UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
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UFS

RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

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Introduction

Despite universities arising in the 19th century and having a long history in South Africa, scholarly books do not exist on the historical origins and development of most universities in South Africa, including the University of the Free State (UFS). The research goal is to undertake rigorous, critical research on the history of UFS that results in a peer reviewed, Department of Higher Education and Training accredited book.

The Research Project on the History of the University of the Free State (RPHUFS) is important for six reasons. First, it would contribute to the historiography on South Africa in general, and on universities in particular. Second, it would contribute to addressing a lacuna in the literature on 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 like UFS, and how, in what ways, and to what extent colonialism and apartheid shaped, and in turn were shaped by, universities like the UFS. 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 UFS could shed light on contemporary questions, such as the difficulties that it could face in going beyond its inherited legacies and transforming its 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 universities that sets out to deliberately inform policy making. All research on social and economic issues is potentially policy related and relevant, on condition that the research is imaginative and rigorous.

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 purpose of the RPHUFS is to produce a critical institutional history of the origins and development of UFS, the changing nature of institutional conditions and how those have shaped both the possibilities and limits of change at UFS.

Aims of the Research Project

The overall RPHUFS has five 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 UFS that considers its origins in 1910 as Grey University College in Bloemfontein, its status from the mid-1930s as the University College of the Orange Free State, and a constituent college of

the University of South Africa, its subsequent development as the University of the Orange Free State in 1950 when it became an Afrikaans-medium university, and its expansion in 2003 and 2004 when it incorporated the Qwa Qwa campus of the University of the North and the South campus of Vista University respectively
2. To also publish the results of the research in the form of peer-reviewed book chapters and articles.
3. To promote through seminars, workshops and conferences, scholarly engagement on questions of concern to the research project.
4. To promote teaching on the history of the UFS and universities in South Africa more generally.
5. 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.

Aims of the UFS Book

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 UFS.
2. To describe and critically analyse the origins of university education at UFS 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 it.
3. To describe and critically analyse the development of UFS during the segregation period and 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 that shaped it.
4. To describe, critically analyse, and explain the social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions and objects that were attributed to UFS at its origin, and over the course of its historical development.
5. To the extent that UFS's social and educational purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and the objects have 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.

To achieve the above stated aims, it will be necessary to explore some key themes.

Theme	Data
What social structures and conjunctures that shape UFS	Nature of the race, class and gender structure and the ideological, political, economic and social conditions
What place and space dynamics ar related to UFS	Geographic location of UFS and its surrounds and its campus spaces
Contestation and conflict in society and at UFS	Nature of contending ideological, political, economic and social forces and implications for UFS

What are the discourses on why UFS is needed	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students
What are the discourses on what UFS should do	Statements of key actors – political, business, administrators, academics, students
Who attends UFS	Student enrolment and success by race, gender and geography
Who are UFS academics	Academic staff by race, gender and geography an their epistemological, theoretical and methodological orientations
Who are UFS managers and administrators	Management, administration and other support st by race, gender and geography and their ideological and political orientations
Who are UFS governors	Governors by occupations, race, gender and geography and their ideological and political orientations
Who are the financiers of UFS	Funders by occupations, sector (public/private/donor) race, gender and geography and their ideological and political orientations
What is taught at UFS and how	Views of key actors and UFS curricula, academic programmes, fields and disciplines
What is researched at UFS	Views of key actors and questions and issues that are researched at UFS
Which, if any, communities are engaged by UFS	Views of key actors and the extent and nature of community engagement activities
What do UFS symbols embody and express	Names, architecture, crests, icons, names of buildings, gowns/clothing, and rituals that are associated with UFS

Objects of the UFS Book

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

1. Review the secondary literature on the origins, expansion and development of UFS.
2. Survey the relevant South African laws, regulations, law-making, policymaking, and policy documents related to UFS.
3. Examine the official records of UFS on its origins, expansion and development and on its activities related to its core purposes, functions and roles.
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 on UFS.
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 UFS.

The Research Framework for the Book

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.” One’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.

An adequate framework must locate and understand the origins, expansion, and development of UFS 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 UFS at its origins and as it 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, UFS and other social actors requires giving attention simultaneously to human agency and the action of different social actors.

Universities exist in time, space and place. They have specific origins, contours and development trajectories and cultures and are imbued with values, traditions, norms and rituals. They serve particular, if diverse, purposes, pursue a variety of goals and undertake specific, if contradictory and paradoxical, functions, roles and activities that vary at different moments and in different historical contexts. Universities operate “within the framework of possibilities and constraints presented by the institutions of our complex societies” (Keane and Mier, 1989:4). They are shaped by social structure and conjuncture, a distinction that “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). If social structure has to do with relatively long-term, enduring and congealed social relations, conjuncture refers to the more short-term and fluid conditions that actors must navigate and within which they must act. People “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). Analysis of universities ‘must take into account the contradictions, possibilities and constraints of the conjunctural and structural conditions’ (Wolpe and Unterhalter, 1991:1). Universities display both continuities and discontinuities, as they adapt to changing ideological, economic, political and social conditions but through their activities they also contribute to those changing conditions.

Paying attention to the historical conditions under which universities pursue their purposes and goals, undertake their functions and perform their roles means being sensitive to continuities and to discontinuities in conditions. 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). Regarding the political economy of South Africa within which universities originated, expanded and developed, four periods can be roughly identified: the colonial period between 1652 and 1910 associated with early Dutch colonisation and, thereafter, British colonisation after 1806 and the subsequent processes of extermination, conquest and dispossession of indigenous peoples; the period of so-called segregation, between the creation of the exclusively white Union of South Africa in 1910 and the triumph of the Afrikaner National Party in 1948, the apartheid period between 1948 and 1990, and the period after 1990/1994 of liberalization that gave way after a negotiated settlement to democracy in 1994. If these four periods could usefully frame the overall investigation of the historical origins and development of universities in South Africa, research may suggest a different periodization of universities based on significant developments within the sector.

Social structure, conjuncture, institutions, policies and practices condition social action and change initiatives, such as contemporary efforts to transform universities and higher education in South Africa. However, if past and present social relations and institutional arrangements condition social action, they do not constrain change initiatives to the extent that they make change impossible and automatically and uniformly reproduce existing social relations, policies and practices. 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). Of course, individuals are not the only agents; so, and perhaps more important, are collectives such as social groups, social movements, institutions and organisations. Social realities are 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. Social action "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). 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 collective actions and social struggles (Wolpe, 1988:8).

Struggles over social relations are the stuff of politics. Burawoy usefully defines politics as "struggles over or within relations of structured domination, struggles that take as their *objective* the quantitative or qualitative change of those relations." His rider is that we must choose between politics defined as struggles regulated by *specific apparatuses*, politics defined as struggles over *certain relations*, and the combination of the two. In the first, politics would have no fixed objective, and in the second it would have no fixed institutional locus. I have therefore opted for the more restricted third definition, according to which politics refers to struggles within a specific arena aimed at specific sets of relations (Burawoy, 1985:253, 253-54).

The merit of understanding politics in this way is that it "refuses to accept the reduction of politics to state politics and of state politics to the reproduction of class relations." The refusal to conceive of the state only in relation to class relations is because "what is distinctive about the state is its global character, its function as the factor of cohesion for the entire social formation. The state not only guarantees the reproduction of certain relations but, more distinctly, it is the apparatus that guarantees all other apparatuses" (Burawoy, 1985:254). Such an understanding creates space for extending 'politics' to diverse social arenas beyond the state – to education, health, environment and other domains – and recognises the role of the state in reproducing other non-class, yet important, social relations that have to do with, for example, 'race' or gender. In these terms, we can talk of 'university politics' and 'relations in university', just as we can speak of the 'relations of production', the social relations between classes in society. We can conceive of subfields of university politics such as 'curriculum politics' and 'governance politics' and think about politics also in relation to specific social classes and categories such as workers, women, academics and students.

In this view, we can see 'university politics' as characterised by the struggles of constituencies such as scholars and students 'within a specific arena aimed at specific sets of relations.' Since such struggles occur within a particular institutional setting it means that they will be 'regulated' and inevitably structured and shaped by the institutional and organisational features of this setting. This definition of politics is immensely useful, yet is "too restrictive" (Wolpe, 1988:55). Wolpe grants that the structure of a specific sphere "will condition the form and orientate the content of the struggles which occur" but points out that the objectives of struggle may not be confined to social relations in a particular sphere (1988:55). That is to say, the concerns of university scholars and students could extend beyond the university arena and social relations in university education to social relations in the economic and political spheres.

This means that the form and content of university struggles may be influenced not only by conditions in university education (such as a colonial curriculum) but also by conditions in the economic sphere (such as the monopolization of the means of production by whites) and by conditions in the political sphere (such as the absence of human and citizenship rights). Social struggles can undermine, modify and sometimes transform social structures, institutions and practices. The relationship between action and structure must be "understood as a matter of process in time" (Abrams, 1982: xv). Even if collective and individual actions may not immediately and seriously erode or undermine existing structures, institutions, policies and practices, they could weaken them in ways that compel those in power or authority to modify them. In this process, new conditions and a new terrain of contestation and struggle could emerge that could favour or retard the efforts of those social forces that seek change.

The discussion to now in terms of structure and agency has been at a high level of abstraction. At a lower level of abstraction, universities can be considered as institutions and organisations, which are conceived of in different ways, some distinguishing between them, others not. What is an 'institution and an 'institutional' approach to analysing universities? Drawing on several intuitionalist theories on institutions and how they shape individual behaviour, we can say that an institution is

‘socially constructed’ and ‘in some way a structural feature of the society and/or the polity’ (Peters, 2012:149, 19). The structure can be formal (legally established) or informal (a shared set of values or norms). Universities, as formal institutions, are complex “systems of established and embedded social rules that structure social interactions” that are constituted by people, ideas, values, rules, norms, conventions, habits, rituals, policies, processes, procedures and practices (Hodgson, 2006:18). They are “established by binding laws, regulations and legal orders which prescribe what may or may not be done” (Leftwich, 2006:1).

Institutions “are simultaneously both objective structures ‘out there’ and subjective springs of human agency ‘in the human head’”; “actor and institutional structure, although distinct, are thus connected in a circle of mutual interaction and interdependence” (Hodgson, 2006:8). If institutions structure the behaviour of actors, they do not only constrain conduct but also enable behaviour that can result in agency of various kinds. ‘Institutional analysis’ is said to permit us to examine the relationship between political actors as objects and as agents of history. The institutions that are at the centre of historical institutionalists analysis…can shape and constrain political strategies in important ways, but they are themselves also the outcome (conscious or unintended) of deliberate political strategies of political conflicts and of choice (Thelan and Steinmo, 1992:10)

Institutions interact in various ways with other institutions, social, economic and political, “within and between societies, in complementary or conflicting ways” and through these interactions they impact on and may change other institutions as well as themselves (Leftwich, 2006:2).

An institution ‘transcends individuals to involve groups of individuals in some sort of patterned interactions that are predictable’ and characterised by appropriate conduct, though there may be differing degrees of predictability, as, for example, between universities and prisons. Moreover, ‘there should be some sense of shared values and meaning among the members of the institution’, it must have a ‘durability and ability to influence the behavior of individuals for generations’ and display ‘some stability over time’ (Peters, 2012:19-20, 30). At the same time, ‘no institution will be so well developed, not have such an unambiguous logic of appropriateness, that anomalous situations will not arise.’ Instruments are, therefore, needed to deal with violations even though, usually, routines suffice to ensure appropriate conduct (Peters, 2012:31). Institutions interact with and are shaped by other institutions such as the state and government. The choices that they make early in their history in terms of purposes, policies and structures and the ‘institutionalized commitments that grow out of them…determine subsequent decisions’ and affects how ‘policies are processed and the choices which [are] made.’ Institutions are “path dependent”; once they have adopted a ‘path they will persist in that pattern until some significant force intervenes to divert them from that established direction’ (Peters, 2012:20-21).

Normative institutionalism posits a key role for ‘norms and values in organisations in explaining behavior….’ The sociological idea of ‘“mythic” institutionalism argues the importance of organizational myths and stories in defining acceptable behavior of members of organizations.’ This approach rejects the idea of individuals as ‘atomistic’, who ‘are autonomous, utility-maximizing and fully rational’ and calculating individuals driven by personal gain; rather, individuals are ‘embedded in a complex

series of relationships with other individuals and with collectives.' To the extent that an institution has 'a collection of norms, rules, understanding, and perhaps most importantly routines' that are developed to 'implement and enforce values and ensure appropriate conduct, it does not have to rely much on its members' fear of the consequences of not conforming (Peters, 2012:26, 27, 29-30). Routine is 'a stable pattern of behavior' that is changeable and can also become dysfunctional. It may ensure predictability but can lead to inertia. Rules are constitutive, structure overall behaviour and formalize the logic of appropriate conduct (Peters, 2012:33).

However, there will be different interpretation of rules and there is latitude regarding appropriate and acceptable conduct that varies from the army to the church to universities. The degree of homogeneity and uniformity will vary depending on the nature of the institution. Since individuals are involved with multiple institutions, they could have multiple loyalties and may 'have to choose among competing institutional loyalties as they act' (Peters, 2012:26). A distinction is made between aggregative and integrative institutional processes; the former is about individual participation for personal gain, the latter about individual commitment to the goals and values of an institution or organisation. Institutions and organisations have three kinds of power or incentives: 'coercive, remunerative, and normative' and their members have three kinds of involvement: 'alienative, calculative, and moral' (Peters, 2012:26).

Institutions raise various issues: their origins and formation; their "cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior" (Scott, 1995:33) and their institutionalization through habituation, routinization and the like.

A key issue is institutional change. Such change or its lack in universities cannot be explained only in terms of conditions in the wider society. Change is also conditioned by the specific nature of the inherited and changing university terrain itself. Furthermore, change is 'the product of purposeful orientations developed within a field of opportunities and constraints' (Melucci, 1989:25) and of 'cognitive and political praxis' (Eyerman and Jamison, 1991:62). Ideas are critical in shaping institutions and their trajectories. Actors appropriate strategically a world replete with institutions and ideas about institutions. Their perceptions about what is feasible, legitimate, possible and desirable are shaped by both the institutional environment in which they find themselves and existing policy paradigms and worldviews. It is through such cognitive filters that strategic conduct is conceptualised and assessed (Hay and Wincott, 2012:301).

Universities especially are spaces of contestation and competition over ideas, epistemologies, theories, paradigms and the like. Ideas that get traction and support can help ruffle and loosen the state of institutionalization and result in deinstitutionalization and deinstitutionalization.
The ability of actors to bring about change on issues or of areas or the context is conditioned by knowledge as well as access to resources, which are distributed differentially.

The critical question is the "relationship between agents and structures, between institutional architects, institutionalised subjects and institutional environments" (Hay and Wincott, 2012:301). The goals and policies adopted, decisions and trade-offs

made, strategies and instruments implemented, all point to human agency. Different social agents and actors acting in cooperation and/or conflict within universities will necessarily affect the pace, nature and outcomes of institutional change. The modalities of change are diverse: designed and planned change; leadership efforts; arising from learning; a confluence of diverse actions enabled by the institution; crisis; external pressures; discrepancies between professed values and actual practices; disobedience of rules that impede change; nonconformity because members embrace new values). It is suggested that '…change is rarely the rational, planned exercise found in strategic plans but rather tends to be emergent and more organic' (Peters, 2012:37).

Change can differ in content and can be taken to mean processes of 'improvement', 'reform', 'reconstruction', 'development' and 'transformation' in universities. Chisholm has rightly argued that the use of these terms "interchangeably has tended to empty them of specific significance" (2004:12). While processes of change may be related, they differ with respect to the *intent* and *nature* of change (Badat, 2009:456). For example, 'improvement' tends to be associated with limited or minor changes in existing policy, organization or practice. Though these changes may enhance the achievement of specific goals and have an impact of considerable scope, they do not usually involve substantive changes in established policy, practice or organisation. 'Reform' generally refers to more substantial changes and such changes may have considerable impact. They, however, remain circumscribed within existing dominant social relations within higher education and also within the wider social relations in the polity, economy and society. In short, notwithstanding that the changes attempted may be far-reaching, and may unwittingly also create the conditions for more radical changes, it is not their intent to displace prevailing social relations as much as to reproduce these in new ways and forms. In contrast, 'transformation', usually has the intent of the *dissolution* of existing social relations and institutions, policies and practices, and the *recreation* and consolidation into something substantially new. These processes of dissolution and recreation may vary in pace, be uneven, and not uniformly result in a complete rupture or total displacement of old structures, institutions and practices.

A historical institutionalist approach sees change as residing "in the relationship between actors and the context in which they find themselves, between institutional 'architects', institutionalised subjects and institutional environments; more specifically, change occurs in (and through) the *same time* inter-relationship between strategic action and the strategic context within which it is conceived and instantiated, and in the later unfolding of its intended and unintended consequences" (Hay and Wincott, 2012:299). Here, change is considered "*path-dependent*: the order in which things happen affects how they happen; the trajectory of change up to a certain point itself constrains the trajectory after that point; and the strategic choices made at a particular moment eliminate hole ranges of possibilities from later choices while serving as the very condition of existence of others" (Hay and Wincott, 2012:299). 'Strategy' is critical: its analysis must encompass "calculation, action informed by such calculation, the context within which action takes place and the shaping of the perceptions of the context in which strategy is conceived in the first place."

Strategies are ‘selected on the basis of an always partial knowledge of the structures (the institutional context) within which the actors find themselves and the anticipated behaviour of others.” Leaders, individual an, groups “are knowledgeable and reflexive” and “routinely (often intuitively) monitor the consequences of their action” - their impact, outcomes, intended and unintended consequences, the responses of other actors and draw on the vantage point of hindsight (Hay and Wincott, 2012:300). Change is “the consequence (whether intended or unintended) of strategic action (whether intuitive or instrumental), filtered through perceptions (however informed or misinformed) of an institutional context that favours certain strategies, actors and perceptions over others’ (Hay and Wincott, 2012:299-300). Actions result in *direct effects* upon the institutional and institutionalised contexts within which it take place and within which future action occurs - producing a partial transformation of that institutional environment (though not necessarily as anticipated) and altering the course of its temporal unfolding (however marginally)’; *strategic learning* on the part of the actors involved – as they revise their perceptions of what is feasible, possible and indeed desirable in the light of their assessments of their on ability to realise prior goals (and that of others), as they assimilate new ‘information’ (from whatever external sources), and as they reorient future strategies in the light of such “empirical” and mediated knowledge of the context as a structured terrain of opportunity and constraint (Hay and Wincott, 2012:299-300).

Change may be slow, gradual or sudden and rapid, incremental or sweeping and can occur through displacement of structures, rules, policies and practices, the layering of the new on the old, the conversion of the existing into new and through drift from the previous to something different as occurs in cases of convergence and isomorphism (Peters, 2012:83, 134). Layering is similar to the idea of ‘sedimentation’, where new practices are built on the old without old practices entirely displacing the old. Change can be exogenous and triggered by external forces, events and processes and/or endogenous, rooted in internal issues and conflicts, or both. Since institutions encompass ideas, values, norms, laws, policies, regulations, rules, structures, organisation, mechanisms, instruments, processes, procedures, actions, practices, conventions, habits and behaviour, in so far as institutional change at universities is concerned, this directs attention to myriad *issues* and *objects* (provision, governance, financing, curriculum, teaching and learning, equity, etc.) at different *levels* of the institution.

One way to see change at universities is as endeavours at “constructing organisations” (Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersonn 2000; Musselin, 2006:67). In recent decades, such change has been related to “the construction of identity and in particular the strengthening of autonomy: this has been one of the principal mottos of most higher education reforms, leading public authorities to delegate decisions they previously controlled and to incite universities to become less dependent on public funding.” At one level, change here is about “the construction of boundaries”: weakening attachments of academics to disciplines and strengthening institutional connections and loyalties through various mechanisms and “by better defining who is inside and who is outside. At another level, change is about “‘being special’: each university should now reveal its difference, look for differentiation, put forward its specificities and advantages in strategic plans emphasizing their singularities and their ‘distinctiveness’.” The process of ‘constructing organisations’ also “means building a hierarchy.” As universities are encouraged “to develop a common project

with shared priorities, it encourages more coordination as well as more control on individual behaviours in order to keep them coherent with the overall institutional project. This is achieved thanks to a strengthened executive leadership and a reduced influence of deliberative bodies" (Musselin, 2006:67).

The 'construction' of organisations is concomitantly the construction of a certain kind of "rationality (setting objectives, measuring results and allocating responsibility)" and its arrival at universities. If the relative "inability to set objectives was previously described as one of their main feature and specificity – they are now expected to select among their always more numerous…and incompatible goals and to define their specific profile." If differentiation is a rationale for this objective…it is also a way to motivate universities to conform with the schemes of action prevailing in other organisations and to define objectives, set the means necessary to reach them, act, and evaluate the outcomes. This thus tends to rationalise the production process within universities and to promote notions such as responsibility, relevance, accountability etc. (Musselin, 2006:68).

In this new model, "academic leaders are asked to become managers with new competences: academic recognition is supplanted by management skills." However, this development cannot be assumed to have impacted on and changed universities fundamentally; "in all organisations, implementing change is challenging and encounters resistance." Moreover,
'some specific characteristics of universities further complicate the change" that may be sought (Musselin, 2006:68).

Universities do not possess a "unitary character" (Melucci, 1989:18); instead, they are loosely coupled entities (Weick, 1976.) This gels with discursive institutionalists who, unlike normative institutionalists "do not focus on a single dominant state of values within an institution, but rather assume that there will be multiple discourses that interact and compete for dominance within the institution" (Peters and Pierre 2012:vii). Musselin elaborates that "functional loose coupling refers to the low level of cooperation and coordination required by teaching and research activities" within universities. She observes that "in few other work places, if any, is it as frequent to ignore what colleagues seated next door are doing and observe so little influence of the activities of those colleagues on one's own tasks. For instance, academics know very little about what is taught by their colleagues in the curricula in which they are involved: thus it has little influence in the preparation of their own teaching." There is no or little collaboration in teaching or research in many disciplines, "team work is rare and when it exists…it is limited to small groups…More frequent and more developed cooperation generally occurs with groups/individuals in other universities, within national or international networks." The "lack of multi-disciplinarity" reveals that cooperation "between entities belonging to different disciplines or located in different department and faculties is not frequent or consistent.

Such a state is in part the result of the historical "nature of teaching and research activities" which are like 'craft' activities; but it is "also socially constructed, i.e. reinforced by academics themselves. They do all they can to keep cooperation and coordination among them to a minimum thanks to three main strategies." One is that "they coordinate only when it cannot be avoided"; even if compelled to collaborate, tactics are deployed that "limits collective work to a minimum; another is reluctance

“to provide detailed information about the content of one’s activity” and a third is to supposedly “respect others’ autonomy (intimacy), i.e. not to look at or to discuss course content, not to interfere with research programmes, etc.” Moreover, minimal collaboration is “facilitated by the diversification of resources. The less faculty members are dependant on the resources provided by their institution, the less cooperative they can be and the less obliged they are to get involved in the internal ‘political’ games for resources” (Musselin, 2006:69). ‘Loose coupling’ complicates change: it can impede the generalisation of change to all parts of a university.

Beyond being loosely coupled institutions, another characteristic of universities is that “teaching and research are rather unclear technologies. This partly results from the capacity of academics to resist and argue against rationalisation attempts but is also linked to the intrinsic nature of such activities.” Teaching and learning and research “are simply difficult to describe” and have been insufficiently studied. Since “they are not described, they can hardly be prescribed.” Moreover, “because teaching and research are difficult to describe and difficult to prescribe, they are also difficult to reproduce” (Musselin, 2006:71). The nature of academic work conditions university governance and, therefore processes of change. It also “affects the efficiency of the tools that may be used to transform universities as well as the exercise of leadership in higher education institutions.” On the one hand, “it weakens the possibility to use formal structures as a lever to reinforce coordination and cooperation”; on the other hand, “it modifies the exercise of leadership and the management of change within universities” (Musselin, 2006:71). Whereas businesses are apt to be hierarchies, universities tend to be holyarchies in that their core constituent academic entities usually possess substantial autonomy by virtue of the principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy that percolate into the everyday functioning of universities. Such an understanding lends itself to more multi-dimensional and nuanced analysis and has implications for how change occurs in universities.

Institutions have features of organisations in that they deploy “(a) criteria to establish their boundaries and to distinguish their members from non-members”, (b) principles of sovereignty concerning who is in charge, and (c) chains of command delineating responsibilities within the organization” (Hodgson, 2006:18). For Musselin, universities are “specific organisations” that possess “organisational particularities.” If universities “possess organisational characteristics that distinguish them from many other organisations”, what are these characteristics (Musselin, 2006:76, 63). The notion of the ‘collegial model’ suggests that “universities are characterized by the influence of specific values.” It assumes “the existence of an academic (scientific) community sharing the same norms and values and therefore able to come to consensual decision-making and to overcome individualistic and private antagonisms” For Burton Clark “collegiality does not only refer to the academic professional norms and values, but more broadly to those shared by all the actors involved in the same institutional community – faculty members of course, but also administrators, students, trustees, etc. – and linked by the saga of its institution, its foundation and its history” (Musselin, 2006:64; Clark, 1971, 1972). This “consensual values-based vision of universities was strongly contested” by those “who stressed the political nature of decision processes and concluded that neither academic nor institutional values were able to reduce the diverging interests at hand.” Here, “universities are filled with conflicts and power relationships that are to be taken into

account in order to understand the negotiation and political exchanges that structure decision-making."

A third idea of universities is as "a decentralized type of bureaucracy, and more so for the organization of teaching than for research". Universities are conceived of "as places where 'bureaucratic' features and rational logics are also to be found" - universities defined as "professional bureaucracies". A fourth idea is of universities as 'organized anarchies; "organisations characterized by multiple goals, unclear technology and fluid participation." A "specific model of decision-making" is said to be associated with 'organised anarchies': "the garbage can model. It refers to cases where decision-making results from the independent intersection of four 'streams': participants, problems, choice opportunities and solutions." Here, "solutions are neither optimal nor satisfying because they often are disconnected from the problems to be solved, the linear process leading from problems to solutions becomes an exception (solutions may exist before problems)" (Musselin, 2006:64). Empirical research suggests that there could be "different decision-making processes within one single university", depending on "the domain under study (funding, teaching, research, etc)". It means that "the specificity of universities [is] to shelter different models of decision-making." Moreover, "collegiality and bureaucracy [could be] two successive stages experienced by universities before they shifted more recently to the corporation and to the entrepreneurial models." However, there is increasingly "a denial of the specificity of the universities" and a concomitant importation of business models into universities (Musselin, 2006:64).

One way to approach the origins and historical development of UFS is to think about its *ends* – its purposes, functions, roles and associated goals and objects. In considering these matters, we must avoid three traps. One is *essentialism*, which is to accord unvarying purposes, functions, goals and roles to universities across time, place and space. There are many differing conceptions and models of universities and they have changed over time. The "name 'university' now applies to institutions with widely different functions and characters" (Graham, 2005:157). However, though universities may indeed have "widely different functions and characters", they possess core characteristics and qualities that differentiate them from other institutions, such as schools and hospitals. To imagine that we can apply the term 'university' to any kind of institution is to succumb to the trap of *relativism*. The final trap is that of *universalism*, the idea that universities everywhere must be identical to or replicas, mimics and clones of modern European universities. This way of thinking abstracts universities from place and space. Universalism also masks a problematic Eurocentrism, which in terms of epistemology, ontology and ideology has underpinned and legitimized European domination and European knowledge with its "colonial epistemic monoculture" (Santos, 2007:xxxii).

European epistemology took it upon itself to stipulate what was knowledge and how it was produced. It proclaimed that its "scientific truths" were universal and "valid across all of time and space" (Wallerstein, 1997:95). This universalism extended to the idea that 'progress' and 'development' in Europe "represented a pattern that was applicable everywhere" (Wallerstein, 1997:95-6). Eurocentrism was "constitutive of the geoculture of the modern world," and powerfully shaped "science and knowledge in universities everywhere" (Wallerstein, 1997:95). Edward Said's seminal contribution was to demonstrate how European claims to normative universality

function to simultaneously erase its particularity, “how this claim is sustained through the exercise of material power in the world” and “the ways in which relations of power underpin both knowledge and the possibilities of its production” (Bhambra, 2014:120). For Said, Eurocentrism impeded human understanding because its misleadingly skewed historiography, the parochiality of its universalism, its unexamined assumptions about Western civilization, its Orientalism, and its attempt to impose a uniformly directed theory of progress all end up reducing, rather than expanding, the possibility of catholic inclusiveness, of genuine cosmopolitan or internationalist perspective, of intellectual curiosity (2004:53).

It is important to distinguish conceptually between institutional *purposes*, *functions*, *roles*, *goals* and *objects*, distinctions that in discussions of the activities of universities are often either not made or are conflated or blurred. Concomitantly, it must be recognised that at different moments and to differing degrees there is for good reasons contestation and conflict around the purposes, functions, goals and roles of universities among social actors within and beyond universities.
While there could be general agreement on the fundamental purposes of universities, this cannot be assumed. The priority and emphasis one may give to a specific purpose may be an issue of conflict. Social actors regularly differ on and dispute the functions, roles and goals of universities and deploy various means to define those in accordance with their social interests.

To speak of the *purposes* of universities, is to inquire into their origins, when, how and why they were created. What intentions underlay their coming into existence? Moreover, why do universities continue to exist? What fundamental values and principles have come to underpin universities? What core idea do societies (social classes groups, strata and individuals) have of universities? Why have societies and states valued and supported, and continue to value and support, universities? Concomitantly, what expectations of universities do societies and states have and do universities have of themselves?

Turning to *functions,* these arise from and relate to the purposes of institutions. To talk of the functions of universities is to allude to the key day-to-day activities of universities: teaching and learning, scholarship and research undertaken by scholars, researchers and students supported by a wide variety of support staff who range from administrative leaders and managers to grounds staff and cleaners. For educational, social or financial reasons the core activities may be, and increasingly are, undertaken alongside other activities such as community engagement/service-learning, contractual and consultancy work for businesses and other institutions, rental of facilities and various other activities – activities that may not always be entirely complementary to the purposes and core functions of universities.

The *roles* performed by universities are the responsibilities, tasks and pursuits that universities define for themselves or that external social actors, including states, define for them. These roles are usually intrinsic to and give effect to their purposes functions, goals and objectives but are shaped also by given historical conditions. Universities could undertake myriad functions and roles; whether they are all desirable and justified are moot points. Some functions and roles could be undertaken willingly and voluntarily; others could be performed “under coercion or irresistible temptation” (Weinstein, 1975: 409-10). At times, there could be

considerable controversy and contestation about the functions and roles that universities undertake.

Purposes, as the ultimate and overall ends of institutions, and the functions undertaken by institutions inform and shape institutional *goals* - the results and outcomes that are desired educationally and socially and whose attainment provides a sense of accomplishment. Universities often have numerous and diverse goals, both of an educational and social nature, that they usually prominently explicate in mission statements. While universities may share the goals that they define for themselves or that others stipulate for them in common with other universities, goals could be, and often are, used to distinguish and differentiate universities from one another.

Universities tend also to have *objectives* related to their goals but which are more specific in nature. There is generally more scope on the part of relevant actors to define, review and redefine the goals and objectives of universities as opposed to their purposes, which are more circumscribed. Goals and objectives are today key features of institutional strategic planning exercises, including institutional planning, academic planning, enrolment planning, staff planning and infrastructure planning, their associated targets, budget allocations, the measures and indicators formulated to assess performance and success and of reviews of institutional performance.

Finally, the *objects* of universities are the things and persons on which universities focus and at which or towards whom they direct their actions. The objects are constituted by their purposes, functions, goals and roles; the societies within which they operate; the wider higher education and education terrains of which they part, the individuals and social groups that inhabit universities and the key internal and external actors that shape universities.

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 critically with Castells’ ideas regarding the functions of UFS over time.

Questions for Research for the UFS Book

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

Empirical Questions

1. When did UFS originate in South Africa?
2. What was the nature of the conditions (political, economic, social, intellectual, etc.) under which UFS originated, expanded, and developed?
3. Which social classes, strata, and groups, and institutional actors were involved in promoting the establishment of UFS, and why?
4. Was there contestation around founding of UFS? 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 UFS take the form of a public university, as opposed to an independent or private university?
7. What social and education purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects were conferred on UFS originally, and as it expanded and developed?
8. What social and education purposes, goals and objectives, roles and functions, and objects was pursued by UFS? How and why did these change over time?
9. What major crises, controversies, and flashpoints occurred at UFS?

Analytical Questions

1. What theoretical framework can help guide the investigation of the origins, expansion, and development of UFS?
   - 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 based on changing ideological, political, economic, and intellectual conditions?
3. What were the principal determinants of the establishment of UFS?
4. How are the origins, expansion, and development of UFS to be explained?
5. Were there, and what were, the intersections between the debates on UFS, 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 at UFS changed over time, and over specific periods?
7. What key propositions can be advanced with respect to structure and agency in the establishment of UFS, 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?

Preliminary structure and outline of the Book

Below is a proposed general structure and outline of the UFS book. Provision is made in each section of the book for additional chapters that may explore in greater detail specific themes or additional complementary issues – institutional culture, student culture, teaching and learning, research, place and space, 'race', gender, fields (the humanities, sciences, etc.), disciplines (History, Anthropology, Physics, etc.). This will depend on who can be drawn into the project and what their interests are.

Acknowledgments

Foreword

Introduction

Chapter Historicizing the University of the Free State (Saleem Badat).

Section One

Chapter The origins of colonial higher education in the Orange Free State: From Grey College to Grey University College, 1855-1910 (name?)

Colonial social structure and conjuncture; dynamics of place and space; contestation and conflict in society and at the College regarding purposes, functions, roles, roles, goal and objects; discourses on why there is a need for a college, what it is for and for whom; who attends, teaches and undertakes research (social composition, size and shape); what is taught and researched and which communities are engaged; who governs, manages and administers the College; and how; who finances the College and how; what is the institutional culture; name of the College, names of buildings, crests, symbols, logos, regalia, rituals, etc.; what key challenges, crises, contradictions and reform; reproduction and change.

Chapter ? (name?)

Section Two

Chapter Union to apartheid: The origins and development of a racially segregated university - the University College of the Orange Free State, 1910-1948 (name?)

Segregation social structure and conjuncture; dynamics of changing place and space; contestation and conflict in society and at the University College regarding purposes, functions, roles, roles, goal and objects; discourses on why there is a need for a college, what it is for and for whom; who attends, teaches and undertakes research (social composition, size and shape); what is taught and researched and which communities are engaged and how; who governs, manages and administers the College and how; who finances the College and how; what

institutional culture; name of the College, names of buildings, crests, symbols, logos, regalia, rituals, etc.; what key challenges, crises, contradictions and reform; reproduction and change.

Chapter ? (name?)

Section Three

Chapter The making of an apartheid Afrikaans-medium university – the University of the Orange Free State 1948 -1994 (name?)

Apartheid social structure and conjuncture; dynamics of changing place and space; contestation and conflict in society and at the University regarding purposes, functions, roles, roles, goal and objects; discourses on why there is a need for a college, what it is for and for whom; who attends, teaches and undertakes research (social composition, size and shape); what is taught and researched and which communities are engaged; who governs, manages and administers the University and how ; who finances the University and how; what institutional culture; name of the University, names of buildings, crests, symbols, logos, regalia, rituals, etc.; what key challenges, crises, contradictions and reform; reproduction and change.

Chapter ? (name?)

Chapter ? (name?)

Section Four

Chapter The UFS in a democracy – the challenge of change, 1994-2027 (name?)

Post-1994 social structure and conjuncture; dynamics of changing place and space; contestation and conflict in society and at the University regarding purposes, functions, roles, roles, goal and objects; discourses on what the university is for and for whom; who attends, teaches and undertakes research (social composition, size and shape); what is taught and researched and which communities are engaged; who governs, manages and administers the University ; who finances; what institutional culture; name of the University, names of buildings, crests, symbols, logos, regalia, rituals, etc.; what key challenges, crises, contradictions and reform; reproduction and change.

Chapter ? (name?)

Chapter ? (name?)

Chapter ? (name?)

Conclusion UFS Quo vadis (Saleem and others?)

Conclusions – looking in the rear-view mirror and reflections on the present and the possible futures.

Bibliography

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Implementation and Work Plan

Activity	Dates	Responsible
Development of proposal	October – November 202	Saleem
Responses to proposal	2 February 2024	UFS History colleagues
Constitute team	February 2024	Saleem
Contact possible contributing scholars	April 2024	Saleem/ Contract Researche
Announce project within UFS and make public call	April 2024	Saleem/Contract Researche Nicole
Seminar on proposed book	13 or 14 May 2024	Saleem/Contract Researche Nicole
Meeting of potential contributors	June 2024	Saleem/Contract Researche Nicole
Documentary research and note-taking	May 2024 - July 2024	Contract Researcher et al
Archival research and note-taking	August – December 2024	Contract Researcher et al
Research, note-taking and writing	January – December 202	Contract Researcher et al
Research, note-taking and writing	January – June 2026	Contract Researcher et al
Writing of the first draft	July 2026 – December 2026	Saleem/Contract Researcher/et al
Writing for final copy of book	January 2027 – June 202	Saleem/Contract Researcher/et al
Submission for publication	July 2027	Saleem
Copy editing	August 2027 – Novembe 2027	Publisher
Publication	Early 2028	Publisher
Book launch	Early 2028	UFS History

Readership

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.

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. The research project will endeavour (finances permitting) to provide opportunities to early career scholars, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students under the mentorship and supervision of the senior researcher and affiliated scholars.

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

Available History department staff and funding enables the constitution of a research team that comprises:
- A senior researcher who will co-ordinate the work of the research project (Saleem Badat)
- Other senior researchers (?)
- Researchers (?)

Other scholars will be invited to contribute.

Postdoctoral fellowships and postgraduate scholarships could be awarded, depending on available funding.

Infrastructure

The research project is located in the History department at the University of the Free State. The department will contribute accommodation, basic utilities and services of an

administrative nature that are necessary for the effective and efficient execution of the work of the project.

Governance

The History department will govern the project and meet as needed to chart the project and discuss its progress. The coordinating senior researcher will report to the head of the UFS department of History.

Finance

To date, UFS has pledged R900 000. Attempts will be made to mobilise additional funds to support research. The project will be financially accountable to the University and donors.

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