous analysis, and for explanation. A further strength is its core concern with the mutual interaction between historical social structure and conjuncture and human agency, and its emphasis on how structure and conjuncture *condition* human agency. That is to say, how they set limits and constraints on courses of social action and outcomes, while they also simultaneously provide possibilities and opportunities for human agency. Social realities become the product of the interplay of inherited and given economic, political, social, and intellectual conditions, and human agency that is conducted under specific relations of authority, power, and access to resources. It also means that in as much as there may be discontinuities in conditions, there may also be continuities, both within the wider political economy and within higher education itself. The distinction between structural and conjunctural "refers to the division between elements of a (relatively) permanent and synchronic logic of a given social structure, and elements which emerge as temporary variations of its functioning in a diachronic perspective" (Melucci, 1989:49-50).

At the beginning of the Introduction, I cited Abrams' contention - that people "struggle to create a future *out* of the past" and that the same past is "the only raw material out of which the present can be constructed" (1982:8) - as one reason for taking context and structural conditions seriously. Another reason is that social action is "is always 'built' by social actors...(and) must be understood in terms of the processes through which individuals communicate, negotiate, produce meanings, and make decisions within a particular social field or environment. They establish relations with other actors within an already structured context..." (Keane and Mier, 1989:4).

Hypothetically, all outcomes and courses of social action are possible. In practice, however, this is hardly the case. As it has been well put: "[m]en [sic] make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx quoted in Tosh, 1984:140). Put in another way, "what we choose to do and what we have to do are shaped by the historically given possibilities among which we find ourselves" (Abrams, 1981:3). The two-sided interaction of human agency and social structure means that social relations, institutions, policies, and practices are the medium as well as the outcome of individual and organisational actions and social struggles.

An adequate framework has to locate and understand the origins, expansion, and development of universities within the wider context of the changing historical conditions and political economy of South Africa. On the one hand, the purposes, goals, objectives, roles, functions, and objects that were formulated for universities at their origins and as they expanded and developed, would have been shaped by historical, structural, and conjunctural conditions. On the other hand, the specific priorities that were determined, the choices and decisions that were made, and the policies that were formulated and implemented by the state, different governments, universities, and other social actors requires giving attention simultaneously to human agency and the action of different social actors.

5. If the origins, expansion, and development of South African universities and, more generally, the wider political economy are to be periodised, four periods can be roughly identified:
  - The colonial period between 1652 and 1910.
  - The period of so-called segregation, between 1910 and 1948.
  - The apartheid period between 1948 and 1990, and
  - The period of liberalization and democracy, after 1990 and 1994 respectively.
6. Manuel Castells contends that universities perform four major functions (2001:206-12). Historically, they have played a major role as ideological apparatuses. As such, they are subject to "the conflicts and contradictions of society and therefore they will tend to express – and even to amplify – the ideological struggles present in all societies." Second, universities have always been mechanisms to select dominant elites. Third, universities play a role in the generation of new knowledge. Castells notes, however, that this "remains a statistical exception among universities, even in the United States where only about 200 of the 3500 universities and colleges can be

considered as knowledge producers at various levels.” Finally, the professional university focuses on training the bureaucracy.

Castells argues that the balance between these functions changes. Because “universities are social systems and historically produced institutions, all their functions take place simultaneously within the same structure, although with different emphases. It is not possible to have a pure or quasi-pure model of universities” (2001: 211). His conclusion is that the real issue is ..... to create institutions solid enough and dynamic enough to stand the tensions that will necessarily trigger the simultaneous performance of somewhat contradictory functions” (2001: 212). It will be useful to work with Castells ideas on the function of universities in considering the social purposes, goals, roles and functions that were defined for universities in South Africa over time and possibly contribute to reworking his ideas.

### Questions for Research for the Book Project

Given the aims and the framework of the research, a number of *analytical* and *empirical* questions arise for investigation.

#### Empirical Questions

1. When did postsecondary education and universities specifically originate in South Africa?
2. What was the nature of the conditions (political, economic, social, intellectual, etc.) under which universities originated, expanded, and developed?
3. Which social classes, strata, and groups, and institutional actors were involved in promoting the establishment of the original universities and later universities, and why?
4. Was there contestation around founding of the original universities and later universities? Why was there contestation - what was the nature and content of the contestation?
5. Which social classes, strata, and groups, and actors were in contestation? If this changed over time, how and why did the nature of contestation change?
6. Why did the original universities and later universities all take the form of public universities, as opposed to private universities?
7. What social and education purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects were conferred on universities originally, and as they expanded and developed?
8. What social and education purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects were actually pursued by universities? How and why did these change over time?
9. What do major national and intra-university crises, controversies, and flashpoints (such as the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, student uprisings, the 'Mafeje affair' at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the Moore crisis at Rhodes University, the Makgoba controversy at the University of Witwatersrand, the Mamdani conflict at UCT) reveal about questions of the social and education purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects?

## Analytical Questions

1. What theoretical framework can most adequately guide the investigation of the origins, expansion, and development of universities in South Africa?
  - What fundamental propositions would constitute the framework?
  - What key concepts would constitute this framework?
  - How are the key concepts to be defined?
2. What historical periods can be identified on the basis of changing ideological, political, economic, and intellectual conditions?
3. What were the principal determinants of the establishment of universities in South Africa?
4. How are the origins, expansion, and development of universities in South Africa to be explained?
5. Were there, and what were, the intersections between the debates on universities, and debates on politics, economy, and society?
6. How, in what ways, to what extent, and why have questions of purposes, goals and objects, roles and functions, and objects changed over time, and over specific periods?
7. What key propositions can be advanced with respect to structure and agency in the establishment of South African universities, and the role of specific social actors?
8. What can be said about the adequacy of the theoretical framework in guiding the investigation; what revisions, if any, were required and why; what additional fundamental propositions, if any, were introduced; what new key concepts if any, were introduced, and were any concepts redefined, and how?

## Work Plan for the Book

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Initial reading, note taking, and development of proposal	January 2020 – December 2021
Documentary research and note-taking	January 2022 – June 2023
Archival research and note-taking	January 2022 – June 2023
Writing towards first draft of book	June 2023 – March 2024
Writing towards final draft of book	March 2024 – September 2024
Writing towards final copy of book	October 2024 – March 2025
Submission for publication	April 2025 – July 2025
Copy editing	August 2025 – November 2025
Publication	December 2025

The book is aimed at a range of readership:

- Local academics, researchers, and students in the fields of higher education studies.
- Overseas academics and scholars in the fields of higher education studies and policy.
- South African higher education leaders, senior administrative staff, and academics at higher education institutions.
- Higher education policymakers, including government officials, advisory bodies, higher education representative organisations, higher education research and development agencies, and officials in science and research institutions.

- International and local donor and development agencies investing in higher education in South Africa.

### **Other Research Questions**

Beyond the book project on the history of universities that focuses on their changing purposes, goals, roles, and functions, it is intended, as funding permits, to undertake further research on the history of universities and higher education in South Africa.

1. Research on the histories of individual universities, historical groupings of universities and on different types of universities, beyond the histories that have thus far been produced or are in the process of being produced on specific universities.
2. Research in historical aspects of key issues related to universities – on core concepts like ‘knowledge’, ‘research’, teaching, ‘collegiality’ etc., on domains such as research, teaching and learning and community engagement, the origins and development of disciplines and fields, and on student activism.

### **Publications**

Publication in the form of peer-reviewed books, journal articles and book chapters, conference, seminar and workshop papers on the results of research and the proceedings of conferences, seminars and workshops is vital for promoting thinking, debate and policy innovation in higher education. It is also indispensable for ensuring a rich and vibrant culture of higher education studies and research in South Africa.

### **Research Mentoring and Training**

It is critical to mentor and train new and next generations (especially black and African and women) of scholars in higher education studies as part of reproducing the field in South Africa and eroding redress the apartheid legacy of the domination of knowledge production by white and male South Africans. The research project will provide opportunities to early career scholars, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students under the mentorship and supervision of the senior researcher and affiliate senior scholars. Early career scholars, fellows, and students will work in close proximity with and alongside the senior scholars, read key literature with them, think together with them, undertake research and writing under close supervision in a critical yet empathetic environment, be afforded opportunities to make conference and seminar presentations, to design and organize seminars and will be supported to insert their research into curriculum, learning and teaching as part of the imperative of transforming the curriculum.

### **Conferences, Seminars and Workshops**

Conferences, seminars, and workshops are important mechanisms for the presentation and discussion of the results of research and their potential policy implications. They also provide useful opportunities for early career scholars, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students to present their work and develop their craft.

## Personnel

Seed funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation of \$60 000 and from the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of R800 000, and contributions previously from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Research Professor contract post for 3 years, 2020-2023) and currently from the University of the Free State (Research Professor contract post for 5 years, 2023-2088) support

- A senior researcher at a professorial level with the responsibility to lead, direct and co-ordinate work of the research project (8 years).
- Two postdoctoral fellowships (1 x 2 years).
- One PhD scholarship (3 years).

Additional researchers will be employed, and additional postdoctoral fellowships and postgraduate scholarships will be awarded in accordance with available funding. Mutually beneficial partnerships and collaborative relationships will be forged with other scholars working on the history of higher education and universities.

## Infrastructure

The research project is located in the History Department at the University of the Free State. The University contributes accommodation, utilities, and various administrative services that are necessary for the effective and efficient execution of the work of the project.

## Governance

The project is governed by a national working group, whose members are indicated below.

Name	Institution
Prof Luvuyo Wotshela	University of Fort Hare
Prof Paul Maylam	Rhodes University
Dr Janeke Thumbran	Rhodes University
Dr Bronwyn Strydom	University of Pretoria
Dr Tshepo Moloji	University of Johannesburg
Prof Saleem Badat	University of the Free State

## Finance

The project is financially accountable to the University of the Free State and donors.

UKZN funded the post of the senior researcher at the level of a full professor for three years (2020-2023), and the post is currently funded by the University of the Free State (2023-2028).

The senior researcher will strive to mobilise funds for additional staff, research, fellowships and scholarships from various foundations and donor agencies.

The principles that will guide the resourcing of the Research Project are:

- Mobilising of donor funding, especially for research and training.
- Income generation through commissions and consultancies.
- Effective and efficient discharge of all responsibilities.
- Timely submission of budgets and progress reports for approval by UKZN and donors.
- Financial good governance, effective financial management and administration, and full compliance with South Africa and donor financial regulations.

## References

Abrams, P. (1982) *Historical Sociology*. New York: Cornell University Press

Castells, M. (2001). "Universities as Dynamic Systems of Contradictory Functions", in Müller, J., Cloete, N, & Badat, S. (eds.) - *Challenges of Globalisation: South African Debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman

Gerwel, G.J. (1987) Inaugural Address, 5 June 1987. *Transformation* 4, pp. 76-83.

Keane, J. and Mier, P. (1989) "Preface" in Melucci, A. *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Melucci, A. (1989) *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press

Tosh, J. (1984) *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*. London: Longman

Wolpe, H. (1988) *Race, class and the apartheid state*. London: UNESCO and James Currey