HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

PERSPECTIVES ON GAINING
AUTHORITY AND POWER

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ABSTRACT

This chapter encapsulates my thoughts and views on higher educationists and researchers working in the field of study and research in South Africa with regard to work done in the various chapters of this book, as well as work in progress in HE studies and research.

Essentially, my argument involves the matter of gaining authority in the form of expert knowledge, striving for excellence and insight via practical experience in higher education studies and research. Such authority leads to power that will influence policy, planning and the practical implementation thereof in higher education. I sketch the way forward regarding the recognition of higher education studies and research by briefly discussing a few points of departure that could possibly assist us in gaining authority regarding this field of study.

My points of departure involve the understanding of

- *global and local pressures, trends, issues and challenges in higher education, which is the object of our study;*
- *the implications of the present expansion of higher education in relation to our own fields of study and research;*
- *the limitations of our thematic higher education authority, and*
- *the necessity of a quality association or society for studies and research in higher education.*

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My summative perspective illustrates the practicality of the above-mentioned points of departure with regard to typical areas or themes of study in higher education, thereby emphasising the complex role and task of the higher educationist and researcher.

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION

The perspectives shared in this chapter are intended to amplify the valuable and interesting perspectives and themes contained in this book, without doing them an injustice through simplification. My experience of more than three decades in higher education studies and research has taught me that authority in this field of study is only gained through expert knowledge and insight by practically experiencing as many areas or themes in higher education as possible. Authority also eludes one to the extent that the use of sufficient primary and secondary sources in research and the preparation of publications is not always possible. I am fortunate to have had the privilege of reading the chapters comprising this book, which have provided me with so many critical and useful sources regarding numerous areas or themes on higher education studies and research. It is with sincerity that I acknowledge the hard work and dedication that has gone into this publication.

Reading these chapters also reminded me, at this juncture in my life, of how so many highly appreciated colleagues struggled for years for the recognition of higher education as a field of study in the interest of theory and practice in South Africa. Various chapters in this book, together with the Council on Higher Education (CHE 2004) and the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD 2008) reports, deal with the legal and policy implications in higher education, and illustrate the valuable contributions made by higher education studies and research. However, the above-mentioned resources also refer to critical issues and challenges with regard to sensitive policy-implementation processes, monitoring and evaluation, which flag unanticipated gaps and consequences in higher education in South Africa. These issues, gaps, challenges and consequences are addressed in various chapters in the book. Examples are the university as a key concept, universities and public goods, the university in a contemporary era, the university curriculum, teaching and learning and social justice, academic development in higher education, assessment and evaluation, professional development of academics, research within the context of community interaction, quality promotion, institutional cultures, governance in higher education as well as higher education and the world of work. Most of these perspectives and themes are related to broader key policy issues in different reports (CHE 2004; OECD 2008; SARUA 2009) on institutional restructuring, equity (access

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with success), teaching and learning, postgraduate studies and research, community service (engagement), quality assurance, accountability (finances), governance, and global or regional or local needs and other challenges in higher education.

There are many reasons for the above-mentioned consequences, gaps, uncertainties and challenges that the field of higher education in South Africa faces. However, for the purpose of this chapter, the most prominent areas or themes of concern are those of authority with regard to expert knowledge, striving for excellence and insight gained through practical experience as well as the related power relations in higher education. At times executives of higher education institutions, representatives and officials within government, representatives in councils, and leaders in business and industry lack the kind of authority in higher education that should ideally be based on higher education studies and research. Although they possess authority and power within other valuable fields of study, which might be relevant in terms of higher education, by definition they are not higher educationists and researchers. We do, however, realise that the implication of such a bold statement entails that we ought to become experts with regard to policies, planning and implementation of higher education in a local, as well as global context, should our authority in higher education studies and research be acknowledged.

This, in turn, raises the question as to why higher educationists and researchers are often not in a position to influence the interpretation and implementation of policies and planning in higher education. Authority in this field encompasses an understanding of where we are and how we reached this point. Furthermore, it entails envisioning solutions through research to the successful continuation from where we are, to where we want to be in higher education. Researchers should comprehend and acknowledge the professionalism and thoroughness demanded by authority in terms of studies and research in higher education.

As a result of the lack of appreciation and recognition, as well as power-authority relations in higher education, some higher educationists and researchers put very little effort into scholarly work and into producing reliable and valid research. My world view and experience regarding higher education, however, does not support such negativity. We must rather find ways to illustrate our authority in higher education studies and research with the firm belief that this will provide recognition and opportunities (power) within the field.

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After this sermon, I am prepared to be confronted with the million dollar question of how we, as higher educationists and researchers, can find ways of gaining authority in higher education.

A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE ON GAINING AUTHORITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND RESEARCH

There are a number of points of departure that I firmly believe will always influence our authority in this particular field of study, namely expert knowledge, striving for excellence and insight gained via practical experience. In the four subsections that follow I suggest a number of options to take higher education studies and research forward during the next number of years in South Africa.

Understanding global and local pressures, trends, issues and challenges in higher education – the object of our study

Some of the references in this book, as well as some of the latest influential literature on higher education (European Science Foundation 2008; OECD 2008; SARUA 2008), emphasise vast changes in and a growing focus on higher or tertiary education in most countries of the world. Higher education sees itself as being one of the most universal sectors of society. Yet, its systems, structures and institutions vary greatly, with the tendency to be deeply rooted in regional, national and local contexts. This is well illustrated by the highly differentiated policies and planning for higher education.

The literature on higher education is often unclear as to whether the thematic reference to higher education concerns the research undertaken on higher education or the disciplinary background of the researchers (e.g. education, sociology and economics). Furthermore, it is unclear whether published literature (books, articles or reports) on higher education is in actual fact either a type of research, 'consultancy', 'development work' or the information- and evidence-based pondering of policy-makers and practitioners (Teichler 2005).

With reference to these difficulties faced by higher education regarding studying and research, I refer to the latest report on higher education in South Africa, produced by the South African Ministerial Committee (RSA DoE 2008), appointed to deal with the progress towards transformation, social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions. This investigation focused on discrimination in public higher education institutions, with specific emphasis on racism; making

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appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and promote social cohesion. The Committee's Terms of Reference stated that it had to report on the following:

- The nature and extent of racism and racial discrimination in public higher education, particularly in university residences. While the emphasis should be on racial discrimination, other forms of discrimination based on, for example, gender, ethnicity and disability should also be considered.
- Steps that have been taken by institutions to combat discrimination. These include an assessment of good practice, as well as the shortcomings of the existing interventions.

And

- Advise the Minister of Education and the key constituencies in higher education on the policies, strategies and interventions needed to combat discrimination, as well as on ways to promote inclusive institutional cultures for staff and students, based on the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution.
- Identify implications for other sectors of the education system.

To fulfil this mammoth task on such a sensitive issue, the appointed committee's investigation was based on a combination of documentary analyses and interaction with higher education stakeholders and constituent groupings. These included the following:

- An overview of current trends in the higher education system, based on quantitative data contained in the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS);
- A survey of the relevant literature pertinent to the key areas or themes of the investigation;
- Analyses of institutional submissions, as well as of policy and strategic documents, including the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Institutional Audit Reports;
- An analysis of a questionnaire on the development and implementation of policies relating to transformation, discrimination and social cohesion within higher education institutions;
- Analyses of submissions received from both national organisations and individuals, resulting from a public call for submissions via the media;

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- Visits to all institutions to solicit the views of institutional stakeholders and constituencies, including councils, executive managements, student leaders, academic and support staff representatives, as well as staff associations and trade unions;
- Consultation with national student and trade union organisations.

The committee seemed to think that it had adequate time, resources and finally evidence to publish an explosive report on pervasive racial and sexual discrimination in South African universities, including the failure of university authorities to confront it. It included wide-ranging recommendations that could affect the funding of higher education institutions and shape their institutional policy-making and implementation (*Mail & Guardian* 2009).

I do not want to discuss the merit of this report in any detail, but in terms of our topic, higher education studies and research, the above-mentioned report is problematic. It fails to establish a link to a specific field or theme of study in the domain of the established disciplines that address this theme. This type of problem faced by researchers in higher education is typical. In terms of its findings and recommendations, this report might also not get the support it deserves, since many executives and actors within higher education institutions might not base their reaction to the report on systematic knowledge in higher education studies and research, but rather on ideological bias regarding the unique institutional political and practical demands within their specific contexts. A further question is whether this report can be regarded as reliable, valid systematic knowledge within higher education studies and research. Although our field of study has gradually created a fairly well-respected body of knowledge over the last four decades that deserves attention and can support problem solving and decision making in numerous areas or themes concerning higher education, the area or theme of racial discrimination within the South African context is an example of where there is limited comparable literature available within higher education.

The above-mentioned point of departure and reference to an example of an important report illustrate difficulties experienced in this field of study to gain authority. It emphasises that higher education studies and research will only be better recognised if research within this field begins with a good understanding of comparable higher education areas or themes (lessons learned) across the world, as well as within regions and countries. Moreover, it is important to realise that higher education is predominantly regulated at a national level: legislation, administration, approval of institutions, curricula and credentials, teaching staff careers, research promotion and

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similar features all tend to be set at either a national level or at the regional level within nations. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that most research on higher education is shaped predominantly by its specific context and that it is not necessarily applicable at a global level. Hence, global and national perspectives regarding various areas or themes of higher education studies should be well understood, bearing national and local differences in mind when addressing the institutional basis of higher education research and the relationships between higher education research and higher education policy and practice (Teichler 2005).

Part of the way forward for higher educationists and researchers involves careful consideration of the global and local (or glocal) picture of the various areas or themes comprising higher education by consulting scholarly work, literature reviews and in-depth research or study before considering publications on the pressures, trends, issues and challenges within higher education. More than three decades ago, Dressel and Mayhew (1974:112) noted the following: "Higher education as a field of study embraces so many different subjects ... that it fits well with no single theoretical base as does medicine with the biological sciences. It can never be a discipline, and certainly not a quantitative one, like physics. Rather researchers should adopt Wilhelm Dilthey's concept of *verstehen*, or understanding."

This understanding is gained by doing the utmost with whatever research methodologies work best to describe, analyse and suggest improved designs and developments for areas or themes in higher education and universities to foster activities of advanced intellectual training and discovery. George Keller (1998) stated that too much of today's 'empirical' higher education research consists of abstracted armchair and computer findings. The actual observation of campus practices, norms and behaviour needs to increase. Research also involves getting the 'feel' of a campus or set of institutions in collaboration with a carefully trained observers and participants, as well as gaining applicable data and statistics.

Some hard-core quantitative researchers will object by stating that true empiricism is impressionistic and anthropological, not precise and scientific. But life, and especially everyday life in colleges and universities, is not disposed to tidy mathematics. It is complex, seldom predictable and seething with thinly shrouded emotions. Higher education researchers need to choose between devotion to their orderly quantitative methods and a deep understanding of the messy academic world. I suggest choosing the latter (also see Keller 1998).

PART SIX • RESEARCH FRONTIERS AND AGENDAS**Understanding the implications of the present expansion of higher education in relation to the field of study and research**

The expansion of higher education has global, regional and local dimensions and it shapes the lives of individual citizens, as illustrated in this book. Moreover, the object of higher education as a field of study forms the institutional basis of all academic disciplines and the contribution of systematic knowledge to the future of society. In this sense it is a constituent of social sciences and humanities, drawing on a multitude of disciplines, as well as on theme-based areas exposed to high expectations of social relevance. I refer to the report *Higher Education Looking Forward: An Agenda for Future Research* (European Science Foundation 2008) where prominent higher educationists such as John Brennan, Jürgen Enders, Christine Musselin, Ulrich Teichler and Jussi Välimaa so accurately concluded that areas or themes addressed in higher education studies and research have a tendency to be influenced by relatively short-term institutional, national and supranational concerns, debates and policies about higher education. This was clearly illustrated earlier in the example of the ministerial report. However, higher education researchers also strive to analyse salient long-term issues and trends concerning the relationship between higher education and the creation and development of so-called 'knowledge societies'. Regarding higher education, these knowledge societies shape the social order as far as social privileges, meritocracy, equity and social cohesion are concerned. They also deal with the balance between the pursuit of knowledge and critical functions of higher education and utilitarian expectations of other parts of society, as well as the modes of regulation of higher education, including the respective roles played by market forces, the academic profession and its leaders, the state and other stakeholders (European Science Foundation 2008).

As regards what can be learnt from the content of this book, together with the example of the ministerial report referred to earlier, higher education studies and research still constitute a small, fragmented field of study in the developed world, even more so in developing countries. In such countries, only a few people in humanities and social sciences or sub-areas of education research grapple with critical areas or themes within higher education in order to influence policy and practice in higher education. In South Africa, there are perhaps a hundred or so individuals seriously interested in this field of study. The paucity of numbers and interest is, in all probability, mainly the result of apartheid in the higher education sector. Meanwhile, the radical transformation agenda from the early 1990s required higher education policy and planning to eradicate backlogs and support socio-economic growth and development on the way

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to an open and democratic knowledge society. Unfortunately, it seems as though many of these individuals function within the academic constraints of institutional support services and faculties of education and not in research institutes that provide greater scientific recognition and growth as a field of study. In the late 1980s and 1990s the transformational needs in higher education in South Africa led to the establishment of a few small higher education studies and research centres that could be compared to some extent to the research institutes functioning in North America, the UK and Europe. Unfortunately, however, these centres are currently concentrating most of their efforts on postgraduate higher education studies, as well as on institutional needs for higher education research regarding specific challenges within these higher education institutions (i.e. forms of institutional research).

The field of higher education studies and research in South Africa will only prosper if the National Research Foundation (NRF) and other funders can be persuaded to support a project, as was done by the European Science Foundation with its rationale to examine higher education and research within a wider context of social science research, and by relating it to more general conceptual frameworks such as human capital theories, theories of power, inequality and social exclusion, theories of organisations and new public management. In so doing, the European Science Foundation hoped to begin to address some of the larger questions concerning the changing relationship between higher education and society and develop research agendas that would be relevant, to researchers as well as to policy-makers and practitioners. The European Science Foundation's (ESF) project identified five interconnected areas or themes among research literature and reports in Europe:

1. Higher education and the needs of the knowledge society
2. Higher education and the achievement (or prevention) of equity and social justice
3. Higher education and its communities; interconnections and interdependencies
4. Steering and governance of higher education
5. Differentiation and diversity of institutional forms and professional roles

Draft reports on these five areas or themes were critiqued by groups of scholars at workshops in Kassel, Helsinki and Paris, at an interim conference in Brussels and, finally, in a dialogue with researchers from other fields and young higher education researchers at an ESF conference in Vadstena, Sweden. At the Brussels conference, a start was made on the process of synthesising the messages emanating from the five thematic reports, with regard to what was and was not known, as well as to the implications for future research agendas. This process of synthesis is continued by

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the ESF report. The aim is to propose an agenda for future research on the changing relationship between higher education and society, to suggest that this agenda may be more deserving of the attention of researchers from a wider range of social science fields than it has typically received, and to remind future researchers, whatever their backgrounds, of the existing body of theory and research on which future work should be built (European Science Foundation 2008).

The significance of this type of research is well summarised in the outline of an ongoing international research project organised by the US Social Science Research Council (SSRC):

Topping the agenda of most international organisations are priorities related to easing the transition to a knowledge-based economy, ensuring we do not become a world of 'haves' and 'have-nots', and advocating educational opportunity as an inherent right. Clearly, accessible higher education and progressive research is inherently integrated into all these priorities; these lofty goals will unwittingly fail if we do not understand how public research universities function in this global world of liberalising markets, deregulated states, and privatising societies.

Given the situation and what is recognizably at stake, it is surprising that the transformation of public research universities has not received more concerted analytic attention. ... The issues are not only ripe for social science examination; they are in need of international and interdisciplinary interpretation, explanation, and discussions (SSRC 2005, in European Science Foundation 2008:6).

These perspectives, taken from this book and the ESF report, explain in no uncertain terms that higher educationists and researchers in South Africa should realise that our field of study has very little hope to gain the authority that leads to powerful recognition in scientific circles if we do not confront certain brutal issues forcing change in our approach to HE studies and research. One of the brutal issues that need to be confronted was addressed in the previous paragraph of this chapter; another issue is the inability of individuals and centres of higher education studies, as isolated institutions, to make a significant difference to higher education in South Africa with regard to their post-graduate programmes. Research on higher education is often institutionally embedded in units serving the institution's administration ('institutional research'), in supporting human resources (e.g. 'staff development'), or in policy-related settings of applied higher education research. Moreover, the borderline between researchers and practitioners has become increasingly fluid due to the involvement of various kinds of higher education professionals and administrators such as rectors' associations, scholars and students involved in higher education policy, evaluation experts, and

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management consultants. This state of affairs will not change easily, because of South African higher education institutions' daily needs, interests and challenges, which need to be addressed in some way or other, if only on short-term basis. However, there is a need for the collaborative harnessing of the limited available expertise in higher education studies and research in South Africa. This need could be addressed by establishing a cluster of significant areas or themes within higher education that will be researched in close collaboration among a few strategically positioned higher education research institutes in regions as well as in all the universities in order to promote first-rate higher education.

The existing higher education centres or units, situated at a few universities, should also make further sincere efforts to collaborate regarding undergraduate and postgraduate studies in higher education. There is little doubt that existing higher education studies programmes fulfil a valuable role and that colleagues working in these units or centres show great dedication. However, I doubt that many will deny the immense contribution that collaborative curriculum design, development and delivery, recognition of expertise and specialities of centres to excellent higher education study programmes could make to improve the quality and service within higher education study programmes. The question then remains why such collaboration is absent in South Africa.

In a study commissioned by the network of executive directors of academic consortia, titled 'Uncommon Wisdom: Making cooperation work in South African Higher Education' (Gibbon and Parekh 2001), various institutional issues and concerns that complicate effective and meaningful cooperation and collaboration between institutions were highlighted:

- Institutions compete with one another for students and resources.
- Similar instructional Visions and Missions result in their reluctance to relinquish sole ownership of academic offerings and identify complementary programmes in other institutions.
- Areas seen as key to the niche of one institution may be fiercely guarded.
- Motives and intentions of stronger, well-endowed institutions are viewed with suspicion and resentment.
- The developmental goals and objectives of institutions vary.
- Conflicting personalities and a lack of direction of institutional leadership are obvious challenges.
- Clear incentives to cooperate or sanctions for failing to cooperate are lacking.

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- There is a perception of threatened job security within institutions.
- Geographical distances challenge collaboration between institutions.

Some of the barriers to joint academic programmes, including higher education study programmes, were the following:

- Potential loss of income by way of subsidy and student fees.
- Registration and graduation of students.
- Different fee levels.
- Differing and occasionally conflicting academic rules.
- Difficulty in determining overall responsibility and coordination of mark allocation.
- A lack of compatibility in academic ethos and approach.
- Inter-institutional differences regarding quality of teaching and academic options.
- Difficulty in arranging student and staff mobility, particularly when institutions are not in close proximity to each other.
- Variations regarding the structure of the academic year, complicating planning and scheduling joint academic options.
- Delayed repeal legislation, resulting in awarding of joint degrees.
- Current funding constraints.

This report also stated that collaboration in research and research capacity building has been successful and probably warrants greater development. Academics are accustomed to working across institutional, regional and national boundaries in this area and such collaboration will become increasingly important in knowledge-based economies in the future (Gibbon and Parekh 2001).

The above observations provide another good reason why higher education research institutes should be considered on a partnership basis in specific regions of South Africa.

Understanding the limitations of our thematic higher education authority

As previously mentioned, there are a few higher education studies centres or units in South Africa that focus predominantly on providing postgraduate programmes in higher education studies. Some of these centres or units conduct collaborative research projects on valuable areas or themes for higher education. Examples of such

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collaboration include those by the Council on Higher Education, the branch for higher education within the Department of Education, the National Research Foundation, the Centre for Higher Education Transformation and others.

One chapter in this book (Blitzer and Wilkinson) refers to a mapping exercise directed by the following questions:

1. What is the (thematic) nature of higher education studies and research in South Africa? Are there particular South African emphases in the research? How do these relate to international trends? Does available evidence suggest a possible or unique categorisation of current higher education research areas or themes in South Africa?
2. Where in South Africa is HE formally studied? What are the institutional or organisational settings where HE is studied? What is studied in the various programmes?
3. How stable is the professional basis of higher education research in the country? (Formal associations? Journals? Other forums and outlets? The researchers? Communities of practice?)

The particular chapter can be consulted for further details, but my view is that the area of higher education studies and research is defined by the fact that it is multidisciplinary, drawing on numerous areas or themes within disciplines such as education, psychology, sociology, political sciences, economics and business studies, law and history. These disciplines inform higher education research, both conceptually and methodologically. A challenge for higher education research is the maintenance of these multidisciplinary sources in order to enhance quality and to avoid being driven excessively by thematic concerns and policy agendas. However, creative theme-based research has the potential, and often the need, to transcend disciplinary perspectives.

Other disciplinary fields contribute to higher education research, although some of the areas or themes addressed are positioned outside and cut across the various disciplinary areas. Moreover, since higher education addresses general aspects of teaching and learning, research and the accumulation of knowledge, it is dependent on expert cooperation in all disciplines, regardless of whether or not they contribute directly to higher education research (European Science Foundation 2008).

In the previous section I explained that higher education research in South Africa lacks a stable institutional base within higher education institutions in the form of regional

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collaborative research institutes. These institutes can provide a link between higher education research and many areas of study in the humanities and social sciences.

In some instances, scholars in various domains of the humanities and social sciences address higher education issues regarding short-term projects or projects covering a certain period of their academic career. In other instances, scholars of these disciplines could either become fully fledged higher educationists or have the potential to contribute more meaningfully to areas or themes in higher education if they were linked to higher education research institutes.

These overlapping peripheries between research and other sources of expertise are also more pronounced in higher education than in other disciplines and fields of study, because there is only one scientific journal for higher education studies and research in South Africa. Opportunities for the average higher educationist to publish in other South African journals and higher education journals in, for instance, Europe, the United Kingdom, North America and Australia are limited because of the highly competitive environment.

In this context, the 2008 ESF report can once again be particularly helpful, because it effectively recognises the fact that the variety of institutional settings and the vague margin between research and practice offer ample opportunities for broadening the scope of higher education research and its practical relevance within many different kinds of publications (for instance, scholarly journals). The ESF report is also helpful in challenging higher education researchers to avoid losing themselves in daily concerns and practical expectations. A reflective exercise of this nature, noting past and current achievements and problems, looking ahead to possible future research topics and areas for inquiry, and designing research strategies for the future, is vital for the reasons I have alluded to. It also contributes to thematic research, however blessed as well as endangered by somewhat unorthodox conditions and characteristics (European Science Foundation 2008).

From the surveys reported in the ESF 2008 publication the following broad areas or themes in higher education studies and research were highlighted:

- Quantitative-structural aspects of higher education systems (e.g. access and admission, patterns of institutions and programmes, student enrolment and flow, graduation and graduate employment);

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- Knowledge aspects (e.g. developments of research and curricula, issues of quality and relevance, concepts and measurement of competences, job requirements of professional utilisation of knowledge);
- Aspects of processes and persons (teaching and learning, research processes and organisation, students, the academic profession, emergence of higher education professions);
- Organisational aspects of higher education (steering and management, state and stakeholders, functions and powers of the academic professions within governance, institutional settings, costs and funding).

This section attempted to explain the limitations of the thematic approach within higher education studies and research taken by researchers working in multiple disciplines and posts within higher education institutions, government, support services and other institutions. It also pointed to the immense task of higher educationists to simultaneously do scholarly work via continuous global literature review and publication of practical solutions through research for local higher education institutions amidst the demands of their unique national and regional contexts.

The necessity for one outstanding association or society for studies and research in higher education

There are many good examples of higher education associations or societies in North America, the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia that generally strive to

- stimulate new forms of research and inquiry into higher education as a field of study;
- assist in developing research capacity in relation to the field;
- encourage and support those entering the field of higher education studies;
- develop a network of scholars and researchers in the field of higher education studies;
- offer presentation of research and scholarship in the field;
- promote the development and widening of research methodologies in the field;
- provide opportunities for the publication of research and scholarship in the field; and
- develop opportunities through which researchers in the field can engage with policy makers, practitioners within higher education and other potential interested parties so that research may shape policy and practices.

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One of the means to promote the above-mentioned aims or purposes would be to establish one strong association or society for higher education that might fulfil these aims and purposes by

- maintaining and developing a South African and international database of researchers and scholars in the field;
- seeking to encourage the work of those recently embarking on research in the field;
- conducting conferences and seminars that bring researchers together, and enable researchers, policy-makers and others to engage with each other;
- producing and supporting various forms of research-based publications;
- establishing and supporting numerous networks of members, each focused on clusters in a particular area or theme within higher education where research may have a role to play, and
- providing advice to and engaging with relevant national and international research and policy debates (SRHE 2008).

The above-mentioned aims and ways of promoting higher education studies and research cannot be met in a country such as South Africa without the realisation that we cannot sustain three or more higher education and research associations supported by a minimal number of experts and researchers, with very little time and resources available due to current circumstances mostly beyond their control. The existing higher education associations in South African higher education should have the vision and courage to form one strong association to better fulfil the aims and purposes stated for an outstanding association or society for higher education.

As previously explained, the above-mentioned association or society should also be guided by strategic clusters of research in higher education in the interest of excellence in South African higher education, as was done by the European Science Foundation via its 2008 HELF report for Europe. The one outstanding higher education association or society should also realise that it cannot serve all the needs, interests, challenges and problems of higher education in South Africa, but should rather focus its efforts on the types of strategic purposes that may maximise the contribution to excellence in higher education studies and research. Examples of such strategic purposes are the following:

- Working to enhance the role of higher education research within the higher education sector;

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- Encouraging and supporting researchers recently entering the field of higher education research;
- Providing opportunities for the publication of research and scholarship;
- Organising conferences and seminars that bring researchers together, as well as enabling researchers, policy makers and others to engage with one another (SRHE 2008).

SUMMATIVE PERSPECTIVES

This chapter's premise is the realisation by higher educationists and researchers in South Africa that authority cannot be gained and no meaningful contributions can be made to the debate on the future of higher education in South Africa without active and progressive study, research and networking in the field of higher education studies and research. The points of departure explained earlier in this chapter can be practically illustrated by reference to the World Bank's document 'The Challenges of Establishing World-Class Universities' (Salmi 2009). This publication deals with various areas or themes in higher education, starting with the broad theme of the university as an institution and ranking of universities, which are supported by subsidiary areas or themes relating to talented academic staff, abundant resources, appropriate governance, success factors and, as always, transformation. The themes are briefly discussed below.

Firstly, it would be important for any higher educationist and researcher in the field to understand this document so that the paradox of the 'global' world-class university, as Altbach succinctly and accurately observed, does not apply when he says that "everyone wants one, no one knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one" (Altbach 2004, as quoted in the executive summary of Salmi 2009).

Secondly, the points of departure expect higher educationists and researchers to understand the implications of this World Bank document within our regional (Africa or Southern African Developing Countries) and South African context in terms of a developing continent and country. A report prepared by Higher Education South Africa (HESA 2009) in connection with higher education leaders illustrates the importance of a specific context by discussing definitional difficulties of universities and by emphatically stating that there is no longer an institute that can simplistically be referred to as 'a university'. By using the term 'university' one is immediately required to use additional adjectives to describe it; red-brick, Ivy League, historically disadvantaged, Land Grant, universities of technology and comprehensives are some descriptions given

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to add precision to an amorphous term. Current higher education debates around managerialism, entrepreneurialism, massification, information or communication or technology channels, distance, borderless opportunities and threats make use of terms that attempt to redefine the term 'university'. Less obvious is the continued use of the term 'university' without problematising its very nature. Due to current South African higher education debates and the changing government relations, the term 'university' is essentially a euphemism for an entity that cannot be fully described. Taking global and local perspectives of world class universities into account will hopefully help to avoid delusions of grandeur with regard to higher education policies, planning and implementation in South Africa.

Thirdly, it is important to realise that there are very few people, if any, who could ever claim to be experts through research in all the areas or themes that come to the fore in, for instance, the World Bank publication. The fact remains that, in most cases, higher educationists and researchers can only become experts in one or a few areas or themes of study and research in higher education. These thematic limitations will hopefully result in collaboration and networking with other higher educationists and researchers in understanding this World Bank Document. A networking approach is needed in most areas or themes in higher education, which would not only influence but also broaden our authority within the field of study. There are, of course, various ways of increasing authority, but regional research institutes and one outstanding association or society for higher education studies and research would most likely be one of the best ways to support networking and the understanding of broader areas or themes in higher education, in relation to subsidiary areas or themes of specialisation in higher education studies and research.

In the South African context, two of the latest areas or themes that appeared in the University World News, are Karen MacGregor's references to a "communist taking charge of higher education" (2009a) and the push to graduate more PhDs (2009b). Again, as per the points of departure mentioned earlier in this chapter, higher educationists and researchers need to react with authority and insight to such articles and to many other views expressed to avoid unnecessary tensions or conflict and to support progress in higher education.

Perhaps it is rather fitting and maybe not absurd to end with the Dinokeng Scenarios (2009) and its three futures for South Africa tailored specifically for our roles as higher educationists and researchers. The Dinokeng document refers to South Africa's broader challenges of social and economic hardship, particularly with regard to unemployment

CHAPTER 19 • PERSPECTIVES ON GAINING POWER AND AUTHORITY

and poverty, safety and security, education and health, which are currently exacerbated by a global economic crisis. The scenarios state that if we fail to recognise the severity of our challenges and fail to address them, we will experience rapid disintegration and decline, resulting in our 'walking apart or behind' instead of 'walking together' in South Africa. The global and local pressures for change in higher education are fuelled by challenges such as a possible financial disaster, competitive threats, a lack of visionary leadership, threatened markets, organisational pressures and poor benchmark performance. The pressures against change are those pertaining to the inertia of systems and institutional comfort zones resisting change, a lack of applicable knowledge and skills in leadership and management (governance), the shrinking back from the workload involved and a lack of recognition of entrepreneurial staff, visionless day-to-day focus, ivory-tower arrogance and a 'not my agenda' stance. Higher educationists or researchers and leaders in higher education at institutional, government and other levels will also be unsuccessful, should we fail to 'walk together'. The Dinokeng Scenarios' definition of 'walking together' could refer to a collaborative and enabling state in higher education with limited power, where engaged and active role-players or stakeholders or leaders in higher education are supported by higher educationists and researchers with authority.

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● A BRIEF TRIBUTE TO KALIE STRYDOM FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Andries Hermanus (Kalie) Strydom was born in Bloemfontein on 5 July 1940. He matriculated at Grey College, Bloemfontein, in 1958 and continued his studies at the (then) University of the Orange Free State where he obtained a BA degree, a Higher Education Diploma, a BEd, an MEd and a DEd, as well as an MA degree in Philosophy.

He started his academic career in 1969 when he was appointed as a lecturer and later as a senior lecturer at the University of the Orange Free State. Only five years later (in 1974) he was promoted to professor and head of the Department of Didactics at Stellenbosch University – an exceptional achievement – since, at the age of 35, he was the youngest professor to be appointed at a Faculty of Education in South Africa at the time. In April 1977 he returned to the University of the Orange Free State as professor and was subsequently promoted to Chief Director of the Research Unit into Higher Education and in 1996 to Chief Director of the Strategic Service at the University of the Free State. Since 2000 he has been the Acting Director of the Free State Higher Education Consortium (FSHEC) and a senior researcher at the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development (CHESD) at the University of the Free State.

For more than two decades Kalie Strydom has been associated with excellence in educational research, especially in the field of higher education. His academic career can best be described as a lifetime of dedication to accountable research, aimed at the advancement of higher education in South Africa. As a result he is regarded as an acclaimed researcher in the field of higher education – nationally, as well as in international circles. Apart from having undertaken a vast number of independent research trips to countries abroad – which include Canada, various American States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Australia – Professor Strydom has appeared as a guest speaker at 39 conferences and other occasions. In addition, he

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

has presented papers at 19 international conferences, and at 70 conferences in South Africa on a variety of aspects of education. This underscores the fact that his work is widely held in high regard and that he has made a valuable contribution to the field of higher education in this country.

Kalie Strydom's publications include 54 research articles, contributions as author, co-author and editor of 11 books, 18 technical reports to different national/provincial education departments, the CUP, the CHE, and other educational associations. He has also contributed a number of editorial reviews. Although a number of these investigate the issue of quality assurance – a field within which he has become a well-known authority – it is evident from his list of publications that his research interests comprise a variety of extremely relevant themes. This proves to be one of his most commendable attributes: the ability to address the educational issues of the day. As such he has contributed widely to the areas of didactics, higher education management and leadership, human resources management and curriculum development, strategic planning, higher education policy, open learning and multicultural education.

His most outstanding research projects include research on all the different aspects of quality assurance, access with success, governance in higher education, regional development and engagement as well as performance management of institutions and staff in higher education and further education and training (FET). He has, therefore, played a significant role in the process of transformation of higher education in South Africa, both through his research and development work.

His expertise in various fields of higher education culminated in community service, which includes a research and development project on a bridging mechanism at tertiary level, and membership of various statutory councils. He is the coordinator of a Task Group of the National Commission on Higher Education, an executive member of the Organising Committee of the CUP Conference on the future of universities in South Africa, and a member of the Human Science Research Council (HSRC). In addition, he serves on the Disciplinary Chief Committee for Education and the HSRC Research Committee for Educational Sciences. As the Founder Chairman and first President of the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education (SAARDHE) and chairperson of the Urban Foundation of the Free State and Northern Cape Region, he played a major role in furthering the interests of higher education. He continued in this tradition by chairing the working group of the Executive Committee for Post-secondary Education and Training Forum of the Free State Province.

Professor Strydom has been a member of various local, national and international academic associations and other organisations. He has also served on a number of different committees of the UFS, the South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA), the Centre for Science Development (CSD), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the Free State Higher and Further Education and Training Trust (as Chairman), the Independent Examinations Board, and the National Commission for Higher Education. He was a member of the Education Committee of the Committee of University Principals (CUP) for a period of 20 years and served on the Academic Planning Committee of the CUP for nine years. His contribution to higher education through representation in a leadership role does, however, not remain limited to South Africa alone. He was a member of the American Council on Education (ACE), the Association for Study in Higher Education (ASHE), the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE), the African Association of Universities (AAU), the University Council of the National University of Lesotho (for five years until 2001), the Council of the Central University of Technology (from 2002-2007), the Council of Motheo FET College and the Provincial Board for FET Colleges in the Free State. In addition, he was the Africa representative on the Foreign Committee of the Association for Institutional Research in the USA.

Other awards received by Professor Strydom during his academic career include study at the *Goethe Institut* in West Germany, a number of bursaries from the VCHO (an association for Higher Education) and the HSRC, as well as the Johann Pauw Memorial Award of SAARDHE (1990), an Outstanding Professor Merit Award at the University of the Free State (1998-2000), the South African Education Association medal and reward for outstanding research and the Harold Wolpe Memorial Award of the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education.

In 2000 Kalie Strydom retired as Chief Director: Academic Planning and Development at the University of the Free State. He was then asked to act as Director of the Free State Regional Development and Engagement Trust at higher and further education and training levels and as senior researcher in the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development of the UFS.

As Acting Director of the FSHEC and senior researcher Professor Strydom has prepared documents advising top management, lectured in the master's degree programme for Higher Education Studies (HES) and supported doctoral students in HES on many different aspects of regional engagement and development with specific emphasis on widening participation (access with success), regional strategic planning and impact

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studies, skills acquisition, human resources management and development and higher education as a field of study.

This book might serve as a small token of appreciation for the sterling work Professor Strydom has done throughout a career in higher education studies and research. I am sure that most, if not all, of his students, colleagues and staff would share the appreciation for the valuable contributions he has made at various levels of promoting the field in South Africa.

ELI BITZER
EDITOR

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● ACRONYMS

AD/ASP	Academic Development/Support Programme
AAU	Association for African Universities
ACE	American Council on Education
AD/ASP	Academic Development/Support Programme
AERA	American Educational Research Association
AFT	Advocates for Transformation
AHEF	African Higher Educational Forum
AIR	Association for Institutional Research
ANC	African National Congress
APD	Academic Professional Development
ASHE	Association for the Study of Higher Education
ASP	Academic Support Programme
ASPECT	Academic Support Programme for Engineering in Cape Town
BUE	Bureau for University Education
CAT	Computer Analysis Toolkit
CE	Community Engagement
CESM	Classification of Educational Subject Matter
CHAE	Centre for Higher and Adult Education
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHESD	Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development
CHESP	Community Higher Education Service Partnership
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPE	Continuing Professional Education
CPL	Continuing Professional Learning
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CREST	Centre for Research and Science and Technology
CSC	Centre for Student Counselling
CSD	Centre for Science Development
CTP	Committee of Technikon Principals
CUP	Committee of University Principals
DoE	Department of Education
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
EHE	Encyclopedia of Higher Education
ELT	Experiential Learning Theory
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ESF	European Science Foundation
ESL	English as a Second Language

ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
FET	Further Education and Training
FSHEC	Free State Higher Education Consortium
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
HBI/HDI	Historically Black/Disadvantaged Institutions
HE	Higher Education
HED	Higher Education Development
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HELF	Higher Education Looking Forward
HELTASA	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee (of the CHE)
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HERDSA	Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HET	Higher Education and Training
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
HSRC	Human Science Research Council
IBSS	International Bibliography of Social Sciences
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEHE	International Encyclopedia of Higher Education
IF	Institutional Forum
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	International Scientific Information
IT	Information Technology
ITLS	Improving Teaching and Learning for Success
JIPSA	Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition
KKK	Kwere Kwere – a sound imitating expression meaning an understandable cacophonic language
LHEA	Leaders of Higher Education in Africa
MS	Microsoft
NASFAS	National Students Financial Aid Scheme
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NWG	National Working Group
OBE	Outcome Based Education

OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development
OSP	Overarching Strategic Plan
OUP	Oxford University Press
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PGCHE	Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education
PGCHET	Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education and Training
PGDE	Postgraduate Diploma in Education
PGDHET	Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education and Training
PQM	Programme and Qualification Mix
QA	Quality Assurance
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
RAU	Rand Afrikaans University
REDIBA	Research Development Initiative for Black Academics
RHEP	Research on Higher Education Programme
RiT	Research-in-Training
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SAAAD	Southern African Association for Academic Development
SAADA	South African Academic Development Association
SAAIR	Southern African Association for Institutional Research
SAARDHE	South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education
SAC	South African College
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAICA	South African Institute for Chartered Accountants
SAJHE	South African Journal of Higher Education
SAQA	South African Qualification Act
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SAUVCA	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association
SEDA	Staff and Educational Development Association
SERTEC	Certification Council for Technikon Education
SMI	Strategic Management Indicator
SoTL	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
SRC	Southern Regional Congress
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
SU	Stellenbosch University
TF	Transformation Forum
TQM	Total Quality Management
UCGH	University of the Cape of Good Hope

UCT	University of Cape Town
UDUSA	Union of Democratic University Staff Associations
UFS	University of the Free State
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIFY	University of the North's, Science Foundation Year
UP	University of Pretoria
VWDVC	Van Wyk De Vries Commission
WASC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges
WiR	Women-in-Research
ZAA	Zuid Afrikaanse Athenaeum