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The contradictory conceptions of research in Historically Black Universities

Abstract

Research is conceptualised in multiple and contradictory ways within and across Historically Black Universities (HBUs) with consequences for knowledge production. Under the apartheid regime, research was deliberately underdeveloped in such institutions and this continues to have an impact. We argue that if HBUs are to move from the constraints of the past into the possibilities of the future, there is a need for a thorough understanding both of how research is currently conceptualised, and of the consequences of such conceptions for research output. We used a critical discourse analysis of interviews, documents and survey data from seven HBUs to identify the dominant discourses about the purposes of research. The findings are four dominant conceptions of research that sometimes contradict each other across and within the HBUs. These are research as integral to academic identity; research for social justice; research as an economic driver and research as an instrumentalist requirement for job security, promotion and incentives. These conceptions seemed to emerge in part because of the history of the institutions and create both constraining and enabling effects on research production.

Keywords: *research, Historically Black Universities, academic identity, discourse analysis*

1. Introduction

Research has long been central to the role of a university as a space of knowledge production (see for example Castells, 2001; Leathwood & Read, 2013; Imenda, 2006; Badat, 2009). However, this focus on the research role of the university has never been as central as it is today in the so called 'knowledge economy' when universities are seen as playing a pivotal role in the provision of a skilled labour force for innovation and technology. In Historically Black Universities (HBUs)¹ in South Africa, there have been deliberations around the extent to which research should be a central part of their profile because historically research was not one of their core functions. This article argues that if HBUs are to nurture research output as a key function, they need to make sense of how research is currently conceptualised by those working within such universities.

2. HBU as institutional type

Institutional differentiation is generally seen to be a positive characteristic in a nation's higher education landscape (Singh, 2014) because having varied types of institution allows for a spectrum of knowledge specialisation, broader access to higher education, and enhanced articulation (Cloete, Maassen & Bailey, 2015). In South Africa, the university sector has developed such a differentiation of type with traditional universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology. However, history continues to plague a different kind of institutional differentiation with real effects across the sector.

The Extension of University Education Act, introduced in 1959 by the governing National Party, laid the foundation for the establishment of the HBUs. The main reason behind the establishment of HBUs by apartheid government was to train manpower to meet the needs of the black population and to service the apartheid administrative structures and thereby to maintain the political agenda of racial division (Bunting, 2002).

Ten HBUs were established which were classified into three broad groups based on geographical location and the ethnic population they were designed to serve (Education Policy Unit, University of Western Cape, 1997). The first group comprised six rural universities: University of Zululand; a campus of the University of the North, established in QwaQwa; the University of Fort Hare (that existed prior to apartheid but was then designated for the Xhosa population), which became the homeland institution for Ciskei (Subotzky, 1997; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013); and three universities found within "independent homelands"² – University of Transkei; University of Bophuthatswana, and University of Venda (Subotzky, 1997; DHET, 2013).

The second group comprised two urban universities, University of the Western Cape for 'Coloured' people, situated in Cape Town, and the University of Durban-Westville for 'Indians' in KwaZulu Natal.

The last group comprised two specialist institutions, the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) which was established in response to demand for medical care for the black population, and Vista University, which was established to offer teacher education through seven satellite campuses across the country (Subotzky, 1997; DHET, 2013).

There were also a number of Technikons developed under apartheid to provide vocational education for different racial and ethnic groups. This institutional type was not encouraged to undertake research, regardless of which racial group the institution was serving (Boughey, 2010).

During apartheid, the ten universities mentioned above were all discriminated against in terms of funding, networking opportunities, and autonomy, especially in regards to restrictions placed on research and postgraduate production (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012; Bunting, 2002). In the post-apartheid era, through a series of state-legislated institutional mergers from 2002, some of these institutions changed their compositions and names.

Out of the ten HBUs established during apartheid only six exist today in that identifiable form: University of Zululand, University of Venda, University of Limpopo, University of Fort Hare, Walter Sisulu University (formerly University of Transkei), and the University of the Western Cape. To this, we can add Mangosuthu University of Technology, the only Technikon that remained as a Historically Black Institution after the formation of Universities of Technology.

See Table below (DHET, 2013) for an overview of these seven institutions, classified as HBUs, which form the study sites for this paper.

Table 1: Historically black universities: Geographical location and dates of establishment

Institution	Location	Date established
Walter Sisulu University of Science and Technology	Eastern Cape with campuses in Mthatha, Butterworth, East London and Queenstown	2005
University of Limpopo	Limpopo	2005
University of Fort Hare	Eastern Cape with campuses in Alice, Bhisho and East London	1916
University of Zululand	Northern KwaZulu-Natal	1960
University of Venda for Science and Technology	Limpopo	1982
University of the Western Cape	Western Cape	1960
Mangosuthu University of Technology	KwaZulu-Natal	1979

The ideology of the apartheid government framed the intellectual agenda of these institutions. Few academics employed by these institutions believed it necessary to introduce research in these institutions and indeed the national structures made it very difficult for them to do so (Bunting, 2002). The limited funding provided to HBUs under apartheid, and the requirement to spend such funding entirely within each financial year on nationally approved budgets, greatly limited capacity in ways that remain evident today.

The current funding formula does not distinguish between universities, though it does provide a small redress line item to HBUs. That we have one 'flat' funding formula skewed to reward postgraduate education, research output, and science and technology fields, areas in which the HBUs were intentionally poorly developed (Subotzky, 1997), means that HBUs continue to be disadvantaged in the current system (Moyo, 2018).

These institutions were largely established in remote rural areas in the former homelands or in semi-urban areas to serve the black population who lived there. The geographical locations have an impact on the social life of those working and studying within them by contributing to apartheid legislated segregation (Subotzky, 1997). Post 1994, this continues to impact on research production in significant ways, including that these institutions are less likely to attract highly qualified academic staff, that these are rarely students' first choice of university, and that it is difficult for such institutions to readily forge strong research networks with advantaged institutions in urban areas (Bozalek & Boughey, 2012).

3. Methodology

This study forms part of a larger project which brings together seven PhD studies that each consider the implications of institutional differentiation on a particular core function of universities³. Muthama's study focuses on the core function of research and in this paper we

argue that identifying the discursive conceptions of research is key to increasing engagement with research. We use critical discourse analysis to establish how research is conceptualised by academics and heads of research in HBUs. Discourses are understood to be:

...systematically organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say (and by extension – what it is possible to do or not to do) with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally (Kress, 1989:7).

We thus understand discourses to have effects in the world. We draw in particular on Fairclough's (2005) conception of discourse which uses a realist ontology (Bhaskar, 1993) to argue that discourses are mechanisms that have causal powers to enable and constrain how we think, talk or act and which thereby contribute to the emergence of events in the world and to the experiences of such events. In realist terms, mechanisms are defined as causal explanations or internal dynamics (Archer, 1996, 2015). Events and experiences, such as the production of research in HBUs, emerge from multiple mechanisms, which include but are not limited to, discourses. In any social context there will inevitably be multiple discourses interacting with each other in complementary or contradictory ways (Archer, 1995), and these in turn will interact with mechanisms of other orders, such as social structures and the agency of individuals. For example, the discourses identified in this study may have effects on how research is valued and undertaken in HBUs, but these will intersect with issues such as institutional policies and leadership, the national funding formula and so on. An analysis of discourses alone cannot fully explain the events and experiences we may observe, but attaining an understanding of the effects of discourses is central to social change (Archer, 1995). It is with this understanding that discourses have real effects in the world that we sought to identify the discourses by which those working in HBUs construct the concept of research.

Before collecting the data, ethical clearance was sought from the institution where the larger PhD study is lodged and then from each of the seven institutions where data was collected. After gaining such clearance, an online questionnaire was sent through the Heads of Research to academics in these institutions. One hundred and fourteen respondents completed the questionnaire online and all seven institutions were represented. The questionnaire was anonymous and we assured participants that any data used would reveal neither their own identity nor the identity of their specific institution.

The last item in the questionnaire requested that those respondents willing to be interviewed submit their contact details. In total 53 out of the 114 participants who completed the questionnaires provided their contact details in the questionnaire. In the end, it was possible to interview 40 of these participants. These 40 interview participants represent all seven institutions and comprise both academics from different faculties and senior managers responsible for Research (DVC: Research, Directors of Research, Senior Research Manager and so on). Data quotes used from the interviews do not reveal the individual participants' identities or their employing institutions and they are cited as AC 1 to AC 34 (for academics) or as HoR 1 to HoR 6 (for Heads of Research).

Thirty-six documents were also analysed such as mission and vision statements, research policies, annual strategic reports, university audit reports and annual research reports. Where data quotes from such documents are used, they are referenced to the specific institution because they are all in the public domain and readily identifiable.

In the next section, we present the dominant discursive constructions of research that emerged from our data. These are research as integral to academic identity; research as means of social justice; research as an economic driver; and research as an instrumentalist requirement.

4. Research as integral to academic identity

The discursive understanding that undertaking research is central to being an academic is dominant in the literature (for example Henkel, 2000, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001). This discourse understands research as being fundamentally entwined with and as driving the practices of academic staff. For example, one academic said, "I am very much involved in research and I want to believe that as an academic staff you *must* be engaged in research" (AC 5). Henkel argues that in traditional universities an academic's identity emerges from their affiliation to a disciplinary home and commitment to knowledge production, more than it does from the particular institution in which he or she works (2000, 2005). This was echoed in some of the data.

What is an academic or who is an academic? The definition of academic: you try to produce research, disseminate knowledge and also question knowledge that is in existence and you cannot do all these things without doing research. Teaching is there to disseminate knowledge but you also have to produce new knowledge, which you are disseminating. So you cannot disseminate something that you are not producing. You cannot be a kind of consumer if I may use that word. You also have to take part in development of new knowledge and disseminating it. (AC 4)

I do see that research is where you generate new ideas and again you cannot actually impart knowledge to students if you tell them things that you actually do not investigate. So it forms a fundamental framework of developing new ideas and passing those new ideas and knowledge to students. (AC 6)

A similar discourse about academic identity in research can be seen in the way the following academic expresses concern about not embodying a research identity.

To me actually there is very little time that is left to do individual research. So as an academic and a researcher at the same time, there is need to create time, and also to find resources to do the research. This is where we have some challenges and ...this is the dilemma that I have. (AC 16)

For these academics, the value of being an active researcher was not just about disseminating knowledge but participating in the production of new knowledge. There was also an understanding among some of these academics that those who do not do research are not "proper" academics.

The academics above are using their agency to draw on the discourse that to be academic you have to do research and that research is key to academic identity. Twenty-one out of the forty interview participants in the study drew on this discourse in some way. The skewed nature of the data cautions us against reaching any quantitative generalisations because those who are actively doing research are presumably more likely to participate voluntarily in a study about research. Furthermore, the literature on research identities suggests that this would be the dominant discourse evidenced across all the data (Henkel, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Waitere *et al.*, 2011), but this was not the case in this study. It would seem that the discursive construction of research as integral to academic identity, while drawn upon

frequently in the data, was not as overwhelmingly dominant as it is in historically advantaged universities (McKenna & Boughey, 2014). The history and nature of the HBUs seems to be constraining some academics and heads of research from drawing on this discourse.

While many of the academics interviewed used their agency to situate themselves as being 'proper' academics because they do research, there was also frequent mention of the ways in which various structures pertaining to the institutional context constrain their ability to take up this identity. For example, some participants explained that although they saw research as central, they felt they were constrained by heavy teaching loads, insufficient funding and "poor quality students".

Many of us feel that our teaching load is too heavy to allow us to do research. (AC 2)

When I got here I realised that, for example, time allocations and teaching allocations... all have hugely explicit teaching requirements, and they are largely non-negotiable... I think we are employed primarily as educators rather than as researchers. (AC 7)

...the challenge is the huge teaching work load, we have to do research but we also have huge classes with over 200 students sometimes, so you are marking, and the administration and we have to do community work engagement... (AC 9)

In terms of funding... sometimes you won't attract very good students because the issue is that you don't have competitive bursaries... So there can be a lot of dropouts, not being able to conduct research just because there is not enough funding. (HoR-1)

In contrast to this discursive construction of research as being integral to the identity of an academic, there was also ample evidence that for some it was not a major aspect of their work. For example, one of the academics remarked:

Not everyone appears to understand the value of research, so if someone doesn't understand the value of research, they probably won't take part in the research. (AC 14)

Boughey and McKenna's study of how HBUs represented themselves in documentation (2011) found that academics in these institutions often suffered from low morale and they raised concerns about weak academic identities. This was echoed in some of the data:

So ... some have gone more to research and some into re-curriculum. [But others] are happy to just be told: 'This is the new curriculum, this is what you have to do'. (AC 9)

A number of the academics mentioned that research was not central to their work and that they tied their identities more to teaching than research. For example, two of the academics said:

I think, first and foremost I am a teacher and then a researcher. (AC 2)

You have to be a lecturer because that is the first and the foremost reason you are an academic. (AC 23)

While this is not a comparative study, it is worth noting that the extent to which the discourse of 'research as integral to academic identity' was drawn upon differed notably between the seven institutions. The Head of Research in one institution said: "Very few in general academics have been really engaging in research" (HoR 1). Another Head of Research in a different institution commented:

I could also say that some academics are not really, really committed. And that's a constraint. It's difficult to work on the people's mind-set, because even this constraint of big numbers, one has to find ways of conducting research. (HoR 4)

5. Research for social justice

The second discursive construction of research in the data was research as a public good with a social justice perspective, whereby research is understood as addressing the problems of society and ultimately contributing to the betterment of society (O'Donoghue, 2014). Research in this construction was understood in terms of producing useful and relevant knowledge to address the problems of local and broader communities as opposed to producing blue-sky knowledge or more theoretically focused research.

Research plays a pivotal role in developing communities and finding solutions for various challenges. It is important that we encourage our academics to undertake research continuously to address challenges faced by our country. (Annual Research Report 2014, University of Limpopo)

It is of no use doing research for the sake of doing research. It must impact the teaching; it must impact on society. (AC 9)

Many of the participants in this study are involved in community based research projects that focus on improved access to basic services, better access to water, more equitable legal representation, and so on. Academics listed many examples of such research projects in the survey data, citing the rural positioning of the university within specific communities as important.

So for instance, we're looking at sustainable livelihoods and the role of entrepreneurship, assisting particularly women and youths. So that's the kind of research that where we know that it's a challenge that is happening in the community, and if we find a solution to that, we're not only making theoretical contributions but also finding practical lived solutions to challenges that are in our context. (AC 14)

Through research output, we advance knowledge production with the aim of improving the lives of people and our environment. (HoR 3)

...we've got a lot of rural areas surrounding our university, and the question is, the ground through which these rural communities can benefit and find solutions to their problems, happens is the universities that are located near them. So that's the kind of stuff I would advocate. (AC 14)

The tying of research to social responsibility was thus explicitly stated in reference to the geographical positioning of these universities. Linked to this discourse, that research should serve the public, was the issue of knowledge dissemination. Researchers in some institutions understood this as going beyond communicating research within the discipline through traditional academic publications and included a focus on knowledge production that informs the public sphere.

Academics have a responsibility to announce research results by way of presentations at national and international conferences and/or by way of publication in journals as well as in popular publications. (Research Policy 2008, Mangosuthu University of Technology)

Some institutions had various structures for disseminating research knowledge to communities beyond academia, such as collaborations with local and government departments, community partnership agreements and so on. Given the extent to which the rural positioning of HBUs has been acknowledged to constrain research engagement (Cooper, 2015; Bozalek & Boughey, 2012), this is an important discourse with which to engage. This discourse suggests that engaged research is significant to the research identities of those working in HBUs and furthermore that such research has the potential to have a major impact on social development in the country. It was also evident that there is scope for better national support for this research, and for it to be more carefully conceptualised and celebrated at a system level, as many participants commented on the ad hoc nature of such initiatives.

6. Research as an economic driver

Alongside these discourses of research as central to the academic identity and research as a social justice imperative, there was a discourse in the data that research is tied to economic imperatives. This is perhaps unsurprising given that this discourse permeates national policy documents (Department of Education, 1997; DHET, 2013; Department of Science and Technology, 2008), which make clear that universities are expected to produce knowledge and develop graduates that contribute to economic growth.

We as academics assist and contribute to the economy of our societies through knowledge production building, through capacity and skill building. That for me is very important. How we do that is through our research. (AC 9)

Higher education literature argues broadly that the global knowledge economy requires a strong university sector to produce highly skilled and knowledgeable workers, especially at doctoral level who can produce globally competitive knowledge for innovation (Castells, 1994; Powell & Snellman, 2004; Sorlini & Vessuri, 2007).

...I think there is now a slow kind of inclination towards what I can term as an innovative way of doing research, rather than just to say, okay, we want to just prove this is related to this, this is whatever, then you're confirming what another country, can confirm it to South Africa, but there is like...people are now aspiring to be quite innovative (HoR 1).

The Vice Chancellor of University of Venda, Professor Mbatlana, draws on the same discourse of research as an economic driver when he makes the following comment in the foreword of 2012-2016 Institutional Strategic Plan.

The quality and profile of our graduates must be continuously monitored to be in sync with the national skills development plan and with the realities of a developmental state that has taken a conscious decision to move from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

In 2007, the government launched a ten-year innovation plan to help South Africa's transformation towards a knowledge-based economy. Part of this plan involved highlighting the role played by science and technology in driving growth and development of the country. This discourse was strongly evident in the data:

I think what we need more is more work on developing emerging researchers, particularly in key clusters of the economy: science, engineering and technology (AC 14).

While many of the academics drew on the discourse of research as an economic driver to articulate their understanding of research, they also saw economic drivers as potentially constraining research:

It is good because more output is like more knowledge is being produced. And more innovation, like new ideas are coming to the market, the solutions to the problems that we are facing, you know, social economy problems that the country is facing, the world is facing, they can be resolved, ... But the bad part is that, for instance, so if it is not really monitored very well, sometimes you'll find that just the same output might not be sufficient because the quality might end up being compromised. Because people are competing for more and because of the incentives that you find that HBIs like they offer like researchers, that can encourage, but that is where you see a trade-off. ...some of academics when they are starting they start off by publishing in... predatory journals that are just like after money, they are not really following the peer review processes. ... So, in a way that kind of competition, that kind of pressure could also put like academics in a tight fit where it compromises the quality now also of the output... (HoR 1)

Such concerns are evident in the literature too (for example Frick, McKenna and Muthama, 2017). What was apparent was that the discourse of research as an economic driver is in tension with some of the other discursive framings in ways that can be difficult for academics to untangle. This, in part, seemed to result in another discursive construction of research as instrumentalist, a discourse to which we now turn.

7. Research as an instrumentalist requirement

The fourth discursive conceptualisation of research that we identified in the data was an instrumentalist one where participants understood research to be an activity undertaken primarily for individual benefit.

In our institution and in the outside world any academic is judged by research. For instance, if as an academic you're applying for a promotion, you have to show evidence of having conducted research. If you apply for a position elsewhere, you have to show that you have conducted research in another higher education institution... You may be teaching, having hundred percent and all that, but you cannot be promoted only based on that, you must show evidence of research. And also research is very crucial because academics have to attract funds that bring income... (HoR 4)

And also because promotion and also the issue of having like a career advancement moving to other institutions and so forth, is also linked to the kind of research output that like quite a distinctive factor now between like one academic to the next. 'How many articles have you published? How many students have you actually supervised?' (HoR 1)

... you don't get promotion unless you have produced a certain number of papers. And, in fact, we have a quota system for the number of papers that you have to produce each year. (AC 13)

The only way to survive in this academia is by doing research. There is no any other better way of saying it. (AC 10)

For us to further your career and you need some research progress, in terms of research output and publications. (AC 18)

... one of the criteria that is used is supervision of postgraduate students, publications in accredited journals, and research funding or practice. So all these count towards

your promotion of course there are that criteria like teaching, but research is the major component. (AC 27)

Some of the Research Policies explicitly foregrounded the production of accredited research outputs as the core objective for research, and not, as in the earlier examples, as being for the benefit of society broadly, ensuring community engagement, or being disseminated in alternative platforms. Arguably, this discourse constructs research as actually constituting research only if it brings money into the university.

...if we are looking at [research] from the university perspective in terms of where the emphasis is this university...okay, remember that money is an issue, right? The university generating some money, obviously you're going to get that through publication, right. So that means they would want people to publish a lot. But, their focus is publishing on those subsidised journals...journals that when you publish in, then the Department of Higher Education and Training would give the university money... Whether you are publishing in a journal that has high impact factors or low, you see. Here we don't care about that. What we care is whether that journal gives the university money. (AC 19)

Most of HBUs had incentive structures for academics undertaking research. These included reference to research outputs in job descriptions and in promotion requirements, but they also included the payment of rewards to researchers who published in accredited journals. Such funds were paid into research codes, for the funding of research related expenses, such as conference attendance, and in some cases, the academics could elect to be paid part or all of such incentives into their salaries.

The Department of Higher Education and Training repeatedly cautions institutions that the payment of incentives to individual researchers promotes 'perverse behaviour' (for example Government Gazette 38552, 2015). The idea behind incentives is that they will increase research productivity, but it has been found to also have the effect of lowering the quality of research, of leading to 'salami slicing' of research, and of rewarding individualistic behaviour that works against collaborations and mentoring of junior researchers, and so on. In this study, there were participants who spoke in favour of such reward systems as encouraging output and those who indicated that these systems either had little effect or had bad effects:

Then because also of the incentives that are provided by the institution ... like adds more output. So the incentive is also working to increase the output. (HoR1).

... it's like taking the horse to the river but you can't make that horse to drink. Because we say here, some people say themselves that 'I don't care about incentives I'm teaching and I don't have time' (HoR 4)

There are lots of attractive incentives behind research which started as a good thing ... But I think that is now coming at a cost. It's costing teaching and learning because now every academic is more interested or more concerned about publishing, and then they know that if they publish at least one point two five units per annum there are going to be very good incentives. You are entitled for an international conference, fifty thousand rand for anywhere you want to go in the world ... (AC 15)

There are institutional incentives, which include assisting in promotions, Vice Chancellor's Award for research excellence. Funding is promoted via outside sources like for example NRF, companies, Governmental agencies and so on. These have positively impacted on my

research when still a junior researcher. However, as part of the senior research corps, this has not impacted on my research output. (AC 20)

There was thus little agreement about the effects of institutions paying funding incentives to individual researchers, but it did seem that participants tied this structure to an instrumentalist discursive construction of research in which research is understood as a vehicle for reward, rather than a discursive construction of research as being a contribution at the boundaries of a field. In an institutional context where a strong commitment to research as integral to the academic's identity has not been nurtured historically, it seemed that this discourse was able to flourish.

8. Conclusion

Discourses have effects in the world (Archer, 1995) and it is thus important to identify these and to consider what effects they might have in enabling or constraining any particular phenomenon, such as research production in HBUs. This study identified the discourses of academics and heads of research who volunteered to participate in a study about research production and thus, as has already been pointed out, are possibly more likely to be those who are research active. Therefore, the findings presented here are not exhaustive. Furthermore, discourses do not occur in isolation of structural enablements and constraints, and in large part the emergent powers of discourses depends on the agency of those who draw on them (Archer, 1995). This means that we cannot understand the discourses described here in a causal way as *determining* research production but rather we have to understand that they intersect with the effects of a myriad other mechanisms (Archer, 1995). Issues related to funding, the country's precarious economic state, and so on, would also have bearing on a university's capacity to produce research (Mda, 2013).

Having cautioned that this study has limitations, it is nonetheless our contention that the discourses identified have significant effects on the production of research in HBUs. Some of the data suggested that where there was a discourse that undertaking knowledge production was central to academic identity, though this was perhaps not as dominant a discourse as the literature on academic identities would suggest, and this discourse was at times constrained by structural systems. The interpretation of the national funding formula down into institutional practices of incentives seemed to complement a more instrumentalist discourse of quick output. Understanding research as related entirely to publication counts or individual benefit will have negative consequences for HBUs.

A key finding in this study was the unevenness of discursive conceptions of research. There is no university in the world in which every staff member or researcher will have exactly the same conception of research and indeed even a single participant might draw on two or more of those conceptions. It is thus possible that the finding of this study will well be echoed in institutions that are not part of the category of HBUs. However, we argue that the history of HBUs has had a particular effect on the ways in which research is conceptualised. It would thus seem work needs to be done on building a meaningful research culture in HBUs if research production is going to be strengthened. There was a nascent discourse of social justice focused research as being a core driver of knowledge production in some of the HBUs. Such areas of strength should be nurtured, if research production is to be developed in less instrumentalist ways.

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(Endnotes)

- 1 Different nomenclature has been used for such universities over the years, all of which remain contentious and problematic. Some policy documents and research literature refer to these institutions as "Historically Disadvantaged Universities". However, as we argue in this article, these institutions *continue* to be disadvantaged in some significant ways. "Historically Black" can similarly be argued to be a misnomer because, while these institutions are now open to students of all race groups, in reality they continue to serve the 'Black' South African population with 95% of their students coming from this racial category (Cooper, 2015).
- 2 The term homelands or Bantustans was used by the apartheid government to refer to the 'independent republics' of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. These republics and others (ten in total) were created by the apartheid government in rural areas of South Africa for the majority black population. The homelands served to separate the black population from the white and to give them responsibility for running their own independent governments separate from the Republic of South Africa governed by the whites. One of the consequences of this was that the blacks in these republics had no protection or any rights in the Republic of South Africa.
- 3 The institutional differentiation project is funded by the NRF with Sioux McKenna as the Principal Investigator (grant number 87646) and Muthama is the beneficiary of the NRF student scholarship (grant number 94969).