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NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION: A SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

Samia Chasi

A thesis submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with how North-South partnerships in public higher education are managed in South Africa. It offers a global South perspective, with a particular focus on how the challenges inherent in such partnerships, which relate to imbalances in resources, knowledge and power, can be addressed. In doing so, the study highlights the need that Southern institutions have for more equal and balanced partnerships with their Northern counterparts.

Facilitated by a postcolonial framework, the study takes a critical look at North-South partnerships in South Africa, recognising that such partnerships have to be understood with the country's legacy of colonialism and apartheid in mind. In this context, a discussion of the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality is linked to transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation as some of the most pertinent issues affecting South African higher education institutions today. Furthermore, the critical discussion of North-South partnerships enables critical engagement with the global phenomenon of higher education internationalisation, which is dominated by Northern perspectives in terms of definitions, concepts and practices.

Methodologically, the study presents a qualitative, single case study, using the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, a public South African higher education institution, as the case. Careful consideration is given to questions of positionality, particularly as the researcher relies on her experiences in the sector to offer a unique practitioner-scholar perspective.

Drawing on data generated from a variety of documents and interviews, the study provides a nuanced, in-depth picture that underscores the lived realities of North-South partnerships at the University. In doing so, it critically illustrates the complexities of the notion of 'North-South' in relation to a university like Wits in a country like South Africa. Besides some practical suggestions for the attention of institutional management, it also offers conceptual insights into what partnerships and internationalisation should look like from a South African perspective.

The study advocates for the increased agency of the global South, highlighting that Southern institutions should be less complicit and less accepting of inequalities and imbalances in their partnerships with Northern counterparts. Furthermore, it argues that changing the paradigm of North-South partnerships towards more balanced engagements contributes to moving the proverbial mountain, transforming our global society into one that is socially more just. It thus adds a small cornerstone note for the ongoing process of laying new foundations for a different and more equitable future for higher education partnerships and beyond.

Keywords

North-South partnerships; Postcolonialism; Internationalisation; Transformation; Higher education; South Africa

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



Samia Chasi

May 2019

To all my families

“If you wish to move mountains tomorrow, you must start by lifting stones today”

– African proverb –

PRESENTATIONS EMANATING FROM THIS RESEARCH

Title	Format	Event	Place	Date
North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education – Report on the Pilot Study.	Presentation	Group seminar	Wits School of Education	2 December 2015
Reflecting on my Positionality as a Researcher.	Presentation	Research weekend	Wits School of Education	14 May 2016
Are we Reigning in a New Era of North-South Partnerships in Higher Education?	Conference paper	Global Conference, hosted by IEASA	Kruger Park	22 August 2016
"Internationalisation – A Postcolonial Perspective."	Presentation	Research weekend	Wits School of Education	19 May 2017
Postgraduate education and the decolonisation debate	World Café deliberations	Dr Mamadi Matlhako (University of Fort Hare)	Colloquium of the EU funded project *Enhancing Postgraduate Environments*	Pretoria 12 July 2018
Are South-North partnerships REALLY mutually beneficial? – Considerations for strategic partnerships in joint programme development.	Interactive discussion	International-isation Policy Dialogue, hosted by the British Council in collaboration with IEASA and the DHET	Emperors Palace, Johannesburg	14 November 2018
North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education – Findings from a South African Case Study.	Presentation	Group seminar	Wits School of Education	20 November 2018
North-South Partnerships in Higher Education – Insights from a Critical South African Case Study.	Presentation	Inter-School Research Symposium – Wits and University of La Verne	Wits Business School	17 January 2019

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"It takes a village to raise a child"

– African proverb –

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GLOSSARY

#FMF	#FeesMustFall
#RMF	#RhodesMustFall
AAU	Association of African Universities
ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ACSUS	African Centre for the Study of the United States
ANC	African National Congress
ARUA	African Research Universities Alliance
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
AU	African Union
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CARTA	Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa
CESA	Continental Strategy for Africa
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CWUR	Center for World University Rankings
DE	Development Education
DFO	Development and Fundraising Office
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EAC	East African Community
EAIE	European Association for International Education
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HAI	Historically Advantaged Institution
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged Institutions
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IaH	Internationalisation at Home

IAPO	International Academic Programmes Office
IEASA	International Education Association of South Africa
IoC	Internationalisation of the Curriculum
ISO	International Students Office
ISPC	Internationalisation and Strategic Partnerships Committee
ISPO	Internationalisation and Strategic Partnerships Office
IUCEA	Inter University Council for East Africa
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
LICs	Less Industrialised Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAFSA	Association of International Educators
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
NSI	National System of Innovation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
RDAP	Reactive-Defensive-Accommodative-Proactive
S&T	Science and Technology
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGE	Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANTED	South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARUA	Southern Africa Regional Universities Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SET	Senior Executive Team
SO	Strategic Objective
SPO	Strategic Partnerships Office

SRC	Student Representative Council
STARND	Strengthening Training and Regional Networks in Demography
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
TELP	Tertiary Education Linkage Program
THE	Times Higher Education
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USAf	Universities South Africa
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WC2	World Cities World Class (University Network)
WIO	Wits International Office
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
WSoE	Wits School of Education

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with a South African case study on North-South partnerships in higher education, and this introductory chapter will provide an overview of why the research was conducted and how. In short, this chapter introduces "what is studied, under what circumstances, for what duration of time, and with whom" (Janesick, 1994, p. 210).

I will start with a discussion of the background to the problem, which situates this qualitative South African case study in a global context of internationalisation of higher education. I will then state the research problem and questions as well as the overall aims and objectives of the study. Following this, I will give an overview of the conceptual field and theoretical framework of the study. I will address issues of positionality as well as the most important methodological aspects of the study. Furthermore, I will discuss the study's significance and, linked to that, its intended contribution. Finally, I will give an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the Problem

In this section, I present the background to the research problem by discussing the reasons for undertaking this research. I address the question of why a South African case study on North-South partnerships was considered worthwhile.

1.2.1 Why Internationalisation of Higher Education?

By presenting a South African case study on North-South partnerships, this study speaks to internationalisation of higher education as a global phenomenon. In the globalised world of the 21st century, internationalisation is a reality that affects higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. It is a key strategy used by universities to respond to globalisation, which refers to the formation of world relations based on a free market economy (Maringe & Foskett, 2010, p. 1). Globalisation involves a number of developments that are beyond the control of HEIs including "an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and

communications technology, the emergence of an international knowledge network, the role of the English language" (Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley, 2009, p. 7). As such, internationalisation is intrinsically linked to globalisation. Both concepts can carry positive as well as negative implications (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014; Jowi, Knight & Sehoole, 2013). Regarding the latter, Ntshoe (2002) notes that globalisation forces can reproduce inequalities and injustices and that HEIs in less industrialised countries (LICs) are often ill-prepared to compete on a global stage and to respond to an increase in managerialism and corporatism and a decline in collegiate culture brought about by globalisation.

On the other hand, HEIs have a major role to play in knowledge generation and innovation, contributing to development, which can be facilitated by internationalisation. Regarding higher education, internationalisation, while meaning different things to different people, commonly refers to a variety of dimensions and institutional activities, both at home and abroad (Knight, 2012). The former is generally referred to as internationalisation at home (IaH), which includes the internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC), and the latter refers to the academic mobility of students and staff, collaboration in teaching and research as well as the establishment of branch campuses abroad, to name a few (ibid.). In South Africa, collaborative qualifications such as joint degrees are currently receiving special attention in the first draft national internationalisation policy (DHET, 2017b). In the broader context of internationalisation, partnerships can play a key role in the activities that institutions pursue in terms of their internationalisation efforts (Sutton, Egginton & Favela, 2012).

1.2.2 Why International Partnerships?

Partnerships can be "both key strategy and core philosophy for internationalisation" (Sutton et al., 2012, p. 148). In the age of globalisation, "higher education itself is now conducted on a global stage" (ibid.), and HEIs have much to gain from partnering to share knowledge and resources, particularly as they face "intensified competition at home and abroad, more insistent public demands for accountability, pressures to both widen access and contribute to economic development through research, stagnating public funding, and a growing role of the market" (Kinser & Green, 2009, p. iv). In this context, HEIs around the world have recognised the value of partnerships, which can be established with a wide variety of partners such as other HEIs, industry, government, non-governmental organisations and communities (Kinser & Green, 2009, p. 2; Sutton et al., 2012, p. 149).

Establishing international links and partnerships is a key strategy for universities to further their internationalisation agenda and to develop adequate responses to the global challenges of the 21st century, as no country, institution or scholar alone would be able to do so effectively on their own. With partnerships assigned such an important role, the question of what kind of partnerships work and how they can be managed successfully merits close examination. This is particularly important in the (South) African context, where so much is expected of international partnerships in terms of their role in facilitating socio-economic development and capacity building in higher education (Hagenmeier, Lansink & Vukor-Quarshie, 2017; NEPAD, 2005; Teferra, 2012). Partnerships are expected to help South African HEIs address challenges such as brain drain, inadequate numbers of academic staff with Doctor of Philosophy degrees (PhDs), inadequate curricula and poor infrastructure, to name but a few (Fischer & Lindow, 2008). When directed at finding solutions to such challenges, international partnerships can bring about benefits for HEIs. However, institutions are also confronted with considerable difficulties in managing partnerships, particularly in the North-South context (Hagenmeier et al., 2017; Jowi et al., 2013; Maringe & De Wit, 2016; Tedrow & Mabokela, 2007).

Challenges in North-South partnerships are intrinsically linked to inequalities between the partners. While partnerships with institutions in the North allow HEIs in the South to gain access to much-needed resources (Malaza, 2011, p. 7), these partnerships also bring about challenges, particularly with regard to questions of power and influence as well as mutual benefit (Kotecha, 2012, p. 2). About a decade ago, Tedrow and Mabokela (2007, p. 167) noted the following:

> ...much work needs to be done in developing more effective and empowering working relationships. What is lacking is research on institutional change processes and how partnership participants are prepared to deal with cross cultural partnerships where the relationship is unequal in nature because of uneven distribution of resources and when the partnership relationship is taking place in a time of social transformation.

In the context of this study, issues of unequal relations, more empowering partnerships, as well as the link between internationalisation and transformation, are addressed, based on the observation that, to this day, the dilemma faced by many institutions in Southern Africa "is that co-operation between higher education institutions continues to take place on terms set by Northern partners, because of the wealth available in Northern countries and the dominance of

Northern scholarship" (Kotecha, 2012, p. 2). To address challenges in North-South partnerships, Kotecha (2012, p. 3) urges higher education leaders and decision makers to shape the internationalisation agenda according to Southern priorities. In the context of partnerships, this means that "Southern African universities need to be more assertive about defining their own interests when negotiating international partnerships with universities and donors in Northern countries" (ibid.). This study looks into how a South African university rises to the occasion.

1.2.3 Why South Africa?

South Africa is an interesting site for a study on internationalisation for a variety of reasons. While internationalisation may be as old as the HEIs on the continent, Africa is considered a late comer to contemporary internationalisation (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 15), and South Africa is no exception. The country formally re-entered the international stage only recently, after the end of apartheid in 1994. In that sense, it is a relatively 'new kid on the block'. However, in this short period of time, South Africa has achieved considerable successes in internationalisation. It was, for example, the only African country that featured in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) list of preferred destinations for international students in 2011 and 2013 (OECD, 2011, p. 322; OECD, 2013, p. 3)[1]. In 2016, 69,381 international students were registered at South African universities, which is just over seven per cent of the total student population (CHE, 2018, p. 8), with the majority of these international students coming from African countries (IEASA, 2018, p. 36). If international rankings are considered an indicator of success, South Africa is successful as the only African country that is regularly featured in different rankings with several institutions. For example, out of a total of four universities in Africa listed in the top 500 of universities worldwide in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World Universities Rankings 2019, three are located in South Africa. Similarly, all four African institutions included in the top 500 list in the *Times Higher Education* (THE) World University Rankings 2019 are South African. As these rankings suggest, South Africa occupies a special position in the African higher education context. It is, for example, one of the few countries on the continent that have a comprehensive

[1] The 2018 edition of *Education at a Glance* does not contain a similar table and does not mention South Africa in the context of top destination countries for international students, as the data presented focuses on OECD countries (OECD, 2018, p. 221).

higher education system (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 22). Linked to that, South Africa's research output accounts for 40 per cent of Africa's total (Rensburg[2], 2016, p. 314).

While such achievements are noteworthy, they cannot mask the fact that the South Africa higher education sector faces many of the same challenges as other institutions on the continent and elsewhere in the global South. The country's past and present is rooted in a history of Dutch and British colonialism as well as apartheid, and the development of South Africa's higher education system has been shaped by European models from the very start (Sehoole, 2006, p. 5). Higher education in the country still bears scars of the past, with the sector being referred to as a "two nation state" (Wits, 2014b, p. 10). To this day, South Africa's higher education is characterised by differentiation due to the legacy of apartheid (DHET, 2013, p. 29), which persists, for example, regarding institutional resources and capacity as well as student and staff demographics.

Partnerships with institutions in the global North continue to be the dominant model for partnerships between South African HEIs and their international counterparts. However, the lack of equity in partnerships is considered one of the current challenges facing higher education in South Africa (Quinlan, 2018, p. 3), an issue that has been highlighted by the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), an organisation that has been instrumental in championing internationalisation of higher education in South Africa since 1997. As part of its efforts to critically engage with internationalisation, IEASA hosted the *Global Dialogue* in 2014, followed by the *Global Conference*[3] in 2016. With these events, IEASA has created a platform for internationalisation associations and practitioners from around the globe to critically reflect on and discuss the impact of internationalisation in different regions of the world. Addressing challenges in North-South engagements, the *Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration* (2014), for example, requests that guidelines be developed for equal and ethical practices in international partnerships. Such requests put the spotlight on the fact that the benefits of internationalisation are not shared evenly between the developed world in the global North and developing and emerging countries in the global South. Such criticality is mirrored in institutional voices, one of which is the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (henceforth Wits).

[2] Professor Rensburg served as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Johannesburg from 2006 to 2017.
[3] The theme of the Global Conference, held from 22 to 24 August 2016, was "A Global International Higher Education Commons: Evaluating and Imagining the Internationalisation of Higher Education". For more information: https://globalconference.studysa.org/.

1.2.4 Why Wits?

Wits, a public South African university, is the case for this study on North-South higher education partnerships. As a leading research-intensive university in South Africa, it offers valuable insights into the role such universities play in fostering development in the country, region and the continent. Furthermore, Wits is a suitable research site because internationalisation is a central element of how the University understands itself and its mission (Wits, 2010a). With its focus on research excellence, Wits is currently ranked as the first South African institution in the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2018 and the second South African institution in the QS World Universities Rankings 2019 as well as the THE World University Rankings 2019. The recruitment of international staff and students as well as partnerships and networks are highlighted as key internationalisation activities in Wits' strategic plan (Wits, 2010c). While the University is ambitious about its international competitiveness, it also has a strong focus on local relevance. It, therefore, values engagements with other institutions in both the global North and the global South, with the latter being informed by its commitment to development and transformation, particularly on the African continent. Wits' stance finds expression in, for example, organisations such as the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), of which Wits is a co-founder, as well as the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), which was set up at Wits in 2018. In that regard, Wits is an example of how a global phenomenon such as internationalisation and a local imperative such as transformation can be reconciled. This reconciliation process is partly facilitated by a critical engagement with internationalisation.

When it comes to North-South partnerships, Professor Habib noted in a presentation[4] that these partnerships tend to be based on Northern desires rather than Southern needs. This observation speaks to the lack of equity in partnerships, which was earlier mentioned as a challenge facing higher education in South Africa. It is a reality that deserves to be studied deeply, and the following section addresses the rationale for this study in greater detail.

[4] This was a public presentation by Professor Habib as short-listed candidate for the position of Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 23 November 2012.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The importance of North-South partnerships in the context of internationalisation of South African higher education was highlighted in the previous section. At the same time, the challenging nature of such partnerships was noted, particularly regarding inequities and inequalities between the partners. These challenges are most notable for Southern partners. However, not only is research on partnerships a relatively new phenomenon, but the research that has been conducted generally looks at partnerships from a predominantly Northern perspective, leaving the Southern perspective largely unexplored (Obamba, Kimbwarata & Riechi, 2013, p. 152). In that sense, the dominance of the North is evident not only in the partnerships themselves but also in the scholarship on the subject. Literature on internationalisation and partnerships is dominated, in volume and impact, by perspectives from the global North, which means that they are typically described in terms of Northern definitions, concepts, models and practices (Cross, Mhlanga & Ojo, 2011, Kotecha, 2012; Martin & Griffiths, 2012; Singh, 2010). Little attention has been paid to how partnerships are experienced at universities in the global South.

At the same time, emphasis is shifting to the South, highlighting the need for Southern agency as well as knowledge production (Connel, 2007; Jooste & Heleta, 2015; Landau, 2012). In South Africa, a stronger focus on the South manifests itself in public discourse on internationalisation. For example, at several recent IEASA conferences, calls were made for practitioners and researchers in and from the South to contribute, or contribute more strongly, to internationalisation debates. Jooste and Heleta (2015), highlighting the dominance of the North in internationalisation debates and research, call for "real collaboration between equals". Furthermore, they note that "Such collaboration will not happen if the higher education internationalisation researchers and practitioners from the global South remain passive and do not engage more actively in research, analysis and knowledge production in the field" (ibid.).

As far as partnerships are concerned, Landau (2012, p. 568), for example, encourages scholars in Africa and elsewhere in the South to do more in terms of asserting their interests and demands into partnerships under the motto "You Get What You Negotiate". However, there is no in-depth study on partnerships that focusses on a Southern perspective, particularly in the North-South context. This study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by giving a scholarly account of North-South partnerships that recognises the voices of people who work at a university in

the global South. In doing so, it critically examines internationalisation of higher education from a South African perspective.

The study is an example of rethinking dominant discourses on internationalisation. As Connel (2007, p. vii.) notes, dominant views tend to describe "the world as it is seen by men, by capitalists, by the educated and affluent. Most important, they picture the world as seen from the rich capital-exporting countries of Europe and North America – the global metropole". In contrast, this study offers a Southern view on internationalisation and partnerships, that is, a view from the periphery. The term *Southern* only partly refers here to the geographical location of South Africa. What is more, it carries a broader meaning, where terms such as *North* and *South* are used to "emphasise relations – authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnerships, sponsorship, appropriation – between intellectuals and institutions in the metropole and those in the world periphery" (Connell, 2007, pp. viii-ix). From this broader view, both Wits and South Africa occupy a complex position, as they can be associated with both the South and the North. This complexity will be further explored in later parts of this thesis, most notably in Chapter Two and Chapter Six. The main concern of this case study is to understand the nature of North-South partnerships in higher education from the perspective of a university in the South, as represented by Wits, and, at this stage, North-South partnerships are generally understood as the partnerships Wits has with institutions in the global North. In the section that follows, I indicate how this problem was translated into research questions.

1.4 Research Questions

This study is an in-depth analysis of North-South higher education partnerships. With the help of a South African case study, it explores the nature of such partnerships from a global South perspective. In doing so, it focuses particularly on the challenges inherent in partnerships between institutions in the South and their Northern counterparts. The research question is: "**What does a selected case study reveal concerning how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education?"**

This central research question is further broken down into a number of sub-questions. These sub-questions are topical in the sense that they address issues on the topic that is being explored. Thus, they divide the central phenomenon into sub-topics of study (Creswell, 2007, pp. 113-

114). As Wits has been identified as the case study institution, the sub-questions are formulated with direct reference to the University. They are as follows:

1. **What role/s do partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of Wits?**
   This question embeds Wits' North-South partnerships in the broader context of higher education internationalisation and starts from the assumption that internationalisation is actively pursued by the University. Assuming further that out of a variety of internationalisation activities universities can pursue, partnerships have become a key strategy, the study explores the specific role/s that partnerships play at Wits.

2. **How do institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices at Wits?**
   This question assumes that Wits' partnerships policies and practices are informed by interlinked institutional goals. Such institutional goals could, for example, refer to research as well as transformation.

3. **What are the challenges of conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships at Wits?**
   This question assumes that challenges are inherent in North-South partnerships, and it addresses the issue of power relations, specifically regarding imbalances and inequalities between the partners. It explores how these challenges manifest themselves in terms of asymmetries of wealth, power and knowledge, with a particular focus on the lived experiences of the Southern partners. It investigates how North-South partnerships are conceptualised and managed at Wits. The conceptualisation stage is considered important, as it sets the scene for partnerships, addressing, for example, needs, expected outcomes and anticipated benefits. Management, on the other hand, talks more strongly to institutional structures and their effectiveness as well as the sustainability of partnerships.

4. **How does Wits respond to challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships?**
   This question focuses on the different ways in which Wits responds to challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships. The main emphasis is on Wits' agency in its role as a Southern partner, driving change and shifting the

paradigm of North-South partnerships toward greater equality between the partners. In this regard, Wits' dual position in the North-South space is noted, illustrating the complexities of North-South relations within partnerships and beyond.

All research questions are open-ended, evolving, and non-directional, in line with the principles of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, p. 107). Providing answers to these questions, this study presents a complex case of North-South higher education partnerships at a South African University, drawing on theoretical aspects, as predominantly represented in Wits' institutional documents, as well as practical aspects, as particularly highlighted through interviews with Wits staff. The relationship between theory and practice is explored in greater detail in later chapters. In the section that follows, I address how the research questions are linked to the study's aims and objectives.

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Addressing the research questions as stated in the previous section, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of North-South partnerships in the context of internationalisation of higher education by making known how Wits, a public South African university, manages such partnerships, particularly regarding the challenges they pose. More specifically, the study's objectives are to:

1. explain the role/s partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of Wits;
2. describe how institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices at Wits;
3. explore the challenges of conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships at Wits and
4. analyse how Wits responds to challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships.

In doing so, the study focuses on a Southern perspective on North-South higher education partnerships and emphasises the lived realities of such partnerships for people in the global South. This focus is reflected in the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, which are briefly discussed in the section that follows.

1.6 Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

In this study, North-South partnerships of a South African university are embedded in the broader context of higher education internationalisation. Therefore, the three main concepts pertaining to this study are higher education, internationalisation and partnerships. These concepts are discussed with reference to their relevant South African, African and global environments. As the main focus of the study is on the nature of the partnerships between higher education institutions in the global South and the global North, with a particular focus on the challenges these partnerships pose, the notion of North-South is critically discussed. This discussion draws analytical insights from postcolonialism, as it allows for a critical view on internationalisation from the perspective of the global South and places the discussion of North-South partnerships firmly in the broader context of unequal relations between the global North and the global South. In that sense, challenges experienced in North-South partnerships are linked to imbalances in wealth, power and knowledge, which tend to favour Northern institutions. Through a postcolonial lens, the discussion of North-South partnerships and, more broadly, internationalisation of higher education, is also connected to pertinent issues affecting the South African higher education sector today, which include transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation.

As has been indicated, the issue of situatedness is an important aspect of this study in terms of its focus on a global South perspective on North-South higher education partnerships. It is linked to the concept of positionality, which is unpacked in the section that follows.

1.7 Issues of Positionality

Positionality affects main aspects of this research. As already indicated, it is significant that the research site is in the global South, as the study's focus is on a Southern perspective on North-South partnerships. Positionality is also important in the context of the case study institution and the research participants. While Wits occupies a dual position in terms of its identity in relation to the notion of North-South, the positionality of the research participants is mainly framed in the context of their position and function within the University as well as their backgrounds and experiences. These aspects are explored further in the data analysis chapter. At this point, I discuss in greater detail issues of positionality in relation to my role as a researcher.

As a doctoral researcher, I do not quite seem to fit into any one drawer. I am a student registered in a school of education. However, I often feel much more at home in the social sciences than in disciplines such as teacher education or science education, an inclination which I might owe to previous studies in sociology. For the greater part of my doctoral research, I have been engaged in full-time work and part-time studies, more the former than the latter. When I first registered for my degree, I was a member of the support staff at an academic institution pursuing academic activities through doctoral studies. I was an experienced practitioner and a novice researcher. Taylor, Downs, Baker and Chikwa (2011, pp. 203-204) refer to many of these dimensions and others as *intermezzo* positionality. Similarly, I will use the term *in-betweenness* to refer to my position as someone who sits in between two things that are seemingly at opposite ends while displaying characteristics of both.

Engaging with this in-betweenness has been an integral part of my PhD journey, and it is important to reflect here on my positionality, particularly regarding my North-South and practitioner-scholar identities, for mainly two reasons: Firstly, it will provide clarity on how I was implicated in the research presented here. Secondly, this understanding will guide the reader as to why and how I conducted my research as well as how I reached my findings. Chasi points out "that human beings do not merely perceive the world" and notes further that "We do not merely describe it, but instead we encounter it through the filter of our ways of knowing. On this view, languages, histories and cultures filter and inform how and what we perceive" (Chasi, 2018, p. 54). I therefore want to make the filter of my ways of knowing visible and locate myself in my work, acknowledging that as researchers we need "to reflect on how our location influences the questions we ask, how we conduct our research, and how we write our research" (England, 1994, p. 87).

Researcher positionality is, therefore, closely linked to reflexivity (Bourke, 2014; Dyll, 2018). According to England (1994, p. 82), reflexivity "is self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher". This introspection and scrutiny does not only involve reflecting about the researcher in terms of his or her background but also about his or her relation to the research topic, to the research participants, the research process and experiences made (Bourke, 2014). In other words, reflexivity means both looking inward and outward (Rose, 1997, p. 309). Inward looking involves for the researcher to reflect on his or her identity. Outward looking, on the other hand, involves reflecting on the researcher's relation to the research and the world in general. Throughout this thesis, I reflect on my

positionality by looking inward and outward. At this point, I focus on a brief reflection on my biography as well as my relation to the research topic. Other aspects of positionality such as my relation to the research participants as well as implications for the broader research process are discussed in greater detail in later chapters, particularly concerning methodological considerations (Chapter Four), data analysis (Chapter Six) as well as final reflections (Chapter Seven).

1.7.1 Reflections on my Biographical Position

The question of how my interest in studying a North-South dimension arose cannot be separated from my biography. North-South figuratively runs through my veins, as I was born to a German mother and a Sudanese father. I was raised, educated and socialised in the North of Germany, in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), based on predominantly Northern norms and values in the absence of my Southern father, his history, language and culture. Now in my mid-forties, I am coming to a point where I will have spent almost half my life in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, and the other half in South Africa, where I have lived and worked for almost 18 years. For most of my professional life, I have worked in international higher education, holding positions in international offices of higher education institutions in Germany and South Africa, in an agency of the European Commission in Brussels as well as in South African representations of German, Dutch and British organisations facilitating education collaboration. In these contexts, I have been exposed to the interplay of Northern and Southern views, needs and interests and have gained deep insights into both perspectives. In South Africa, a country that is preoccupied with racial divisions, the fact that I am a black German, who has also occasionally been identified as Indian, often leads to interesting engagements with people from all kinds of backgrounds.

In many ways, I know, express and occupy aspects of Northern and Southern perspectives. This has richly coloured my experiences of the individuals and institutions I have worked with. I will illustrate this using an example from my study abroad practice. For students from the North studying abroad seems predominantly motivated by personal ambitions and individual self-fulfilment. When I was a student in Germany, adding an international experience to my curriculum vitae and exploring different cultures were certainly the main reasons why I decided to study abroad in Scotland and Russia. In contrast, the majority of South African students I have met over many years of facilitating student mobility are motivated differently. They

ponder about how they will use their privileged position to give back to their community or society at large upon returning from their stay abroad. And they often ask this question before they even leave for their study abroad destination. The possible reasons for this, which will not be explored further here, could include a complex interplay of cultural, economic and other dimensions.

Where North-South is often used as an expression of contrast, with North and South placed at opposite ends of the spectrum, I am both and therefore somewhere in-between. While I cannot ignore the Northernness of my identity, in my work, I generally focus on my Southernness, which is particularly true in the context of this study. I took a deliberate decision to register for my studies at a university in the South, with a supervisor interested in driving a Southern agenda. What is more, the study's focus is on a Southern perspective on North-South partnerships, and my research draws heavily on my experiences and networks in the South African higher education sector. This is facilitated by me being a member of IEASA, which allows me to keep abreast of relevant discussions and developments. Through my association with IEASA, I have been able to build and maintain a national network of colleagues working in the space of internationalisation, which offers numerous opportunities for exchange and mutual learning. In my capacity as holder of the partnerships portfolio of IEASA's Management Council, a position I held from 2011 to 2017, I was able to play an active role in that regard, for example, through facilitating partnerships workshops at IEASA's annual conferences. Workshops like these contribute to strengthening the internationalisation community in South Africa by providing practitioners and scholars with an opportunity to draw on each other's knowledge, skills and experiences. It is this kind of work and exposure that has brought me to the topic of this research, which I explore further in the following section.

1.7.2 Reflections on my Relation to the Research Topic

The topic of North-South partnerships in higher education is very close to my heart, and my interest in researching it grew out of my many years of practical experience in the field of international collaboration in higher education. In that sense, this study is an example of practitioner-scholarship. Practitioner-scholars are generally interested in both studying knowledge that emanates from competent practice as well as applying academic research to practice (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016). As a practitioner, more specifically the manager of international partnerships at a South African university, I was often confronted with practical

challenges of establishing partnerships with institutions in the global North. For example, in my practical experience, 'traditional' student exchanges with Northern institutions, which are based on tuition waivers, hardly ever work in the South African context.

In addition to administrative challenges regarding credit transfer, compatibility of academic calendars and language, most South African students cannot participate in these exchanges due to financial constraints. They simply cannot afford to take part, as living costs in the Northern host countries are prohibitive, which is often exacerbated by unfavourable exchange rates. At the same time, opportunities to access funding and scholarships are scarce, especially for non-degree studies. Due to the limited ability of South African students to take up available places, exchange programmes often end up being imbalanced and one-sided, which tends to benefit only the Northern partners. This, in turn, leads to scepticism on behalf of the Southern partners regarding the usefulness of such agreements. However, Southern institutions continue to enter into these kinds of partnerships. As many colleagues have shared over the years, this is often done believing that in a world where institutions are expected to build international linkages, any partnerships are better than none.

Several years ago, I mentioned this dilemma at a session targeting international higher education leaders from around the world at an international conference held in the United States (US). When I noted that many South African universities would rather set up research partnerships than exchange programmes with partners in the North, a Canadian delegate reacted to this proposition with considerable surprise. She said she would have never assumed that one could engage in research collaboration with African institutions because she only ever thought of Africa as a continent in need. This was a defining moment in my professional career, as it epitomised what I had experienced in numerous other encounters. It was an example of me being exposed to a narrative on Africa that is based on the notions of deficit and need.

In its approach to collaboration, the North assumes that the South is lacking and in need of support, and the perceived needs are not necessarily aligned with Southern realities. In this particular instance, at this particular conference, I was irked so much that I took the decision to do something about my irritation. As Mills (2000, p. 226) notes, "many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues—and in terms of the problems of history-making". Turning my personal trouble into a public issue, I started byfacilitating workshops at national and international internationalisation conferences, aiming to bring practitioners and educators from the South into conversation with colleagues

from the North, highlighting Southern issues and making Southern voices heard. This practical engagement was soon paired with a wish to dig deeper into the issues pertaining to North-South partnerships and particularly the challenges they pose. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 59) note, "when we feel irritated or bothered or just cannot forget an experience, we must stop and explore the experience more carefully". Eventually, I decided to embark on doctoral studies, encouraged by calls made at several symposia and conferences for practitioners and academics, in and from the South, to contribute more strongly to internationalisation debates and research.

I became a practitioner-scholar who wanted to investigate "localized problems of practice through in-depth inquiry" (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016, p. 1). Doing research as an 'in-betweener' is not always easy. It required me to continually negotiate the roles of a practitioner on the one hand and a scholar on the other. For example, I asked myself questions about how I could translate my professional self into a language that gains legitimacy in the academic world. At the same time, I wondered how I could write in such a way that I do not deny what I know as a practitioner. Despite such challenges of translation, I believe the exercise was worthwhile, and I trust that the study is interesting and insightful reading for scholars and practitioners alike.

Following these reflections on my biographical position and my relation to the research topic, I conclude that this study emerged from a coming together of a unique set of personal and professional experiences. My professional curiosity (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 58) was facilitated by what I would call a 'biographical predisposition' to North-South issues, which I summarise in the next section as my position on the nexus of two dimensions.

1.7.3 On the Nexus of two Dimensions: North-South and Practitioner-Scholar

Following my reflections on positionality, specifically regarding my biographical background as well as my relation to the subject matter of the research, I consider myself a researcher on the nexus of a North-South dimension as well as a Practitioner-Scholar dimension. This in-between location is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

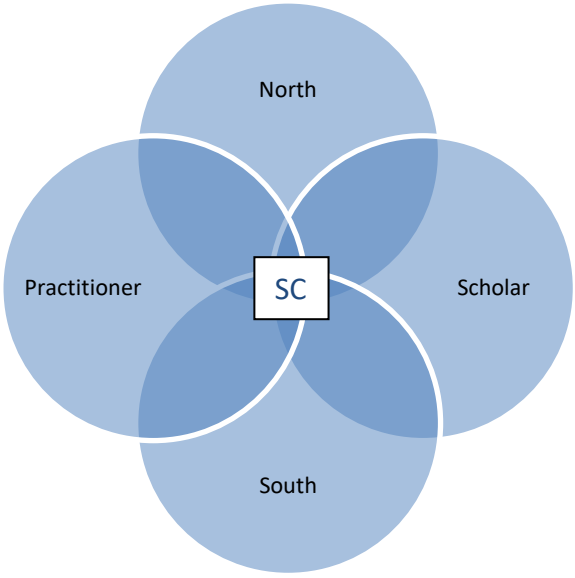


Figure 1: My positionality as a researcher.

Each dimension has two spheres: North and South as well as Practitioner and Scholar. As a starting point, I occupy the space where all four spheres meet, the position marked with my initials 'SC' in Figure 1 above. These spheres refer to different domains of experience and knowledge in my personal and professional lives. It is important to note, however, that my position is not really fixed, as the diagram might suggest. There are no clear, hard boundaries between the spheres. Rather, there is an element of flux, which allows me to move within and in between the spheres, occupying different positions, as determined by the circumstances and the issues being considered.

Having reflected on my background and my relation to the research topic, I note that reflexivity, as a key characteristic of qualitative research, has implications for the entire research. For example, positionality informs methodological aspects of the research, which are briefly discussed in the section below.

1.8 Overview of Methodological Issues

This study's overall objective is to gain a deeper understanding of North-South partnerships and how these partnerships are managed at institutions in the global South. Such an enquiry is well embedded in qualitative research, as we "conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Furthermore, Creswell notes that

qualitative research is needed when we want to pay particular attention to silenced or marginalised voices (ibid.), which this study aims to do by focussing on Southern voices in a context that is dominated by Northern perspectives.

The study adopts a constructivist paradigm, which gives expression to its multiple realities and collaborative approach to knowledge generation, where knowledge is created in interaction between the researcher and the research participants. A qualitative, constructivist stance also highlights the role of the researcher as an active research participant, which relates to issues of positionality as discussed in the previous section. The researcher's self is included in the study, which incorporates elements from autoethnography and self-study research.

Through an in-depth analysis of how North-South partnerships are managed at Wits, this study employs case study research, using a single case, multiple sources of data and non-random, purposive sampling as a sampling strategy. Through the analysis of documents and interviews as the two main sources of information, this study reports an in-depth, complex case, based on major issues and themes emerging from the data. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which were in the main conducted with participants from a variety of different backgrounds between September 2017 and January 2018, are considered particularly important in that regard, as they are a means of collaborative knowledge production. Furthermore, they highlight the multitude of lived realities of people who are involved in North-South partnerships and illuminate the human experiences of such partnerships for people in the global South. This focus is linked to the significance and intended contribution of this study.

1.9 Significance and Intended Contribution of the Study

The significance of this study is mainly threefold. Firstly, by focusing on a South African institution, it provides a partnerships perspective from the global South, which so far has been under-researched. As little is known about Southern realities of North-South partnerships, the insights and voices offered in this study are expected to generate new knowledge on partnerships, specifically in the North-South context. With its focus on North-South partnerships, the study will contribute to scholarship in the field, especially in South Africa, where comparable research has not yet been undertaken. As far as Wits is concerned, this study will complement other research on internationalisation, which has, for example, dealt with the experiences of international students (Ojo, 2010) as well as internationalisation as an emerging

concept at the institution (Cross, Mhlanga & Ojo, 2011). Together with this research on partnerships, all these studies on different dimensions of internationalisation will provide an increasingly comprehensive picture of Wits' internationalisation efforts over time.

Secondly, by exploring how North-South partnerships are managed at a South African university, this study makes a contribution to scholarship on internationalisation in different regions of the world. Presenting a critical investigation of a South African university as the unit of analysis from a postcolonial perspective, is part of the intellectual process of challenging the 'single story' accounts (Nyamnjoh, 2012, p. 16) of internationalisation. At a time where the first draft national internationalisation policy has only recently been published, this study will make a new contribution to the "research, analysis and knowledge production in the field" of internationalisation of higher education, as called for by Jooste and Heleta (2015). Insights from this study can contribute to a more contextualised and nuanced understanding of internationalisation and help "define what a proactive internationalisation agenda might look like from an African perspective" (Kotecha, 2012, p. 3). While the study is not representative, lessons from its Wits case study should contribute meaningfully to the field by enabling practitioners, scholars and policy-makers in South Africa and beyond to better understand the South African context of internationalisation and partnerships so that they can design their engagements in that regard accordingly.

Thirdly, the uniqueness of this study stems from my positionality as a researcher, specifically from my position on the nexus of the North-South and practitioner-scholar dimensions. My in-betweenness sets me apart from other scholars in the field. In this context, it is important to note that my realities, as presented in this research, say something about me and my unique location in the world. As Chasi (2018, p. 57) notes, "When research reflects on this unique path, the results are bound to make unique contributions". Reflecting on my in-betweenness, I noted earlier in this chapter that it allows me to draw from both worlds, be that in the North-South or in the practitioner-scholar context. Combining such perspectives helps create an understanding that is not often found, and I hope that the study speaks to audiences from different backgrounds, offering useful insights for Northerners and Southerners as well as scholars and practitioners alike. As Nyamnjoh (2012, p. 19) points out:

> Forging such mutuality, in a spirit of partnership and interdependence, would help re-energize African scholars and allow for building genuinely international and

> democratic communities of researchers. Global conversations and cooperation among universities and scholars are a starting point in a long journey of equalization and recognition of marginalized epistemologies and dimensions of scientific inquiry.

In this spirit, my study is intended to foster dialogue and understanding and inspire positive change towards more equal and mutual North-South higher education partnerships.

1.10 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters, as follows:

Chapter One is an introductory chapter that provides a general overview of the study, giving an indication of what was studied, where, when, with whom and how.

Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework of the study. Following a review of relevant literature, it embeds North-South partnerships in the broader context of higher education internationalisation and presents internationalisation, higher education and partnerships as the study's main concepts. These concepts are discussed with reference to local, regional and global environments. The discussion of North-South partnerships includes a critical reflection on the notions of global North and global South as well as the challenges inherent in such partnerships due to wealth, power and knowledge imbalances between the partners. The need for Southern agency is particularly highlighted.

Chapter Three presents postcolonialism as the theoretical framework of the study. It discusses the meaning of postcolonialism as well as the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality. The chapter highlights the relevance of postcolonialism as a critical lens for not only North-South higher education partnerships but internationalisation of higher education in general. It also discusses North-South partnerships in the context of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation as some of the most pertinent issues affecting South African higher education today.

Chapter Four outlines the methodology of the study, starting with a discussion of key characteristics of qualitative research and constructivism. Linking back to the issue of practitioner-scholarship as mentioned in Chapter One, the role of the researcher is discussed in detail, with specific reference to methodological elements taken from autoethnographic and

self-study research. Furthermore, the study is discussed as an example of case study research, and methods of data generation and analysis are addressed. The chapter concludes with an outline of issues relating to research quality and ethics.

Chapter Five contextualises the case by presenting documentary data gathered for the study. It provides a general overview of Wits as the case study institution, describing the University and the environment it operates in, which includes an outline of Wits' general stance on internationalisation and partnerships as well as an illustration of the institutional context of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation. Following this, key documents are analysed regarding how they address internationalisation and, more specifically, partnerships issues. The chapter is complemented by a summary of interview data, which is presented in narrative form in Appendix G.

Chapter Six focuses on data analysis, which is presented in three parts. First, documents and interviews, the two main sources of information used for the case study, are brought into conversation. The second part discusses how the data helps answer the research questions. Finally, the findings are re-theorised, reflecting on how what the case study has found relates to the literature review and theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, respectively. The chapter highlights the complexities of North-South partnerships, particularly regarding Wits' dual identity in relation to the concepts of North and South.

Chapter Seven concludes this thesis and offers final reflections and conclusions on the Wits case study on North-South partnerships in higher education and its broader context. This includes implications for policy and practice emanating from the study in relation to Wits as well as the South African higher education sector and beyond. Linked to a discussion of the limitations of this study, suggestions for future research are made. Finally, the chapter ends with a reflection on what the researcher has learnt as a result of this study.

1.11 Concluding Remarks

In this introductory chapter, I have provided a background to the study by placing the Wits case of North-South partnerships in a broader context of internationalisation of higher education. I have discussed why such a study is relevant, noting the contribution the study aims to make to scholarship and debates on the global phenomenon of higher education internationalisation in the 21st century. Contextualisation is a significant feature of this study,

which manifests itself in issues of positionality, particularly with regard to the study's focus on a Southern perspective on North-South partnerships.

In addition to explaining why the study was undertaken, I outlined its general blueprint, giving an overview of how the research was approached and conducted. I argued that higher education, internationalisation and partnerships are the main concepts pertaining to this study and that postcolonialism is an appropriate lens for its South African case of North-South partnerships. Regarding methodology, I described this study as an example of case study research in the framework of qualitative, constructivist research, which generates data mainly from documents and interviews. Finally, I provided a brief indication of what the reader can expect in the chapters that follow by giving an indication of how the thesis is structured. As indicated, the next chapter presents a more detailed overview of the study's conceptual field by discussing relevant literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW – AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPTUAL FIELD

2.1 Introduction

Using a case study approach, my study explores how North-South partnerships in higher education are conceptualised, understood and problematised by academics and professionals at a selected public university in South Africa. In this Chapter, I aim to locate my study in the work of others (Hofstee, 2006, p. 91). This is done by reviewing relevant secondary literature, which was, in the first instance, identified using a number of different approaches including searches of library catalogues, electronic databases and internet search engines. The main overall search terms employed were 'internationalisation', 'partnerships', 'higher education', 'North-South' and 'South Africa'. Reference lists in sources that had been found were consulted to identify further potentially relevant literature.

This chapter reviews literature to frame the conceptual field of my research by highlighting the main concepts pertaining to the study. As mentioned earlier, the three concepts that are fundamental to the work presented in this thesis are those of higher education, internationalisation and partnerships. Each of these concepts is further unpacked. With regard to higher education and internationalisation, the discussion moves from the broader to the narrower, by looking at the global perspective first before considering the African environment and then more specific South African circumstances. As far as partnerships are concerned, the approach is slightly different. I first discuss partnerships in general and then zoom in specifically on North-South partnerships, including a discussion of the notion of North-South. The aim here is not to offer direct comparisons between the global, African and South African contexts but rather to show their interconnectedness, highlighting issues that are relevant for this study in each of the contexts.

2.2 Higher Education

The term *higher education* is understood slightly differently in different countries around the world but commonly refers to education and training provided by universities and colleges.

The South African *Higher Education Amendment Act* (Act No. 9 of 2016) offers the following definition:

> 'higher education' means all learning programmes which must be registered in accordance with the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008), as a qualification or part-qualification on the HEQSF[5], regardless of whether such programmes are in fact registered or not on the sub-framework (The Presidency, 2017, p. 4).

While most universities around the world operate mainly in their own national contexts, we can speak of a global higher education environment, as noted by Maringe and Foskett (2010), which is further described in the following section.

2.2.1 The Global Higher Education Environment

Maringe and Foskett (2010, pp. 2-5) identify seven key characteristics of the global higher education space: (1) lack of uniformity and homogeneity; (2) increasing influence of international law and commodification of higher education; (3) flow of people and finances from the poor, underdeveloped countries to the rich, industrialised nations of the West; (4) subordination of national governments and systems to the influence of regional and international organisations; (5) growing demand for higher education and development of a higher education market; (6) increase in competition for students and staff as well as resources and funding and (7) a focus on producing global citizens.

Other related characteristics of the global higher education environment include, for example, an increasingly liberalised environment with dwindling government support, an increasingly consumerist approach to education as well as an "increased dominance of Western knowledge epistemes underpinned by the pervasive influence of English and a few other global languages" (Wits, 2014b, p. 9).

With developments such as commercialisation of education, a neo-liberal approach is also found in higher education. Neo-liberalism began in the early 1980s and has two distinct forms:

[5] The acronym HEQSF refers to the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, more specifically the "sub-framework for higher education as contemplated in section 7(d) of the National Qualifications Framework Act" (The Presidency, 2017, p. 4), which relates to governmental policy guiding higher education in South Africa.

political and economic (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 909). In the political sense, neo-liberalism focuses on individuals, their freedom a well as their pursuit of self-expression and actualisation. Economically, neo-liberalism focuses on the principles of a free market economy and competition (ibid.). Regarding higher education, Motimele (2017, p. 5) points out that:

> …the university has become an institution of neoliberalism in which the balancing of books, the achievement of profits, and the success in pseudo-markers of quality such as university rankings are prioritised within a framework in which students appear only as customers.

As indicated here, universities are increasingly linked with market-based ideas and policies and, consequently, higher education is more and more understood as a commodity. As Ford and McMullin note, the commodification of education sees international students as a multibillion dollar industry in countries such as the US, Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia (2016, p. 294). Commodification of higher education also leads to increased managerialism, corporatisation and profit motivated governance at universities (Wits, 2014b, p. 9). The prosperity of institutions depends on how they manage to reconcile an academic culture with a business culture. This is illustrated, for example, by the following statement from Wits' strategic plan:

> Universities are recognised as special kinds of businesses, which must recognise and apply business principles if they are to prosper. Academic scholarship and intellectual leadership skills are no longer the sole requirements for running higher education institutions. Efficient management, political networking and fundraising skills are equally, if not more important. Therefore, they need their own 'business models' that address the very specific demands placed on them by the society they serve. (Wits, 2010c, p. 15)

Universities, therefore, have to perform a careful balancing act, which is not easy. From the academic perspective, there are a number of concerns, expressed, for example, as follows:

> The system of business principles and statistical accountancy has resulted in an obsessive concern with the periodic and quantitative assessment of every facet of university functioning. An enormous amount of faculty time and energy are expended in the fulfillment of administrative demands for ongoing assessment and reviews of programs and in the compilation of extensive files demonstrating, preferably in

> statistical terms, their productivity – the number of publications, the number of conference papers presented, the number of committees served on, the number of courses taught, the number of students processed in those courses, quantitative measures of teaching excellence.
>
> Excellence itself has been reduced to statistical accountancy (Mbembe, n.d., no pagination)

In such an environment, which is changing more rapidly than ever before, universities around the globe face a double challenge. They have to be innovative and responsive and forever find new ways of discovering and sharing knowledge. However, they have to do so with public funding that is stagnant or declining (Weber, 2016, p. 213).

Globally, knowledge institutions have a role to play in national development. There is, for example, a correlation between rates of participation in higher education and levels of socio-economic development (Rensburg, 2016, p. 308). When the importance of the higher education sector to the economy is acknowledged, it is not surprising that national governments are interested in encouraging the growth of higher education (Foskett & Maringe, 2010, p. 307). Consequently, universities around the world have to meet an ever-increasing demand for higher education. As Foskett and Maringe (2010, p. 307) further note, "UNESCO[6] (2009) estimates that participation grew from 28 million in 1970 to 152 million in 2007, with an annual growth rate over that period of 4.6 per cent, and a rapid increase of some 33 per cent since 2000". Higher education growth has been particularly strong in emerging economies.

As far as competition is concerned, global university rankings have become an indicator of how universities compete on a global scale for prestige and status as well as students, staff and resources. On the surface, rankings can be seen as an instrument to make knowledge about higher education publicly available, and such knowledge can assist potential students in identifying the most suitable institution, programme or course (Ford & McMullin, 2016, p. 291). At the same time, there is also a lot of criticism, for example, regarding the ease with which indicators can be influenced as well as academic peer bias (ibid.).

Rensburg highlights the risks associated with the ranking practice. He points to the huge pressure that institutions are under in terms of elevating their positions in global rankings,

[6] The acronym UNESCO stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. For more information: https://en.unesco.org/.

following the logic of "perform or perish" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 307), which is "increasingly differentiating not just universities but also nations and regions" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 309). Rensburg (2016, p. 308) challenges this logic as well as the underlying assumption that "greatness in terms of knowledge and research is already known and needs only to be emulated". Instead, he claims that "greatness is evolving and must evolve, in response to the multiplication and proliferation of pressing challenges with which the whole of humanity and its planet are faced" (ibid.). He also notes that universities should no longer be ranked mainly according to their research outputs but "also by how they and their research and other activities respond to these grand challenges" (ibid.).

At this point, it seems appropriate to briefly reflect on the role that research universities play in the development of higher education as well as in the socio-economic development of the countries and regions in which they are situated. Research-intensive universities have a particular role to play in that regard, as they can help build sustainable research capacity and address challenges of global concern such as climate change, poverty and diseases (Wits, 2010b). Research universities are also "essential to the transformation of any economy" and are "required to generate and adapt knowledge that is needed to improve production systems and social cohesion" (ARUA, n.d., p. 4). Strengthening research capacity in Africa is particularly important, as, with the exception of South African institutions, most of the continent's leading universities were "structured as under-graduate training institutions, often with some linkage to a UK or European university that took case of their graduate training needs" (ARUA, n.d., p. 2).

Rensburg (2016, p. 310) argues that research universities can only be truly great if they "elevate, and be seen and known to elevate, all of humanity, including the poor and the marginalised inside and outside their nation-states, regions and continents". He proposes that universities take the lead in finding solutions to the grand challenges by: (1) establishing international inter-university epicentres of critical thought and conversation; (2) facilitating action within global networks by debating proposed solutions and seeking agreement on how to move forward; (3) educating more civic-minded and cosmopolitan citizens through cooperatively developed and taught curricula and (4) enrolling and supporting higher proportions of youth and minorities, especially from poor and marginalised communities. According to Rensburg (2016, p. 317), research universities "must be, and must be seen to be, inclusive and civic-minded, and cooperative and integrative in their efforts".

Regardless of their main function and location, in the 21st century, universities around the world face a number of challenges. As Weber (2016, p. 204) notes, their survival will depend on their capacity to adapt to changes and to do so quickly enough. In that regard, Weber (2016, pp. 204-205) points to four universal challenges affecting universities today: (1) internationalisation; (2) competition; (3) increased pace of scientific and technical progress and (4) emergence of the knowledge economy. He also notes that universities are resilient institutions and have proven that they can adapt to changes in their history, which in individual cases spans up to nine hundred years (Weber, 2016, p. 204). Modern universities in Africa do not have such long histories, spanning centuries. However, in the context of this study, the African higher education landscape deserves particular attention and is discussed in greater detail in the section that follows.

2.2.2 The African Higher Education Environment

There are about 2,000 HEIs on the continent, and the sector is diverse and differentiated, as noted at the 1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future in 2015. In terms of differentiation, African higher education includes institutions that are public and private, not-for-profit and for-profit, comprehensive and specialised. As far as diversity is concerned, the sector comprises of institutions that:

> …exhibit divergent missions, visions and values, patterns of access, enrolment and equity, systems of management, governance and accountability, financing and budgeting models, quality of teaching and learning pedagogies and infrastructures, levels of training for academic staff and research productivity, and forms of national, regional and international collaborations and partnerships. They also differ in the nature of their relations with the state, practices of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, linkages with society and industry, and ability to produce graduates needed by the economy (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 2).

In spite of their differences, institutions across the continent have some things in common. For example, since the era of colonialism and, in the case of South Africa, apartheid formally ended, there has been considerable and rapid growth of the sector in response to growing demand. However, despite impressive growth "during the last two decades, enrolment still stands at about 7 % of the age cohort – low in comparison to other regions of the world"

(African Union [AU], 2016, p. 18). Furthermore, African higher education "faces serious challenges manifested in poor quality, inadequate infrastructures, outdated pedagogies, low levels of funding, scholarly productivity, and global competitiveness" (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 2).

Regarding global competitiveness, as measured through world university rankings, it is noted with concern that "with the exception of South Africa and Egypt, none of the African universities appears in the top of these rankings" (AU, 2016, p. 19). Other concerns include "considerable inequities in gender, social class, geographic location, minority groups, and disability among others", "an ageing population of professors and trainers", the "working and living conditions of both faculty and students", the "mounting cost of tertiary education" as well as "the growing trend in jobless graduates" (ibid.). Notwithstanding these challenges, higher education on the continent has a role to play in creating a prosperous and peaceful Africa. It is required to "Produce the human capital required for the continent's inclusive and sustainable development, democratic citizenship, and repositioning as a major global actor" (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 3).

2.2.2.1 The Role of Higher Education in Africa's Development

Africa is rising and offers tremendous development opportunities (Rensburg, 2016, p. 313). Development and education are intrinsically linked, as "for any meaningful and sustainable economic growth to be realized and sustained, tertiary education must be centrally placed in the development agenda of nations" (AU, 2016, p. 18). In other words, education can be considered "the engine that drives economic growth, fuels innovations and creates jobs" (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 12).

After having previously received less attention by national governments as well as international agencies, higher education in Africa has been recognised as a key sector for development (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 22). In 2009, the Association of African Universities (AAU) hosted a conference entitled "Sustainable development in Africa – The role of higher education". In the *Abuja Declaration*, which emanated from the Conference, the role of higher education is described as follows:

> Higher Education has a special responsibility to conduct the scholarly and scientific research necessary to generate the new knowledge needed, and to train the leaders and teachers of tomorrow, laying emphasis on integrative learning and the ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings (AAU, 2009, p. 1).

Further, the Declaration urges higher education institutions on the continent to produce research that is aligned with developmental needs, relevant, accessible and applicable. Institutions are also encouraged to foster collaboration with national and international partners in education, government and the private sector (AAU, 2009). Sehoole and Knight (2013, p. 192) highlight that the economic dimension of development affects higher education, as universities are expected to produce graduates that meet the demands of the labour market as well as new knowledge for the knowledge economy. Similarly, Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 85) note:

> Given the vital link between higher education and development, any strategy intended to achieve this must include plans and policies on the role of higher education in skills development. Any long-term development plan requires that the state and government design means and methods to capacitate its people for participation in the economy.

Sehoole and Knight (2013, p. 192) point out that universities have a role to play in addressing human development and issues relating to, for example, culture, health, governance, education and the environment. Thus, universities play an important role in the development trajectory of their nations as well as the continent as a whole.

Summarising the role of universities in development, Ndofirepi and Cross (2014, p. 292) note that "Their business has been basically to produce, through research, relevant knowledge, and to disseminate the same knowledge, through teaching". While higher education recognises its role in achieving the continent's development goals, the sector is experiencing difficulties in meeting such societal demands due to lack of resources and capacity, poor governance and leadership as well as the low quality of academic programmes (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 12). These challenges merit closer investigation.

2.2.2.2 Challenges Facing African Higher Education

Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 22) note that "By international standards, Africa is the least developed region in terms of higher education institutions and enrollments". African higher education faces major challenges, mostly regarding issues such as "access, governance, the role of research and publishing, information technology, the academic profession, the 'brain drain' and migration of talent, and others" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 24). Regarding access, Rensburg (2016, p. 314) notes that African institutions struggle to meet the growing demand for higher education and to increase the participation rate from eight per cent to a global average of 32 per cent. With the public sector struggling, private higher education institutions are on the rise. Apart from draining resources such as academic staff from the public sector, private higher education raises concerns regarding quality of its education provision and the lack of accountability of institutions, including those that are foreign-based (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 34).

As far as governance is concerned, Teferra and Altbach (2004, pp. 30-31) highlight that challenges include, for example, excessive levels of non-academic staff, high staff costs as well as "poor, inefficient, and highly bureaucratic management systems", which can be further exacerbated by poorly trained and qualified staff. Furthermore, governance can be negatively affected by practices such as corruption and embezzlement as well as governmental interference regarding the appointment of university presidents or vice-chancellors (ibid.). Regarding research and publishing, African higher education institutions experience challenges in terms of access to journals and databases as well as inadequate research and publishing infrastructures, resulting in low research output (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 38). As Rensburg (2016, p. 314) notes, African research productivity stands at less than two per cent of the global output.

Meanwhile, Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 39) highlight that many African research activities are funded "by external agencies, such as bilateral and multilateral bodies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, and others". Given such dependency on external funding, it is important "to ensure that the research that is taking place, regardless of the source of funding, meets the needs of African scientists and the broader interest of African societies" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 40).

Generally, financial constraints weigh heavily on African higher education. Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 27) note that due to massification at times of little economic growth, higher

education has become unaffordable and institutions across the continent face serious shortages of books and teaching materials, labs and lab equipment and supplies. Furthermore, they point out the following:

> The total yearly expenditure for higher education in Africa as a whole does not even come close to the endowments of some of the richest universities in the United States. The budgets of individual universities in many industrialized countries exceed the entire national budgets for higher education in many African nations (ibid.).

Jowi (2012a, p. 55) points out that Africa spends an insignificant 0.3 per cent of its total gross domestic product (GDP) on research. Rensburg also comments on the severe underspending for research, noting that the entire research output of Africa equals that of a single country, the Netherlands. Furthermore, South Africa's research output, which accounts for 40 per cent of Africa's total, is matched by that of a single institution, Harvard University (Rensburg, 2016, p. 314). The migration of talent and skills away from Africa is another serious challenge facing the continent. As Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 41) note, the "term 'brain drain' is frequently used to describe the movement of high-level experts from developing countries to industrialized nations". It is most commonly facilitated by "Social upheavals, political instabilities, economic uncertainties, real and perceived persecutions, and poor working and living conditions" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004. p. 45). While brain drain is often problematised in the North-South context, there is also an internal mobility of scholars, "best described as the flow of high level expertise from the universities to better-paying government agencies and private institutions and firms" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 41).

In the context of severe challenges facing the sector, it is a daunting task for universities on the continent to play a critical role in contributing to Africa's development, reducing poverty, creating jobs and generating knowledge and research (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 12). To fully understand the present challenges faced by the African higher education sector, a look at the history of the continent' education systems is important, as it reveals the devastating impact of colonialism and its aftermath. As Rodney (2010, p. 444) notes, there was an "incredibly small number of Africans who were able to acquire 'modern' skills during the colonial period". Today's lack of skills among Africans can be traced back to colonial times where, in some places such as South Africa, there was "specific racial discrimination in employment, so as to keep the best job for whites" (ibid.). The system was set up in such a way that there was an "international division of labor aimed at skills in the metropoles and low-level manpower in

the dependencies" (Rodney, 2010, p. 445). The following section further explores the link between colonialism and present-day challenges in African higher education.

2.2.2.3 Connecting the Present with the Past: Colonialism and its Aftermath

Higher education in Africa is much older than the arrival of Europeans. However, "While Africa can claim an ancient academic tradition, the fact is that traditional centers of higher learning in Africa have all but disappeared or were destroyed by colonialism" (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 23). In addition, the legacies of colonialism affect African higher education insofar as universities on the continent were, with only one possible exception, Ethiopia, "shaped by colonialism and organized according to the European model" (ibid.).

While there were some differences in the European models depending on the colonising country, Teferra and Altbach note that "Colonial higher education policy had some common elements". These included, for example, limited access, limited academic freedom and autonomy, the use of colonial languages as well as limited curricula and academic offerings. The main purpose was to support the administrative systems of colonialism (2004, pp. 23-24). While the relation of the colonisers and the colonised was primarily economic, colonialism was "effected through power, political power, but it was also accomplished through cultural subjugation – for instance, through control of the education system" (Wa Thiong'o 2009, p. 108).

Even though colonialism on the continent has formally ended, its legacy shapes African higher education to this day. As Singh (2010, p. 270) points out, institutions continue in the way they were set up, following colonial examples. The programmes and curricula continue to replicate colonial European models, and European languages continue to be used as the main medium of instruction. Regarding the latter, Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 45) note:

> Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese remain the major international languages of instruction at African higher learning institutions. At a time when globalization has become such a powerful force, the dominant position of European languages has become even more accentuated and evident. English has become particularly powerful, even dominating over other major European languages. The predominance of English is fueled by, among other things, the Internet and globalization.

European languages, and particularly English, are not only the dominant languages of instruction at higher education institutions; they are also the dominant languages of scholarship. As Teferra and Altbach (2004, p. 46) point out:

> African universities rely on the knowledge system that has been conceived, developed, and organized based on Western languages. The Western world produces the majority of knowledge conveyed in those languages. African universities do not have the capacity to generate enough knowledge of their own, nor do they have the capacity and infrastructure to process and translate existing ones virtually from the Western world – yet.

At the very least, as Sehoole and Knight (2013, p. 180) note, efforts to revitalise higher education in Africa were prioritised in the 1990s. More specifically, "With the ascendancy of knowledge as a critical component for development came the centrality of higher education as an agent for knowledge production and advancement" (Sehoole & Knight, 2013, p. 181), leading to the fact that universities today play a more crucial role than ever before.

Recognising past and present challenges, a continental multi-stakeholder summit was held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2015 to identify strategies for transforming the African higher education sector under the topic "Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future". As noted by the participants, the modern African university is poised to "achieve the triple historic and humanistic goals of African nationalism, namely, decolonisation, development, and democracy" (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 2). How this is envisaged to be achieved is further explored in the section that follows.

2.2.2.4 Towards the Future of African Higher Education

Key documents that speak to the future of the African continent are the United Nations' (UN) *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the AU's *Agenda 2063*. While the importance and relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is acknowledged, this account focuses on 'home-grown' strategies and programmes, giving expression to the conviction that "Africa is well poised to shape its own destiny" (AU, 2016, p. 10). Higher education has a particularly important role to play in achieving the development targets set out in this document, particularly with regard to Aspiration 1 of *Agenda 2063*, which envisages "A

prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development" (AU, 2015, p. 30). Education in general and higher education in particular are key factors in Africa's goal to have "Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation". More specifically, the following is envisaged:

> In the Africa of 2063, at least 70 per cent of all high school graduates will go on to have tertiary education at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and Universities with 70 per cent of them graduating in the sciences, technology and innovation programmes, to lay the foundation for competitive economies built upon human capital to complement the African continent's rich endowments in natural resources (AU, 2015, p. 31).

Acknowledging the transformative role of education and training, the AU developed a ten-year *Continental Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25)*, running from 2016 to 2025, as a sector strategy for education and training. *CESA 16-25* is aligned to *Agenda 2063*, as it is "meant to deliver the necessary human capital for the realization of the AU Vision" (AU, 2016, p. 21). Its mission is as follows:

> Reorienting Africa's education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, sub-regional and continental levels (AU, 2016, p. 21).

CESA 16-25 is concerned with all sub-levels of education and training, including pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. It also includes technical and vocational as well as informal and non-formal education and training. While several of *CESA 16-25*'s twelve strategic objectives have a bearing on higher education such as those concerning education infrastructure and policies, ICT capacity, gender parity and equity and harmonisation, one strategic objective (SO) is dedicated to higher education. The goal of SO 9 is to "Revitalize and expand tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness" (AU, 2016, p. 25). Specifically, it aims to do the following:

a) Honor national commitment to allocate 1 percent of GDP to research and innovation
b) Create conducive environments for research and innovation through the provision of adequate infrastructure and resources

c) Link research to the development of priority areas and enhancement of global competitiveness
d) Promote research on education and TVET
e) Consolidate and expand Centers of Excellence and enhance institutional linkages in the continent
f) Promote international research and development cooperation based on continental interest and ownership
g) Expand competitive grants and awards and other support mechanisms to nurture young academics and accomplished researchers
h) Strengthen quality (post)graduate and post-doctoral education to cater for expanding tertiary education as well as meet demand for high level human capital (AU, 2016, pp. 25-26).

If *CESA 16-25* is implemented successfully, it will "eventually enable Africa not only to have the necessary human capital for its sustainable development, but above all to become a major player in the knowledge economy and be a credible competitor in a globalized world" (AU, 2016, p. 35). Taking cognisance of such ambitious goals, the 2015 Higher Education Summit confirmed the sector's commitment to "Produce the human capital required for the continent's inclusive and sustainable development, democratic citizenship, and repositioning as a major global actor" (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 3). Working towards this goal, the following eight priority areas were identified:

- Expanding higher education;
- Promoting diversification, differentiation and harmonisation of higher education systems;
- Increasing investment in higher education;
- Pursuing excellence;
- Building capacity in research, science, technology and innovation;
- Improving business, higher education and graduate employability;
- Facilitating nation building and democratic citizenship and
- Mobilising the African diaspora (Adapted from 1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, pp. 3-13).

These priorities address the challenges African higher education faces, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and provide indications as to how they can be overcome, particularly with regard to access and growth, financing, research capacity and brain drain. Overall, the Summit Draft Declaration and Action Plan emerging from the 1st African Higher Education Summit commits higher education to Africa's development. It emphasises the need for Africa to assume agency for the future of its higher education sector, for example, by situating higher education at the centre of the development agenda, by curtailing the dependence on external donor support and the impact of donor influence as well as by promoting African ownership of research and innovation. While it is encouraged that African solutions be developed for African problems, it is, at the same time, acknowledged that Africa cannot do this alone but in partnership with institutions and governments in other countries and regions of the world. Furthermore, it is understood that Africa can look towards the North for models and best practice. For example, with reference to increased investment in higher education, it is stated that this might entail "special tax incentives for private and charitable investments in higher education as is done in North America" (1st African Higher Education Summit on Revitalizing Higher Education for Africa's Future, 2015, p. 6).

Working toward the summit's objective of a "shared vision for the future of African higher education", actions will have to be taken at continental, regional and national levels. Regarding the latter, the following sections take a closer look at the South African higher education environment, as the country is an important player on the continent. It is also the country in which the case for this study is located and therefore merits closer examination.

2.2.3 The South African Higher Education Environment

South Africa is one of the few countries on the continent that have a comprehensive higher education system (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 22). The sector, which includes Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, private as well as public higher education institutions, is governed by the national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (Boshoff, Jooste & Pillay, 2018, p. 23). In terms of South Africa's public universities, the DHET notes in its *Annual Report 2016/17* that "The public higher education sector consists of 26 universities, (differentiated into eleven general academic universities, nine comprehensive universities and six universities of technology), as well as the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences" (DHET, 2017a, p. 33).

According to its website[7], the mission of the DHET is "to develop capable, well-educated and skilled citizens who are able to compete in a sustainable, diversified and knowledge-intensive international economy, which meets the development goals of our country". The Department is assisted in its mandate by a number of national bodies and organisations such as the Council on Higher Education (CHE[8]) and Universities South Africa (USAf[9]). The CHE is an independent statutory body that advises the Minister of Higher Education and Training on higher education policy. It is responsible for quality assurance of higher education, monitoring and reporting as well as the overall development of the sector. USAf, on the other hand, is a non-profit, non-statutory, voluntary and membership association that represents South Africa's public universities. Its main purpose is promoting and facilitating an optimum environment for South African universities to operate effectively as well as contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of the country, which affirms the role of universities and higher education in South Africa's development.

The DHET's focus areas, priorities and strategies in terms of its vision for the development of South Africa's post-school education and training system until 2030 are outlined in the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* of 2013. As stated by the Minister in its preface (DHET, 2013, p. vii):

> It represents government's thinking in the area of higher education and training and is in line with the country's key national policy documents including the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan and the draft Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa.

The overall objective is to transform the system and to eradicate the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, as "Access to quality post-school education is a major driver in fighting poverty and inequality in any society" (DHET, 2013, p. viii). It is envisaged to develop an integrated post-school education and training system which strongly supports partnerships between different types of education providers, employers and other relevant stakeholders.

[7] The official website of the DHET is http://www.dhet.gov.za/.
[8] The official website of the CHE is https://www.che.ac.za/.
[9] The official website of USAf is https://www.usaf.ac.za/.

Regarding higher education, Habib[10] (2011, p. 8) identifies the following three priorities for universities in South Africa: (1) production of a highly qualified human resource base for national development; (2) development of a new generation of academics for the sustainability of the higher education sector and (3) production of high quality research and innovation for enhanced global competitiveness. The main areas of focus outlined in the *White Paper* include, for example, improving the quality of education, guiding the purposeful differentiation of the university sector, improving access, success and throughput rates of students, improving recruitment and retention of academic staff and increasing research and innovation. As stated in the *White Paper* (DHET, 2013, p. 27), "Universities are crucial institutions in terms of reaching our national development objectives". This is particularly relevant with regard to addressing national "challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality" (ibid.).

2.2.3.1 Higher Education's Role in South Africa's Development

In the context of national development, it is the responsibility of the DHET to reach "Outcome 5 of the 14 Government outcomes, namely, to produce "A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path" (DHET, 2017a, p. 15). The Department's efforts are guided by the National Development Plan (NDP), an overarching strategic document which provides the roadmap for South Africa's policy development and implementation until 2030.

The main objective of the NDP 2030 is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality (National Planning Commission, 2012, p. 14). The Plan recognises that education has a major role to play in "improving the quality of education, skills development and innovation". For higher education, the NDP (National Planning Commission, 2012, pp. 59-60) includes the following targets to be achieved by 2030: increasing enrolments at universities by at least 70 per cent, to about 1.62 million from 950,000 in 2010; increasing the percentage of PhD qualified staff from the current 34 percent to over 75 per cent; producing more than 100 doctoral graduates per million per year, which is an increase from 1,420 in 2010 to well over 5,000 per annum as well as expanding outputs in science, technology and innovation outputs by increasing government and industry spending on research and development. These targets address some of the challenges the South African higher education sector is facing, specifically with regard to meeting the demand for study places as well as increasing the quality of teaching and research.

[10] Professor Habib has served as the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg since 2013.

2.2.3.2 Challenges in South African Higher Education

Rensburg (2016, p. 313) points out that the higher education system in South Africa differs from those of other countries on the continent in several ways. South Africa is the most productive in terms of research output and international collaboration and ranks in the top of the world in terms of output in a number of specific research areas. The country's research output accounts for 40 per cent of Africa's total (Rensburg, 2016, p. 314).

However, what is important to note in this regard is that such successes cannot be attributed to the South African higher education sector as a whole. Rather, the national context of higher education is characterised by a "two nation state", with 5 universities having world-class status and the rest being "under current rules un-gradable" (Wits, 2014b, p. 10). The top five universities produce more than 60 per cent of the country's entire research output (DST[11], 2018, p. 39). In addition to a differentiation in terms of categories of institutions, which were the result of a policy change, South Africa's higher education system is differentiated in terms of resources as a result of historical legacies (DHET, 2013, p. 29).

Differences based on resources and capacity manifest themselves as a consequence of apartheid, a system of institutionalised racial segregation that existed in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. The South African Communist Party (SACP) as well as the African National Congress (ANC) have described apartheid as a special type of colonialism, where the coloniser (white people) and the colonised (non-White people) were not geographically distant but lived within the same borders (Nkwinti, 2016). Apartheid laws enforced racial segregation and discrimination against non-whites in all spheres of life, including higher education. Reflecting the different kinds of status and treatment they received, historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) are distinguished from historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs). To this day, universities in South Africa "continue to ail under the crippling influence of the legacy of apartheid, with statistics of performance, participation, persistence, dropping out, and quality of educational outcomes still quite traceable along racial lines" (Wits, 2014b, p. 10).

Politically, South Africa's transition has impacted positively on the country's higher education system, particularly regarding massification and diversification of access to universities (Habib, 2011, p.5). Despite such progress, national demographics are not yet fully reflected in

[11] The acronym DST stands for the Department of Science and Technology. For more information: https://www.dst.gov.za/.

student and staff bodies of universities and transformation is slow (Rensburg, 2016, p. 314). The DHET notes that "A welcome growth has been the performance of universities in postgraduate studies. Despite this growth, an ageing academia and the ongoing challenge in attracting younger, especially black academics, remains an ongoing concern for the university sector" (DHET, 2017, p. 11).

As indicated earlier, major challenges facing the South African higher education sector today can be associated with issues of access and participation, throughput and equity, which are often interlinked. For example, in 2011 there was a graduation rate of 15 per cent, compared to an international average of 25 per cent, with black students still more affected than others (DHET, 2013, p. 32). In addition, universities have generally been negatively affected by South Africa's economic transition (Habib, 2011). As Habib (2011, p. 6) notes, universities have become increasingly corporatized as a result of a very conservative macro-economic agenda, with power having "shifted decisively from structures like Senate (where academics predominate) to Finance and Council (where administrators and external stakeholders are in the majority)". Such corporatisation has resulted in, for example, increased managerialism, a stronger focus on profitability, increased administrative workloads for academics as well as a greater need for generating third stream income (ibid.), which were mentioned earlier in the context of neo-liberal developments in the global higher education context.

Habib (2011, 2016) argues that instead of bemoaning the state of affairs or trying to "keep at bay the worst consequences of corporatisation dynamics", universities need to proactively engage with the context they find themselves in "with a view to subverting it in the long term" (Habib, 2016, p. 46). In response to neo-liberalism and corporatisation of higher education, Habib argues for structural reforms. Reforms need to be initiated which enable further reforms down the line. More specifically, he says:

> The net outcome in the long term is a new structured balance of power that enables transformation of the very system itself. It is a response that recognises that there are negative consequences to the engagement, but nevertheless argues that it is better to advance a progressive agenda with some negative consequences than to do nothing at all (ibid.).

Such reforms are transformative in nature as "they begin, however timidly, to pluralise power and change its balance between stakeholders" (Habib, 2011, p. 9). Furthermore:

> If the prevailing state of affairs in higher education is a product of the existing balance of power, then any agenda of change has to speak to the immediate context and be directed to changing this structured balance of power in the medium- to long-term. (ibid.)

Generally speaking, "leading and managing any university is a challenging task in the 21st century, but undertaking this responsibility in a developing world context like South Africa, where the managerial and strategic challenges tend to be more acute, is an even more onerous one" (Habib, 2016, p. 35). As indicated earlier, one of these challenges is transformation of higher education.

2.2.3.3 Transformation of South African Higher Education

Transforming South Africa's higher education system means to redress inequalities of the past. As Boshoff et al. (2018, p. 23) note, "The legacy of apartheid was a racially divided higher education sector of uneven quality plagued by duplications and inefficiencies". In a report on transformation in public universities, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, n.d., p. viii) notes the following:

> More than 20 years into the country's democracy, South Africa continues to face deeply entrenched inequalities in all spheres of our society, including our public universities. Despite notable progress made in addressing historical inequalities in public universities, patterns of systemic exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination persist.

Furthermore, the SAHRC Report concludes that South Africa's public higher education institutions "have not sufficiently transformed in the past 20 years" and that "despite the relative gains, transformation in the higher education sector has been relatively slow" (SAHRC, n.d., p. viii). Badsha (2016, p. XI) notes that there is no uniform understanding of what transformation means in the context of higher education in South Africa and how it should be measured. She further points out that:

> In the first two decades of democracy much of the focus was on broadening and diversifying student access. There is much reason to celebrate significant achievements in this area, although much is yet to be achieved, especially in relation to improving quality, student success rates and better pipelines into postgraduate study and research.

> Less progress has also been made with regard to the renewal of the professoriate, and the representation of black people and women in the senior echelons of the academy remains alarmingly low (ibid.).

Referring to the second Higher Education Transformation Summit, which was held in October 2015, the DHET notes that despite significant progress in some areas, "more needs to be done" (DHET, 2017a, p. 34). What this entails is discussed further in Chapter Three when issues around transformation and decolonisation are addressed in greater detail.

While South African higher education institutions are required to respond to national developmental needs, they do not exist in isolation. Local realities are linked to regional, continental and global contexts. This interconnectedness is explored in the following section as part of a discussion of internationalisation, a phenomenon that affects universities around the world.

2.3 Internationalisation

Over the space of 25 years, internationalisation has become a "global, strategic, and mainstream factor in higher education" (Knight and De Wit, 2018, p. 2). In the 21st century, internationalisation is a key feature of higher education around the world (Ford & McMullin, 2016). This section explores how internationalisation affects higher education in the global, African and South African contexts.

2.3.1 Internationalisation around the World

For universities around the globe, internationalisation manifests itself in, for example, student and staff mobility, international partnerships as well as the importance of international university rankings (Ford & McMullin, 2016). Some of these activities are not new. As Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 289) note, universities have been engaged in international education for centuries through linkages and mobility. However, in recent years, change has occurred in terms of scope and magnitude of internationalisation (Ford & McMullin, 2016, p. 289).

While higher education has had an international dimension for centuries, the term *internationalisation* in this regard is relatively recent, having been used in the context of

education for about three decades only (Knight & Sehoole, 2013, p. 4). As noted in the *IAU*[12] *4th Global Survey* on internationalisation of higher education:

> Internationalization is an integral part of a continuous process of change in higher education; increasingly it is becoming a central motor of change. Its importance has grown along with the more general developments of globalization, offering new opportunities but also posing new challenges. (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 5)

Weber (2016, p. 204) notes that internationalisation is one of the fundamental changes that influences universities regardless of their location, and, as a consequence of globalisation, universities must think and act internationally in every aspect of their operations and relations, including how they work with their main stakeholders and engage in core functions of teaching and research as well as funding, administration and campus life.

In addition, internationalisation has a role to play in counteracting nationalist and isolationist tendencies, which have recently been brought to the fore through developments such as Brexit as well as the presidencies of Donald Trump in the United States of America (USA) and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil. As Swemmer (2018, p. 52) notes, such political trends "seem to militate against international accord thus creating a new dynamic". Knight and De Wit (2018, p. 3) point out that the "danger of isolationism, racism and monoculturalism is a threatening cloud", one that is becoming bigger and "may define present and future challenges of internationalization more than ever". At the 20th Annual IEASA Conference[13], held in Durban in 2017, delegates grappled with how "Growing inequality, the increased visibility of nationalism, racism, sexism, xenophobia and anti-globalisation have strained the internationalisation agenda" (Chasi, Quinlan & Singh, 2018, p. 18), asking themselves questions such as "If we believe internationalisation is important in peace-making, upholding human rights and cultivating globally competent graduates how can we broaden and extend our influence?" (ibid.).

As a reality that affects higher education around the world, albeit differently, internationalisation deserves closer attention and is further analysed in the section that follow.

[12] The acronym IAU stands for International Association of Universities. For more information: https://www.iau-aiu.net/.
[13] The Conference theme was "Advancing Internationalisation of Higher Education: Overcoming Hostility and Building Communities" (Chasi et al., 2018, p. 18).

2.3.1.1 Defining Internationalisation of Higher Education

Knight (2004, p.6) observes that "internationalization is interpreted and used in different ways in different countries and by different stakeholders". In the context of higher education, she defines internationalisation as the "process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution" (J. Knight, as cited in Knight, 2004, p. 9). As Maringe (2010, p. 28) notes, Knight's definition seems to have struck a chord with scholars and practitioners in the areas of higher education internationalisation and is widely accepted.

Maringe, Foskett and Woodfield (2013) highlight that all universities are, by definition, international in character and that this international character is intensified through internationalisation. To reflect this, they propose that Knight's definition "should focus more on adopting an increasingly international dimension" (2013, p. 11). Both versions suggest that internationalisation is not static. It is, instead, a dynamic process; a process that involves change (Sehoole & Knight, 2013; Weber, 2016).

Another term used in this regard is 'transformation'. As Knight and Sehoole (2013, p. 6) note, "Not only has internationalisation transformed the landscape of higher education in the last three or four decades, it has undergone fundamental changes itself". The evolution of the concept of internationalisation reverberates in discussions on its 'comprehensive' or 'integrated' nature (Jones, 2011; Hudzik, 2011). Hudzik (2011, p. 5) defines comprehensive internationalisation as follows:

> Comprehensive *internationalization* is a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility.

Another term used in this regard is *mainstreaming* internationalisation. Mainstreaming refers to the moving of internationalisation from the margins to the centre of attention and onto the agenda of governments, higher education institutions, student organisation and accreditation bodies (Beelen & De Wit, 2012, p. 1). For universities, internationalisation has moved to the centre and has become part of institutional strategy (Ford & McMullin, 2016, p. 289; Knight

and De Wit, 2018, p. 2). Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 290) note further that, while internationalisation is defined and debated by scholars, "there remains a lot of confusion on university campuses about what internationalization is". This observation highlights that, at the institutional level, internationalisation is an endeavour that needs to be carried out and supported by the entire university community, and internationalising the university is a process that is "fraught with increasing complexity" (Ford & McMullin, 2016, p. 295). Knight and De Wit (2018, p. 3) point out that comprehensive internationalisation "does not reflect widespread reality" and that "for most institutions around the world, internationalization is still characterized by a collection of fragmented and unrelated activities". The need to reflect critically on the changing concept of internationalisation has been also been underscored by Brandenburg and De Wit (2011). They urge us to consider internationalisation and globalisation not as dogmatic concepts and goals in themselves but rather as means to an end.

When dealing with as complex a phenomenon as internationalisation, contextualisation is important. As Knight and Sehoole (2013, p. 4) note, internationalisation "is driven by a diversity of rationales, finds expressions in a variety of activities, brings multiple benefits, risks and unintended outcomes" (2013, p. 4). There is an increased awareness that the notion of internationalisation of higher education touches on "realities at the global and local levels" (Knight and De Wit, 2018, p. 3).

Maringe (2010) reports on a survey conducted with 49 universities from around the globe, suggesting that internationalisation is generally considered a response of universities to the influences of globalisation. In many cases, it is considered a key strategic issue and driven by senior academics and/or managers in the intuitions, although less so in non-Western universities as well as in Africa and the Middle East (Maringe, 2010, pp. 30-31). Global surveys such as this one as well as a series conducted by the IAU indicate that there are significant differences in how internationalisation is evaluated by institutions in different regions of the world, particularly regarding its perceived risks and benefits. Such regional results are a critical aspect of any survey analysis, as they "often tell a much more nuanced story about how internationalization is evolving" (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 7). Overall, the *IAU 4th Global Survey* results indicate that:

> …internationalization has fairly clear priorities with respect to specific activities, most often targeting student learning and student mobility. Student knowledge and appreciation of international issues is also the most significant expected benefit, tough

> institutions also perceive risks, at both institutional and societal levels (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, pp. 6-7).

As far as these risks are concerned, institutions "express concern about equal access to international opportunities for all students and about the commodification and commercialization of education. They are also preoccupied that more competition among higher education institutions will arise as a result of internationalization" (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 7). Such concerns arise in the context of globalisation, which refers to the formation of world relations based on a free market economy (Maringe & Foskett, 2010, p. 1). It can be described as the "flow of people, ideas, capital, values, services, goods and technology across borders" in a global or worldwide context (Knight & Sehoole, 2013, p. 5). Globalisation and internationalisation are two complex, closely related processes, and their relationship is further discussed in the next section.

2.3.1.2 Internationalisation and Globalisation

Globalisation and internationalisation are complex, multi-faceted concepts (Maringe, 2010, p. 17). Knight and Sehoole (2013, p. 5) point out that there is no agreement on the exact nature of the relationship between the two – on whether internationalisation is an agent of globalisation or whether globalisation is a catalyst for internationalisation. Maringe (2010, p. 24) offers the following definition of globalisation:

> Globalization is s multidimensional concept that relates to creating a world in which the social, cultural, technological, political and ideological aspects of life become increasingly homogenous and in which economic interdependence and growth are driven by the principles of the free market.

In this sense, globalisation is linked to the concept of neo-liberalism, as described earlier. It is also linked to the concept of internationalisation in so far as it "provides the external environment of a rapidly integrating world economic order which is pushing universities to adopt internationalisation ideologies, strategies and approaches" (Maringe & Gibbs, 2009, p. 85). As such, it can be considered the "single most important driver of internationalisation" (ibid.). Internationalisation, on the other hand, is a key strategy that universities use to respond to globalisation (Maringe & Foskett, 2010, p. 1), as mentioned earlier.

Maringe and Foskett (2010, p. 2) note that globalisation and internationalisation of higher education share common characteristics, as both have political, economic, ideological and cultural dimensions. Regarding internationalisation, Maringe adds a fifth dimension, which he refers to as the academic rationale (Maringe, 2010, p. 27). Central to this rationale are internationalisation activities focussed on teaching and learning so as to produce graduates that are global citizens.

The relationship between globalisation and internationalisation is not a one-way street. On the contrary, Maringe and Foskett (2010, p. 2) emphasise the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the two concepts. While universities have always had an underlying international dimension in terms of mission and focus, globalisation has accelerated internationalisation activities (Maringe, 2010, p. 17). The two concepts are mutually reinforcing ideas, as "Globalization largely provides the external impetus for accelerated institutional internationalization. On the other hand, the intensification of university internationalization activity reinforces accelerated globalization" (ibid). Maringe argues that globalisation and internationalisation are understood differently in different regions across the world (2010, p. 17). He further notes that globalisation can be viewed positively or negatively. In case of the latter, the emphasis will be on its negative impact, especially its contribution to the widening of the poverty gap between the rich North and the poor South (Maringe, 2010, p. 18). Saul (2008, p. 155) points out the following:

> …the real victims of global inequality are to be found right here in southern Africa (as elsewhere in the global South) as disclosed by the grim statistics that reveal, in South Africa, that more, not fewer, of the impoverished (still largely racially-defined, it should be noted) reside here than ever before.

In this sense, globalisation can be seen as reinforcing inequality. Such global inequality was acknowledged in the *Millennium Declaration* of 2000, in which the UN recognise their "collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level" (UN, 2000, Section I). Furthermore, they note.

> We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed. We recognize that developing countries and countries with

> economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable. These efforts must include policies and measures, at the global level, which correspond to the needs of developing countries and economies in transition and are formulated and implemented with their effective participation (ibid.).

Globalisation, then, is here to stay, and universities, like the societies they are part of, have to face it as a reality. In an increasingly globalised world, universities have a value-creation role nationally as well as internationally. "The global terrains are, however, congested and provide uneven playing fields" (Maringe & De Wit, 2016, p. 309). Rensburg notes in this regard that development and growth have not been even and inclusive across the world, and that the poor and less developed stand a chance of being left further and further behind in the global development race (2016, p. 309). The same applies to higher education, where well-resourced institutions with world-class facilities and scholars will find it easier to engage in internationalisation activities than their less capacitated and resourced counterparts.

The response to whether globalisation and internationalisation are seen as positive or negative developments will largely depend on whether their benefits are perceived to outweigh their risks, and vice versa. Generally, one can assume that those who enjoy the benefits will be advocates of globalisation and internationalisation while those at the receiving end will be much more critical and less accommodating of these phenomena. Maringe (2010, p. 24) notes that institutional responses to internationalisation can be both reactive and proactive, with the latter as "preparation for envisaged futures". This raises the question of what the future of internationalisation of higher education could look like.

2.3.1.3 The Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education

Foskett and Maringe (2010) explore how internationalisation of higher education may evolve in the future. They argue that internationalisation will be an important factor for universities to consider to "secure a strong economic, intellectual and academic future" (Foskett & Maringe, 2010, p. 308). They paint a picture of higher education in 2025 and the role of internationalisation in shaping this picture, with the help of the propositions presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Propositions on the future of higher education internationalisation.[14]

Proposition	Context
The global system is not uniform and homogenous.	Differentiation exists and will increase, especially in the context of global markets.
Higher education is increasingly subject to international trades and services law and international law.	With state funding decreasing, universities will have to generate more income from international students and enterprise activities.
Student and staff mobility is predominantly from poor, less developed countries to richer developed countries.	Movement will continue to be from less developed to more developed countries. Traditional destinations are North America, Europe and Australia but their domination of the market place will be challenged by new destinations like China, Singapore and Malaysia.
Higher education is increasingly under the influence of international organisations.	This refers to organisations such as The World Bank and UNESCO and their role in sharing good practice and promoting good leadership. The notion that best practice is shared from West to East will be increasingly challenged.
Demand for higher education will increase in years to come.	This refers to national and international markets as well as expansion to new growth sectors, particularly in countries with high levels of participation, to include mature students, students from lower socio-economic groups etc.
Global higher education is characterised by increasing competition for students, resources, staff and funding.	Universities will have to scan markets attentively, carefully position themselves and be responsive.
Universities are increasingly focusing on notions of global citizenship and related graduate attributes.	This is to allow students to become global citizens and to make positive contributions to the global economy. International experiences through, for example, study abroad will be important but other dimensions such as the internationalisation of the curriculum will play a vital role.

Foskett and Maringe (2010, p. 311) conclude that to enable universities to operate successfully in the global market, increased internationalisation is the inevitable future path. Having an international profile and networks will allow institutions to compete, especially with regard to resources. Research funding, for example, will increasingly be channelled to selected institutions for selected themes of global relevance for the greatest economic and social impact.

[14] Source: Adapted from Foskett and Maringe (2010, pp. 308-310)

All universities will engage in internationalisation, albeit to differing degrees. Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 296) emphasise that an institution's response to internationalisation should be informed by its resources and human capital and that, before deciding which internationalisation activities to pursue, that institution should define what internationalisation means. Apart from such institutional contexts, internationalisation manifests itself differently in different countries and regions of the world. The next section takes a closer look at internationalisation in African higher education.

2.3.2 Internationalisation of Higher Education in Africa

Jowi et al. (2013, p. 15) point out that Africa is considered a late comer to contemporary internationalisation, even though internationalisation as a feature may be as old as the higher education systems on the continent. In this understanding, internationalisation in Africa is linked to the continent's colonial history. Illustrating this further, Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 82) note the following:

> As a result of colonialism, African universities have developed with a specific but rather narrow international outlook. In concordance with the continent's colonial history, most African states developed tertiary education structures which were inspired by those of their respective colonial masters, and worked with partners in the relevant former colonial countries. After independence, this focus did not shift fundamentally.

In this narrow understanding, international education is then synonymous with colonial education, which means essentially that higher education in Africa is inherently international because of its colonial origin and character. Recognising this link between colonial and international, De Wit raised the question if Africa "needs to first de-internationalise to internationalise" at the Going Global Conference in 2012 (Jowi, 2012b). This question is based on the underlying assumption that Africa has "possibly one of the most internationalised higher education sectors" (ibid.). However, the agenda and priorities of internationalisation in Africa were for the most part not driven locally, as "aspects such as funding, curriculum, policies and even the way universities are organised have been largely influenced by external drivers" (Jowi, 2012b). Hence, De Wit suggests that "Africa needs first to shed these" (ibid.).

The colonial interpretation is not generally taken into account when the phenomenon of internationalisation in African higher education is discussed. For example, Knight and Sehoole define internationalisation of higher education in the African context as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (J. Knight, as cited in Knight & Sehoole, 2013, p. 5). They indicate that this definition is intentionally neutral and aiming to be generic so as to be applicable to a variety of different countries and education systems. Internationalisation is considered a universal phenomenon.

As is the case elsewhere in the world, internationalisation is one of the major forces shaping Africa's higher education sector today (Jowi et al., 2013). It is "a necessary strategy in order to enhance the human capital and knowledge provided for the benefit of the societies they serve" (Wits, 2010b, p. 10). As such, it is closely linked to development, which is not surprising, given the role that universities on the continent play. "Simply put: knowledge is development" (Sehoole & Knight, 2013, p. 180). As Jowi et al. (2013, p. 24) note, African universities have an important role to play in facilitating national development. They have been accorded a pivotal role by organisations and initiatives such as the AU and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with regard to capacity building for knowledge production, innovation and development.

2.3.2.1 Benefits, Risks and Challenges of Internationalisation of African Higher Education

Depending on the actors and stakeholders involved as well as on their needs, the purposes and outcomes of internationalisation can differ (Knight & Sehoole, 2013, p. 6). The current growth and development of higher education in Africa have been heavily impacted by internationalisation, which brings about benefits but also challenges and risks (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 15).

As far as benefits are concerned, African higher education institutions pursue internationalisation mainly to increase research outputs and knowledge production and to strengthen institutional capacity (J.O. Jowi, as cited in Jowi et al., 2013, p. 15) This was confirmed in the *IAU's 4th Global Survey*, whose results indicate that "For African respondents, the top ranked benefit is strengthened knowledge production capacity" (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 9). The top three internationalisation activities for African universities are

research collaboration, outgoing staff mobility as well as international development and capacity building (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 13). Through these and other activities, internationalisation of higher education in Africa can make a significant contribution to the achievement of continental development goals (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 16). Sehoole and Knight (2013, p. 178) point put that development is enhanced by promoting social cohesion and by sharing a number of values such as freedom, solidarity, diversity, respect, tolerance and fairness, which universities can promote on their campuses. Engaging in international collaboration can further enhance development through, for example, the sharing of best practice (Sehoole & Knight, 2013, p. 180).

Apart from benefits, higher education internationalisation in Africa also carries risks, as clearly reflected in the *IAU 4th Global Survey*. In terms of institutional risks, African respondents think that international opportunities will only be available to students with financial resources, followed by the risk of brain drain (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 10). As far as societal risks are concerned, African institutions are concerned that benefits of internationalisation are not shared equally, that a 'Western' epistemological approach is dominant and that education is commodified and commercialised (ibid.).

In the context of colonial legacies, international cooperation in general and internationalisation of higher education in particular have not been self-initiated and self-directed but rather continues to be shaped by power imbalances (Singh, 2010, p. 270). In this regard, another risk of internationalisation of higher education in Africa is that it facilitates continued external dependencies. For example, African respondents to IAU's 4th global survey "cited national and international rankings as the most significant driver of internationalization, not government policy" (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 9). Furthermore, they indicate that demand from foreign institutions is among the top three external drivers (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 10). The African context of higher education is still characterised by dependence on foreign funding and personnel (Sehoole & Knight, 2013, p. 181). While international expertise can strengthen programmes at African institutions, such external knowledge might not always be relevant and "a panacea for all challenges" (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 21). Concerning dependency on external funding and resources, Jowi et al. (2013, p. 27) point out that these might have negative impacts on African higher education through the adoption of inappropriate policies and educational models, undue influence on research agendas as well as concerns regarding the safeguarding of African intellectual property.

Apart from carrying risks, internationalisation of higher education in Africa has different nuances than elsewhere. Singh (2010) notes that while internationalisation activities in Africa span a wide variety of activities, these do not carry the same weight as in other regions of the world. For example, on the one hand, African countries are primarily sending countries when it comes to student and staff mobility. On the other, African countries are primarily recipients of cross-border or transnational education (Singh, 2010, p. 270).

In addition to the risks highlighted above, there are several challenges that African higher education institutions face in their efforts to internationalise. For example, "the challenge of pursuing global competitiveness from an African context is rendered more demanding by the reality of inadequate financial resources" (Wits, 2010c, p. 35). When asked about internal obstacles to advancing internationalisation, African respondents to the IAU's 4th global survey cited lack of funding and insufficient exposure to international opportunities. With regard to external obstacles, African universities mentioned limited public funding, difficulties with recognition of qualifications and programmes as well as the fact that internationalisation is not a priority in national policy. "Only in Africa is the fact that internationalization is not a priority in national policy ranked as an important external obstacle" (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 11). In contrast to other regions, Africa has not yet developed a strategic response to internationalisation but rather treats it "as a marginalised activity with little strategic planning and limited support" (J.O. Jowi, as cited in Jowi et al., 2013, p. 15). There is a need for HEIs and governments to make internationalisation a strategic priority and plan for it accordingly.

2.3.2.2 Towards the Future of Internationalisation of African Higher Education

Jowi et al. (2013, p. 28) argue that if Africa's internationalisation strategies are "double-pronged, with a focus on intra-Africa cooperation as well as reaching out for strategic international partnerships" and are well structured, coordinated and supported, the benefits of internationalisation can be maximised and the risks minimised. They argue further that internationalisation needs to be given requisite attention and turned into an opportunity for growth. Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 85) note in this regard that "African intellectual métissage demands a paradigm shift in higher education so as to respond to the specific and peculiar needs of the African continent as well as the broader overarching dictates of internationalisation".

If Hagenmeier et al. (2017) are right, internationalisation in Africa will have a strong focus on Africa. This is in line with results of the *IAU 4th Global Survey*, which show that in terms of regional priorities, Africa is the most important region for itself. What the results also show is that none of the other regions cites Africa as among their top three priorities (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014, p. 12). Changing this would be working towards achieving the goals set out in *Agenda 2063*, specifically Aspiration #7, which states that "Africa will emerge as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner with a bigger role in world affairs" (AU, 2015, pp. 41-42).

2.3.2.2.1The African Agenda

Internationalisation in African higher education already has an African focus in terms of regional orientation, as mentioned above. There is also a commitment by higher education institutions on the continent to drive Africa's development, as discussed in previous sections. In addition, "Higher education in Africa is currently in the process of casting off its colonial moorings and embracing internationalisation in the true sense of the word" (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, p. 82). Referring to De Wit's question about whether Africa needs to de-internationalise to internationalise, as mentioned earlier, Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 83) note:

> While 'de-internationalising' would be fallacious, it is important that a particular African process for internationalisation be developed, fully reflective of the African identity. It is impossible to sustain internationalisation processes if they are not based on a sound sense of identity and cultural foundation

In this context, it is important that internationalisation in African higher education is not considered a means to an end but rather a strategy to achieve other objectives. For example, Jowi et al. (2013, p. 21) point out that "African scholars and scientists thus need to use internationalisation to develop locally relevant knowledge for local challenges". This speaks to both the need to produce knowledge for development as well as the need to reduce external dependencies.

Hagenmeier et al. (2017) advocate that in future internationalisation in Africa should have a stronger focus on Africa, with an African agenda at the heart of internationalisation efforts of African universities to contribute to the development of the entire continent. In this regard, Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 82) speak of an "Africa-focused and imbued internationalisation

process". They "apply the term *métissage* to denote the process of intellectual crossfertilisation across international borders on the continent" (ibid.). Elaborating further on this notion, they note the following:

> This means that in addition to the generally recognised purposes of a university, African universities should position themselves as catalysts for regional development. In other words, African universities should vigorously and purposively champion and undertake capacity enhancement for the entire region as the rationale for their internationalisation and Africanisation efforts. We advocate in this article that capacity enhancement for the development of the entire African continent should be the fulcrum of the African internationalisation agenda and strategies. African universities should promote Pan-Africanism as well as international programmes and respond to the developmental needs of the continent (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, pp.84-85).

Apart from a continental or Pan-African dimension, internationalisation in Africa has a regional dimension (Jowi et al., 2013). Protocols to foster regional student mobility are in place in the East (East African Community, EAC) and the South (Southern African Development Community (SADC). Bodies such as the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and the Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA) address issues such as harmonisation, quality assurance and regional collaboration in teaching and research (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 25).

In the Southern African Context, the *Protocol on Education and Training in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)* of 1997 makes provision for collaboration at many levels of education, from basic to tertiary education as well as life-long learning. With regard to higher education and training, the protocol stipulates, for example, that universities in member states should "reserve at least 5% of admissions for students from SADC nations other than their own" (SADC, 1997, p. 11). In addition, institutions should "treat students from SADC countries as home students for purposes of fees and accommodation", starting 10 years after signing into effect of the Protocol (ibid.). Furthermore, the SADC Protocol (SADC, 1997, p. 13) encourages bilateral and multilateral cooperation between higher education institutions in the SADC member states in the form of joint teaching, research and development of programmes, curricula and teaching materials as well as sharing of resources and exchanging students and staff. It acknowledges the critical role universities play in the development of human resources as well as the importance of aligning the research agenda with national and

regional needs (SADC, 1997, p. 15). As a member of SADC as well as a country that is "poised to play a significant role as a future hub of HE [higher education] on the African continent" (Wits, 2014b, p. 10), South Africa's internationalisation context is explored next.

2.3.3 Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa

As in the broader African context, internationalisation is not something new for higher education in South Africa. Sehoole (2006) argues that in the country's colonial context, international education is as old as the arrival of colonialism and the emergence of higher education in South Africa. He notes that it is important to "incorporate the role of international education in colonial conquest and perpetuation of segregation, failing which, discussions of internationalisation will be superficial and not do justice to the complex, divided and conflict-ridden nature of South African society" (Sehoole, 2006, p.1).

For South African higher education, internationalisation is "one of its strategic arenas of engagement, a priority area and an area of national importance" (Bawa, 2012, p. 6). It has become an increasingly important issue for universities in the country since the formal end of apartheid and international sanctions. As documented by Jooste (2007, pp. 6-14), the first consultative meeting on international education in South Africa took place in 1995, with representatives of almost all universities as well as representatives of the Committee of Technikon Principals, the Department of Home Affairs, the Matriculation Board as well as the Human Resources Council. The meeting mainly addressed the considerable influx of international students after the end of apartheid and related issues such as income generation, evaluation of international qualifications, study permits, language requirements and services for international students (ibid.). Following another consultative meeting, which recommended the establishment of a voluntary association, IEASA was launched in 1997 (Swemmer, 2018, p. 51).

Today, internationalisation in the South higher education sector is no longer regarded as simply a matter of dealing with the presence of international students on university campus throughout the country. A number of institutions have adopted Knight's (1994) definition of internationalisation of higher education, indicating that their internationalisation efforts include hosting and recruiting international students and staff, mobilising local students and staff, integrating an international dimension into programmes and curricula, setting up international offices as well as developing internationalisation policies (Kishun, 2006). However, in a

differentiated system, the advancement of internationalisation has not happened evenly across the sector. As Jooste and Hagenmeier (2018, p. 5) note:

> …there remain certain universities which still lack appropriate institutional internationalisation framework, international offices and coordination of international engagements. In the absence of relevant national, governmentally set standards, internationalisation remained dependent on the changing priorities of universities.

Nevertheless, internationalisation of higher education is a topic that has been widely debated in recent years, with IEASA playing a facilitating, coordinating and capacity-building role. IEASA identified the need for a national internationalisation policy as far back as 2003 and has since been a major driving factor in its development (Jooste & Hagenmeier, 2018, p. 5). The country's first national internationalisation policy, whose draft version was published for public engagement in 2017, and other relevant national documents are addressed in the next sections.

2.3.3.1 Relevant National Frameworks and Documents

Since the end of apartheid, internationalisation efforts have for the most part been the responsibility of individual institutions, with some guidance and support from national bodies and organisations such as the DHET, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Universities South Africa (USAf). Some documents that are relevant to this discussion are the DHET's *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, the DST's *White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation,* USAf's *Strategic Framework 2015-2019*, the DHET's *Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa* and IEASA's *Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education*.

2.3.3.1.1*White Paper for Post-School Education and Training*

In the DHET's *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* of 2013, internationalisation of higher education is directly addressed in section 4.9. It is seen in the context of globalisation and South Africa's reappearance in the international community after the end of apartheid. More specifically, the phenomenon is defined as follows:

> Internationalisation takes various forms, including: cross-border movements of students and staff; international research collaboration; the offering of joint degrees by universities in different countries; the establishment of campuses by universities outside of their home countries; the growth of satellite learning and online distance education, including online educational institutions; arrangements between countries for the mutual recognition of qualifications; the regional harmonisation of qualification systems; and the increasing inclusion of international, intercultural and global dimensions in university curricula (DHET, 2013, pp. 39-40).

Generally, positive effects of internationalisation are mentioned in this document such as improved "international communication, cross-cultural learning and global citizenship" through student and staff mobility, which, in turn, contribute to building peace and cooperation between nations and to "finding solutions to global challenges such as sustainable development, security, renewable energy and HIV/AIDS" (DHET, 2013, p. 40).

It is argued that South African institutions, especially those that were previously disadvantaged, can be strengthened and can benefit from "an increase in knowledge production, intellectual property and innovation in South Africa", which can be brought about by international linkages and partnerships. It is worth noting that internationalisation is also considered "an opportunity to take local and/or indigenous knowledge to the international community" (ibid.).

As many South African universities engage with the DST regarding international collaboration in science and technology, I briefly touch on the DST's stance on internationalisation, particularly regarding the *Draft White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation*, which was published for public consultation in September 2018.

2.3.3.1.2*Draft White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation*

As noted on the DST website[15], one of the Department's core programmes is Programme 3: International Cooperation and Resources, which is focused on strengthening the national system of innovation (NSI) through strategically developing, promoting and managing international relationships, opportunities and agreements in the field of science and technology

[15] For more information: https://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/programmes/international-cooperation-and-resources.

(S&T) as well as to support South Africa's foreign policy through science diplomacy. The Programme focuses its work on three main components. In addition to increasingly attracting international resources and promoting and facilitating overseas bilateral cooperation, the Programme advances and facilitates South Africa's participation in strategic African bilateral agreements and multilateral organisations to support economic and social development in the region and on the continent.

In this context, the *Draft White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation* frames the increasingly important role that science, technology and innovation (STI) play in South Africa's development. For example, STI should be used to accelerate sustainable and inclusive economic growth, increasing the competitiveness of South Africa's economy and the quality of life of its people (DST, 2018, p. x). In this context, the need for transformation is acknowledged, particularly regarding the participation and development of black and women researchers as well as of disadvantaged universities. Regarding the latter, the DST will develop a strategy "to increase the participation of historically disadvantaged institutions in international collaborations, and to ensure that international collaboration does not perpetuate exclusion" (DST, 2018, p. 53).

Internationalisation is an integral part of the *Draft White Paper*, especially regarding the aim of "expanding and transforming the research system in a rapidly changing and increasingly technologically advanced world" (DST, 2018, p. 38). The research system is required to be an open one, and internationalisation, among other factors, is understood to be central to such openness (ibid.). International research cooperation and partnerships play a significant role in this regard, as they, for example, help attract prominent scientists, strengthen postgraduate supervisory capacity, facilitate the transfer of technology and skills and leverage international funding. They also contribute to internationalising South African research and to increasing the visibility of South Africa in the international scientific community (DST, 2018, p. 51). International partnerships are considered "one of the strengths of South Africa's NSI" (DST, 2018, p. 52), and one of the DST policy intents is to expand internationalisation and science diplomacy. In this context, the *Draft White Paper* contains specific objectives including an enhanced strategic focus, increased efficiencies in international cooperation as well as improved planning and coordination for international cooperation (DST, 2018, pp. 52-53). In its internationalisation efforts, the DST has a strong focus on the African continent, and it is committed to supporting a pan-African agenda. It "will continue to prioritise support for the

development of STI capacity in Africa and the implementation of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa" (DST, 2018, p. 52).

2.3.3.1.3USAF's *Strategic Framework 2015-2019*

In the main, USAf's position towards internationalisation is that the organisation aims to help ensure that the South African "university sector is sufficiently internationalised to benefit from a mobile global student and academic talent pool, and attract and retain top academics and students" (USAf, 2014, p. 2). Of the six goals laid out in the organisation's *Strategic Framework 2015-2019*, one refers specifically to internationalisation. Goal six is geared towards supporting "the internationalisation agenda of South Africa's universities" (USAf, 2014, p. 6). To achieve this, USAf (ibid.) will:

> a. Actively participate in policy development for the internationalisation of higher education;
> b. Support the South African Government and solicit support from the Government in the implementation of international academic cooperation agreements on a case by case basis; and
> c. Monitor the impact of internationalisation on universities.

In terms of priorities for the work of USAf in the period 2015-2019, the main challenge to be addressed is the lack of a national policy on internationalisation.

> Although South Africa's universities are internationalising to improve their scholarship, research and innovation efforts; the absence of a national macro policy framework limits their growth potential in this regard. Working closely with the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA), Universities South Africa will lobby government to develop and implement an internationalisation policy framework with a view to facilitating the cooperation of our universities and their counterparts in other parts of the world to award joint degrees and engage in joint research projects (USAf, 2014, p. 11).

The identified challenge regarding the lack of a national policy on internationalisation of higher education has recently been overcome, as the DHET published its first draft internationalisation policy for public comment in April 2017.

2.3.3.1.4*Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa*

The DHET's *Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa* (DHET, 2017b) was published for public comment in April 2017. It is South Africa's first national internationalisation policy. The *Draft Policy Framework*, which is based on the *White Paper* of 2013, has, as its purpose, to "guide and regulate the activities that relate to internationalisation of higher education by higher education institutions and other role players in the sector in South Africa" (DHET, 2017b, p. 4). Considering that universities had been dealing with internationalisation individually and variedly since the end of apartheid and the re-opening of South Africa, the policy has generally been well-received by the sector. For example, Jooste and Hagenmeier (2018, p. 6) note that the adoption of the policy, which would need to incorporate the comments received from the sector, would be a "welcome and important step to advance internationalisation" and to "ensure the sustainability of the process at all South African universities". Furthermore, Quinlan (2018, p. 3) highlights that "a framework supporting and validating the work of internationalisation is most welcome at a time when domestic political and economic pressures might diminish the importance of engagement in the international knowledge economy".

The *Draft Policy Framework* recognises that South Africa has been affected by all major trends in internationalisation (Kishun, 2018, p. 55). It addresses issues regarding the advancement of internationalisation of higher education in South Africa, specifically the following activities: "student and staff mobility and international research collaboration; cross-border and collaborative provision of higher education; the governance, administration and reporting of internationalisation of higher education; internationalisation at home and the internationalisation of the curriculum; and quality assurance and accreditation" (DHET, 2017b, p. 3). In doing so, it provides a far-reaching framework into which institutions can embed their own internationalisation agendas. In this process, government will play a facilitating role but will not directly steer internationalisation across the sector.

I welcome the draft policy as a first attempt on behalf of the DHET to formally and substantively address internationalisation at a national level. However, it is not yet a comprehensive framework. As Kishun (ibid.) observes, it does not address pertinent developments such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution and how international education will

respond to disruptive technological changes. In addition, I have three main concerns. Firstly, the document, which still needs to be adopted, comes at a time when universities in the country have been internationalising in the absence of a national policy for more than two decades, which means that national and institutional objectives now have to be reviewed and, possibly, re-aligned. The fact that universities have the main responsibility for internationalisation underlines their autonomy and academic freedom but opens up the question as to how individual institutional efforts will be coordinated, particularly regarding the required strengthening of universities that lack institutional infrastructure and capacity to support internationalisation. Linked to that, my second concern relates to the fact that the national government will not provide any funding earmarked for internationalisation activities. On the contrary, it is stated that "The provision of resources for the internationalisation of higher education is an institutional responsibility" (DHET, 2017b, p. 25). On the one hand, the Department "recognises that some of the historically disadvantaged institutions have not yet established the aspired international relations and, therefore, not benefitting from it as much as they should. These institutions are to be encouraged" (DHET, 2017b, p. 20). On the other hand, this encouragement does not translate into financial support. In the context of South Africa's 'two-nation state', where, as described earlier, higher education institutions are differentiated in terms of their resources due to historical legacies, it stands to reason that such a stance will further disadvantage institutions that are already disadvantaged. Apart from aspects regarding coordination and finance, my third and most prominent concern relates to the policy's suggested priority focus for international engagements, which reads as follows:

> In the design of internationalisation of higher education activities by South African higher education institutions, priority must be given to South Africa's interests and thereafter, where possible and relevant, the following order of priority must be adhered to: the interests of SADC states; then the rest of the African continent; then the global South and emerging economies, and then the world beyond (DHET, 2017b, p. 21).

This priority focus is an expression of moving South Africa and Africa to the centre, which is noteworthy in the context of this study and will be discussed in greater detail as part of the theoretical framework in Chapter Three, specifically in the context of Africanisation of higher education, and as part of the data analysis in Chapter Six.

While I appreciate the gesture of putting South Africa's needs first, I think this priority focus is not applied consistently across the policy. For example, the *Draft Policy Framework* includes

benefit to society and contribution to the public good in the rationale for internationalisation. However, it does not engage with the question of how that can actually be achieved. In that sense, I am concerned that the policy misses an opportunity to critically reflect on how internationalisation is generally understood and practiced and to define what it means from a South African perspective, shaping a uniquely South African approach. Such an approach would have to address, for example, the challenges South African institutions currently face regarding dominant internationalisation practices as well as the relationship between internationalisation and transformation.

A more critical discussion of higher education internationalisation has been facilitated by IEASA, especially through the hosting of the *Global Dialogue* in 2014, as previously mentioned. The event, which was attended by representatives from 24 international organisations that work in the field of higher education internationalisation on five continents, resulted in the *Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education.*

2.3.3.1.5*Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education*

The *Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalisation of Higher Education* (IEASA, 2014) was published following the *Global Dialogue* seminar in January 2014. While the document does not address the South Africa context only, it is included here because the seminar it emerged from was initiated and hosted by IEASA. Furthermore, I consider it important because, of all the documents discussed here, it is the only one that was written by a group of experts in the field of higher education internationalisation after intense deliberations over two days. The *Global Dialogue* attendees, representatives of national, regional and other organisations working in international higher education around the world, expressed their "commitment to emphasise the importance of decision-making and practices in the development of internationalisation activities that are imbued with ethical considerations and inclusivity" (IEASA, 2014, p. 2). They highlighted that "internationalization must be based on mutual benefit and development for entities and individuals in the developed, emerging and developing countries" (ibid.). Furthermore, the *Global Dialogue* participants agreed that the following three integrated areas of development should be prioritised:

1. Enhancing the quality and diversity in programmes involving the mobility of students and academic and administrative staff;
2. Increasing focus on the internationalization of the curriculum and of related learning outcomes;
3. Gaining commitment on a global basis to equal and ethical higher education partnerships (IEASA, 2014, p. 2).

The third area regarding equal and ethical partnerships is of particular interest for this study. To contribute towards the development of guidelines for international partnerships, as noted in Action Six of the *Global Dialogue*, I dedicated a partnerships workshop I hosted at IEASA's annual conference in August 2014 to the discussion of equal and ethical partnerships. Participants of the workshop, which was entitled *Partnerships for the Future*, agreed that a strong commitment to ethical principles is particularly important in the context of North-South partnerships, as they tend to be characterised by inequalities. As Chasi and Hagenmeier (2014, no pagination) note in their blog on the workshop:

> …partners should try to avoid the dominance of one partner in whatever way possible and mitigate unequal power relations where they exist. Abuse of power at any level was strongly condemned. Attendees did not agree on how equality can be achieved in North-South partnerships, but they noted that transparency and adherence to ethical principles are core to managing inequalities.

Furthermore, the workshop participants agreed that mutual benefit and recognition of differences were characteristics of partnerships that work. More specifically, the following key concepts and principles were considered important in that regard:

- Transparency, accountability and responsibility,
- Disclosure and honesty,
- Sensitivity, awareness and alignment,
- Integrity, respect and trust,
- Mutual benefit, reciprocity and local 'embeddedness',
- Self- and partner knowledge and
- Flexibility and equity (ibid.).

Having addressed a selection of national frameworks and documents relevant to a discussion on internationalisation and partnerships, I turn to some further background on facets of internationalisation in South Africa in the following section.

2.3.3.2 Facets of Internationalisation in South African Higher Education

South Africa is a "net recipient country in terms of human migration patterns. This is likely to replicate the flows of talent to its HE institutions" (Wits, 2014b, p.10). Indeed, South Africa is a popular destination for international students, particularly from other African countries (Kwaramba & Mukanjari, 2013, p. 56). Factors contribution to South Africa's attractiveness include the use of English as the main medium of instruction, a relatively low cost of living and a well-established higher education sector offering internationally recognised qualifications (IEASA, 2018, p. 36).

In 2016, 69,381 international students were registered at South African universities, which equals just over seven per cent out of the total student population of 975,837 (CHE, 2018, p. 8). However, if these numbers are disaggregated further, it becomes apparent that more than 40 per cent of these students are not mobile but are registered for distance education programmes (IEASA, 2018, p. 35). The majority of international students in South Africa are African, specifically from the SADC region, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Headcount enrolments of all non-South African students in 2016.[16]

SADC	49 403
Other African	11 895
Rest of world	6 649
Unknown	1 434
Total	**69 381**

The highest number of international students at South African universities are from SADC countries, making up just over 71 per cent of international students and 5 per cent of the total student population. Regarding the latter, South Africa has met the quota for student places that should be reserved for SADC students as part of the *SADC Protocol* (Kwaramba & Mukanjari,

[16] Source: Adapted from CHE (2018, p. 8)

2013, p. 68). For some countries, this outflow of students to South Africa is problematic. For example:

> Lesotho's capacity to retain highly trained personnel is low. The South African job market provides better salary packages, and many leave. Lesotho's institutional capacity is eroded as a result. Students from Lesotho who study at and graduate from South African institutions seldom return home upon completion of their studies and instead take positions in South Africa (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 43).

Even though South Africa benefits from international student mobility, brain drain is a challenge that also affects the country's higher education sector.

> Reports indicate that many of the best and most experienced academics from South Africa are migrating to Australia, Britain, Canada, the United States, and other developed countries. It is ironic that while several countries complain about the loss of their highly skilled labor to South Africa, South Africa itself bemoans its loss of talent to other countries. It is useful to understand this "hopping" phenomenon in discerning the effects of brain-drain issues nationally, regionally, and internationally (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 44).

As far as scholarship is concerned, a number of different elements of internationalisation of higher education in South Africa have been addressed by different authors over the last two decades. Rouhani (2007), for example, explores the responses of South African universities to the increased numbers of international students in the immediate post-apartheid era. Others have looked at internationalisation in the context of colonialism (Sehoole, 2006) or focused their contributions on different aspects of internationalisation such as, for example, internationalisation processes in the context of service delivery (Louw & Mayer, 2008), internationalisation in the context of a higher education system that is characterised by under-funding and overcrowding (Dunn & Nilan, 2007) as well as internationalisation through partnerships (Anderson & Maharasoa, 2002).

More recently, Kwaramba and Mukanjari (2013) looked into internationalisation in the context of achieving development goals, particularly with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women. They note that "internationalisation of higher education [HE] plays a significant role in ensuring gender equality and the empowerment of women as it encourages regional and global parity in the treatment of women" (2013, p. 53). Kwaramba and Mukanjari

(2013, p. 62) find that an international study experience can empower female international students by increasing their confidence and recognition in their home countries.

Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 90) discuss the importance of regional and continental integration in internationalisation efforts, using the Master in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa Programme, offered by the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, in conjunction with 13 other law faculties of universities in Africa, as an "excellent example of a capacity-enhancement postgraduate study programme in Africa which is realising African intellectual *métissage*". For them, internationalisation has to be responsive to Africa's developmental needs. Hence, they note:

> In this context, due consideration must be given to continental and regional integration akin to the Bologna process. Continental credit transferability, programme accreditation and/or recognition, system articulation across national borders should enable graduates to pursue further studies at universities in other parts of the continent. This will be of relevance in particular when joint degrees are being offered transnationally (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, p. 89).

In some instances, several different authors have looked into different dimensions of internationalisation at a particular institution such as Wits. Ojo (2010) based his work on an empirical examination of how students at Wits experience and conceptualise internationalisation at the institution. Focussing on bringing out students' voices, he argues that understanding the student experiences is important in informing internationalisation policy and practice (2010, p. 129). Further, he notes that internationalisation is not an end in itself but rather a means for the University to achieve its institutional vision (Ojo, 2010, p. 130). Cross, Mhlanga and Ojo (2011) also examine internationalisation at Wits. They look at it as an emerging concept and focus on the conceptions that inform the internationalisation practice at the institution, the strategies that are in place to promote internationalisation and how these match the universities particular circumstances. They highlight that current internationalisation debates tend to privilege Western concepts of internationalisation as global truths. They note that "In South Africa, where the legacy of isolation and the dominance of Eurocentricism in academia have inspired considerable scepticism regarding internationalisation, the challenge is to find innovative approaches that account for its specific context" (Cross, Mhlanga & Ojo, 2011, p.76).

The specific nature of the South African higher education sector and the challenges it faces were discussed earlier in this chapter. Knight and De Wit (2018, p. 3) point out that "the international dimensions of higher education today may have become too disconnected from the local context". What is important to note in this regard is that, in South Africa, internationalisation carries the risk of further deepening existing inequalities in the country. As Rensburg (2016) points out, legacies of colonialism and apartheid can see historically disadvantaged institutions left out of the internationalisation race. To benefit the sector as a whole, it is, therefore, imperative that internationalisation efforts are mindful of South Africa's needs and are linked to the country's transformation agenda.

Apart from challenges faced at institutional, national, regional or continental level, there are global challenges, particularly regarding issues around education, health, security and the environment. As Rensburg notes, "The grand challenges of the present cannot be solved by any single scholar, leader, university or country working on their own", and in the face of these challenges we require "global-scale combined and cooperative innovations and solutions" and "pooling and networking of resources" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 310). Such global-scale cooperation is often achieved through partnerships, which directly links them to internationalisation. Anderson and Maharasoa (2002, p. 15) point out that the idea of internationalisation as "the conscious and voluntary collaboration between two or more institutions or departments within institutions of higher education with a view to enhancing efficiency in their core functions" assumes partnering, and partnerships are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

2.4 Partnerships

For universities in the 21st century, partnerships seem inevitable. As Foskett (2010, p. 139) notes:

> In our globalised world, higher education institutions that want to be international players have to work with partners, be that in education, in government, in the NGO sector or in the private sector. How to set up and maintain successful partnerships has become an important aspect of higher education internationalisation.

Foskett (2010, p. 141) locates current partnerships in the UK and USA of the 1980s, where the private sector was believed to be able to show public sector organisations how to run their operations. The underlying assumption was that "one partner has the right answers and the other must adopt their way of working" (Foskett, 2010, p. 141). This assumption is, still, often at the heart of development cooperation. Koehn and Obamba (2012, p. 360) point out in that regard that partnerships emerged during the 1990s as the prevailing model for international development assistance. Generally speaking, partnerships are "a grouping of interested and skilled people from a range of organisations which are working together to tackle major problems" (Foskett, 2010, p. 141).

Illustrating the interdependence of higher education, government and business sectors, Foskett and Maringe (2010, p. 313) note that "The rise of the employability agenda and the centrality of national governments in driving the growth of university funding mean that the status of government, business and employers as university customers will grow". Furthermore, "managing a complex set of external relationships will become a business-critical process for university leaders" (ibid.). In that regard, university-business relationships will "see a strong engagement between global corporations and global universities" (Foskett & Maringe, 2010, p. 314).

In the context of internationalisation of higher education, partnerships can play a key role in the internationalisation of all core functions of universities, including learning, teaching, research and community engagement. For example, with regard to IoC, a comparison of seven international universities reveals that the majority of institutions specifically mention partnerships to achieve their aim of creating global awareness, intercultural intelligence, global society and global citizenship through the curriculum (Wits, 2014b). While acknowledging the importance and global relevance of partnerships, it is important to take a closer look at what the term means.

2.4.1 Defining Partnerships

There is no universally accepted definition of partnerships (Foskett, 2010, p. 141). For higher education, Kinser and Green (2009, p. 4) define partnerships as "cooperative agreements between a higher education institution and another distinct organisation to coordinate activities, share resources, or divide responsibilities related to a specific project or goal". Partnerships can

be established between HEIs, but they can also create links between HEIs and, for example, the private sector, governments, communities and international associations (Kinser & Green, 2009; Sutton et al., 2012). Similarly, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 301) use the term partnerships for "any formal or informal working together by two or more higher education entities in pursuit of common goals". Furthermore, they note that there are many different forms of partnerships, which can be established between universities as well as between universities and other education institutions such as schools but also government and industry (ibid.).

When partnerships are discussed, it seems apparent that there are no two of a kind. The many variables that characterise partnerships include, for example, scope, purpose, duration, stakeholders and activities (Koehn & Obamba, 2012, p. 360). While partnerships can vary considerably, Kinser and Green (2009, p. 4) identify the following three features all partnerships have in common: (1) an involvement with an outside entity; (2) a spirit of cooperation and (3) a common goal. In other words, "Partnerships enable a combination of the distinctive aptitudes and resources of multiple actors to be brought to bear on common projects for shared purposes" (Wits, 2010c, p. 31). In addition, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 299) note that "A distinguishing feature across all these partnerships forms is the distribution and flow of human and knowledge capital, which can be justified on six main grounds". These grounds include access to global knowledge processes, combining local and distant perspectives, enhancing the international capital of universities, sharing of resources, national rules and requirements, in case of branch campuses, as well as "the hope of narrowing knowledge gaps and differentials" (ibid).

In the context of international higher education collaboration, Sutton et al. (2012, p. 151) point out that the most common partnerships are exchange partnerships, which are established to facilitate student and staff mobility. Higher education partnerships for mobility and other purposes such as research collaboration seem to be on the rise. They appear to have become a crucial characteristic of internationalisation rather than simply one of many tactics and are increasingly used as "agents of internationalisation" (Sutton et al., 2012, pp. 147-149). However, De Wit cautions institutions striving to set up as many partnerships as possible, equalling their number with the success of the institution's internationalisation efforts. He argues that "the more partnerships, the more international" constitutes a common misconception of internationalisation (H. De Wit, as cited in Beelen & De Wit, 2012, p.7). In

line with this, a trend towards fewer, more strategic partnerships has emerged (Knight, 2004; Koehn & Obamba, 2012). As Knight puts it, "the rationale for developing key, strategic, international-education alliances at both the national and institutional level is not so much an end unto itself but a means to achieving academic, scientific, economic, technological, or cultural objectives" (2004, p. 27). In the case of Wits, for example, it is noted that "The success of our academic projects and our financial sustainability is likely to come about as a consequence of, among other things, resilient strategic partnerships" (Wits, 2010c, p. 31).

Strategic international partnerships are a popular and growing tool for universities to enhance their international reputation (Ford & McMullin, 2016, p. 292; Maringe & De Wit, 2016, p. 308). This is illustrated, for example, by an increasing number of groups of HEI alliances. According to Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 292), strategic university alliances have two main objectives: (1) to strengthen capacity by sharing resources and facilities and (2) to facilitate research across disciplines and national borders to be able to address global challenges.

With reference to research intensive universities, Rensburg (2016) points out that research cooperation and exchange can be fostered through membership in research university networks. Two examples of such networks are Universitas 21, which has 21 member institutions from five continents and the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), which has 16 members drawn from different regions on the continent. Rensburg (2016, p. 316) notes that membership in such networks can help address some of the challenges experienced by universities, particularly those in the South, as they "reduce the brain drain from the South by providing researchers with multiple and repeated opportunities to undertake collaborative research, share knowledge and resources, and build mutual capacities with counterparts in the North and East, without permanently relocating".

Through global research partnerships, universities should work towards finding mutually beneficial, sustainable solutions to the challenges humanity at large faces (Rensburg, 2016, p. 314). No region in the world can "fully develop its people, let alone its knowledge, without collaboration" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 315). ARUA, for example, recognises that partnerships are essential for universities to leverage their resources for greater impact, as hardly any "university in the region is in a strong enough position to make the desired impact on the region on its own" (ARUA, n.d., p. 4).

2.4.2 Drivers for Partnerships

Foskett (2010, pp. 142-143) identifies three drivers for organisations to become involved in partnerships. Firstly, they might be driven by mission aims, which often relate to the organisation's underlying values. Secondly, organisations want to further development aims, both at the individual and institutional levels. Thirdly, organisations may enter into partnerships because of business aims, which includes, for example, access to funding and resources. Understanding these aims is vital to ensuring the success of any partnership, as sustained commitment of motivation of the partners depends on how well their needs are being taken care of (Foskett, 2010, p. 143).

The reasons why HEIs pursue partnerships are manifold. Anderson and Maharasoa (2002, p. 17), for example, mention that HEIs enter into partnerships to respond to emerging challenges and for reasons relating to innovation, continued existence, co-opetition, capacity building and quality enhancement. Perhaps it can be generally stated that HEIs establish partnerships because of a realisation that an institution alone finds it increasingly more difficult to exist in a world where expectations, demands and competition are on the rise, while resources are dwindling. Regarding the latter, Malaza (2011, p. 7) points out that partnerships help South African HEIs gain access to much needed resources. In addition, partnerships are expected to help HEIs address challenges such as brain drain, inadequate numbers of academic staff with PhDs, inadequate curricula and poor infrastructure, as observed by Fischer and Lindow (2008). As Ramphele (2004, p. 17) notes, "There seems to be a cruel irony in the inverse relationship between the size of the development challenges that nations face and the capacity of their university systems to rise to meet them". It is in this environment that partnerships can play a vital part in achieving institutional and national development goals.

2.4.3 Partnerships for Development

In the context of higher education in Africa, the notion of partnerships is intrinsically linked to the concepts of aid and development. Tedrow and Mabokela (2007, p. 166) comment on the link between academic partnerships and foreign aid, as follows:

> Academic partnerships are linked to foreign aid practices. For instance, since the colonial era in the 1900s, African higher education institutions received significant financial support from developed countries. During the 1960s–1970s, the period of

> African independence, partnerships focused on building independent African institutions (Coleman and Court 1993). During the 1980s, the support for institutional building diminished and funding was targeted toward special objectives within departments.

In 2005, ministers of developed and developing countries responsible for promoting development and heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions agreed on far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways aid is delivered and managed (OECD, 2005/2008). In 2008, they expressed their commitment "to eradicating poverty and promoting peace and prosperity by building stronger, more effective partnerships that enable developing countries to realise their development goals" (OECD, 2005/2008, p. 15). Partnership is also an important notion forming an integral part of development agendas including, for example, the SDGs:

> We are determined to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people (UN, 2015, p. 2).

NEPAD (2005), recognising the critical role higher education plays in building the knowledge economy, states that the revitalisation of higher education in Africa has to be a collaborative effort. "Therefore, the need to strengthen higher education, especially through active collaboration has already become an important strategy for building capacity, facilitating professional mobility, enhancing human development and attaining regional integration in Africa" (NEPAD, 2005, p. 2). Partnerships play an important role in this process, and sub-regional and North-South collaboration is particularly encouraged to "ensure effective program implementation, monitoring and evaluation" (NEPAD, 2005, p. 4). There is, therefore, an overlap between academic and development agendas.

2.4.3.1 Overlap of Development and Academic Agendas

The European University Association (EUA[17], 2010, p.11) notes an increasing overlap of interest between 'development' and 'academic' agendas, which were traditionally separate, and proposes that institutions should integrate their development cooperation objectives into their overall internationalisation strategies. Recognising the importance of higher education to the development of knowledge societies and the vital role HEIs play in knowledge generation and innovation, the EUA (2010, p.12) argues that partnerships between African and European HEIs can be seen as a strategic means to contribute to capacity building and development of African institutions through, for example, increasing research and teaching capacity, enhancing doctoral education and creating opportunities for academic mobility. Specific recommendations are made as to how different stakeholders such as governments, HEIs, development cooperation agencies, regional and national university associations as well as the Commissions of the AU and the European Union (EU) can take higher education partnerships forward (EUA, 2010, pp. 20-23).

After decades of neglect, not least because of World Bank policies and focus on primary education, efforts to revitalise African higher education look at partnerships as an important tool for development and capacity building. In this context, Tedrow and Mabokela (2007) look into academic partnerships between a historically disadvantaged institution in South Africa's Eastern Cape Province and three partners in the US, Canada and Europe. They point out that these partnerships "are being used as interventions to support educational reform and curriculum transformation to build a new multicultural democracy in an age of globalization" (Tedrow & Mabokela, 2007, p. 160).

The dominance of neo-liberal economic policies and the emergence of knowledge economies have placed greater value on the production and absorption of knowledge and have placed higher education institutions, as producers of knowledge, at the forefront of social-economic growth and development (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 16). African HEIs cannot adequately respond to development goals on their own, and internationalisation can support them in fulfilling their role. Internationalisation activities can be used to support national resources and initiatives, and transnational partnerships are now at the forefront of development (Sehoole & Knight, 2013, p. 182). There are numerous examples for this, as illustrated by Foskett (2010), who shares lessons from a partnership in the field of demography and population studies between

[17] For more information: https://www.eua.eu/.

an institution in the UK and partners in five countries in the SADC region, which was aimed at academic development as well as institutional capacity building. Obamba et al. (2013) note that at their institution, Moi University in Kenya, international partnerships are mainly oriented towards addressing specific deficits in terms of development and institutional capacity, rather than suggesting a growing convergence in research interests or capacities (Obamba et al., 2013, p. 171). However, partnerships can also facilitate capacity building and enhancement across institutions on the continent. As Gibbon (2014, p. 7) notes, the South Africa Norway Tertiary Education Development (SANTED)[18] Programme, a ten-year collaboration involving Norway and several SADC countries, included a "set of projects that were designed to promote inter-institutional collaboration in the region". Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 87) highlight the following:

> We argue secondly that strengthening the higher education system to respond to African developmental needs advances the vision of true and proper international partnerships for capacity-enhancement. International partnerships between universities on the continent can assist in capacity-enhancement as often expertise which is available in one university is lacking in another university. In such situations, pooling and sharing of resources by partner universities can assist in establishing leadership and management as well as academic capacity.

From all of this, it appears that internationalisation can support capacity building in higher education and that partnerships are a crucial element of this as regards African higher education's capacity in teaching, learning and research (Teferra, 2012, p. 4). In efforts to revitalise higher education in Africa, partnerships have therefore become a buzzword (Teferra, 2012, p.1). As far as partners for African institutions are concerned, Teferra distinguishes between historical partners for bilateral higher education partnerships and initiatives, which are located in North America and Europe, as well as emerging partners such as Brazil, China, India and Russia. As Jowi et al. put it, traditional North-South partnerships are being challenged by emerging partner countries such as China, India and Brazil, as "the economic growth pole moves east" (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 23). As indicated in previous parts of this chapter, there is also a growing interest in South-South collaborations, particularly with institutions in Africa as part of continental development initiatives. Regardless of who they partner with, institutions

[18] The SANTED programme, funded by Norway, facilitated collaboration between higher education institutions in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia (Gibbon, 2014, p. 4).

are generally interested in setting up partnerships that are successful. Factors contributing to this success are discussed in the following section.

2.4.4 Successful Partnerships

In partnerships, success is not guaranteed. As Teferra (2012, p. 5) notes, often "partnerships do not simply live up to expectations for a number of reasons: from paltry financial resources to weak logistical support, from poor planning to substandard execution, from bad policy to cumbersome guidelines, and from unstable leadership to inconsistent follow-up". Given their frequency and importance, it is not surprising that many authors are concerned with identifying factors that make for successful partnerships (Anderson & Maharasoa, 2002; Kinser & Green, 2009; Sutton et al., 2012).

Heffernan and Poole (2005, pp. 227-229) look into partnerships between Australian universities and their off-shore partners in Singapore, Hong Kong and Malaysia and discuss communication, trust, commitment and culture as key variables in the successful management of these partnerships. In the South African context, referring to the Tertiary Education Linkage Program (TELP), Tedrow and Maboleka (2007, p. 166) note three success factors: "a committed proactive vice-chancellor, a competent coordinator, and the project's integration into the institution's strategic plan." Their findings "suggest that the effectiveness and efficiency of partnership linkages depends on resolving conflicts over differences in communication styles, culture and values, and leadership" (Tedrow & Maboleka 2007, p. 177).

From working in a partnership with institutions in the UK and Southern Africa, Foskett identifies as critical success factors "clear articulation of the aims of each of the partners and convergence of those aims towards a common purpose" as well as trust, which can take a long time to develop (Foskett, 2010, p. 144).

International partnerships also require firm management (Foskett, 2010, p. 145) and can be strengthened if partners are "involved both in the delivery (of their strengths) and in development activities (on their needs)" (Foskett, 2010, p. 148). Apart from factors critical for success, Foskett (2010) indicates that successful partnerships go through four phases: Firstly, the purpose needs to be defined, and, secondly, commitment needs to be secured. These stages can be time consuming but are vital. Thirdly, the partnership needs to be managed, with the relevant procedures and process put in place. The fourth phase is development, where the

partnership is continually implemented, evaluated and changed as necessary (Foskett, 2010, pp. 149-150).

Obamba et al. (2013, p. 172) include the following factors as having contributed to the success of two international partnership programmes between Moi University and partners in the US and Belgium, respectively: multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approach; organisational embeddedness, leading to increased legitimacy, support and visibility; 'boots-on-the-ground' principle, meaning the physical or symbolic presence of one partner on the premises of the other; peer-review and synchronisation with development goals; multiple and sustainable funding sources; internal and boundary spanning synergies and linkages; strongly collaborative and symmetrical steering core as well as equity and complementarity, not equality.

In the context of partnering with African higher education institutions, a number of aspects mentioned here seem particularly relevant. From an earlier discussion on the importance of higher education's role for development on the continent, an alignment to institutional and national development goals seems to be a key ingredient for success. Furthermore, adequate resources, both in terms of personnel as well as in terms of funding, are essential. This is particularly important in contexts that are already characterised by resource constraints. As Teferra (2012, p. 6) highlights:

> As the number of institutional partnerships grows, their impact on institutional resources (time, funding, and infrastructure) and institutional dynamics (cohesion, complimentarity (sic), and priorities) may be considerable. This may be particularly so in countries with few "partnerable" institutions, in a region that tends to attract more development support.

As the following discussion on North-South partnerships shows, it is not only the availability of resources that is important in this regard but also how these resources are obtained, managed and shared among the partners.

Another important consideration when looking at partnerships and determining their chances for success is to identify the best match. Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 296) note that universities have a tendency to look for like-minded or similar partners. However, refusing to partner with institutions that are perceived to be of lower quality could have the perverse effect of limiting human capital formation and global development when, arguably, the world needs teaching and research collaboration that crosses North-South-East-West divides. Furthermore,

Ford and McMullin (2016, p. 292) suggest that when it comes to ensuring the success of global alliances, complementarity needs to be a major selection criterion. Such partnerships have to go beyond similarity and alignment of values and philosophies, as the potential lies in the combination of strengths of all partners.

Learning from the SANTED programme, which has been described as an "exemplar of its kind" (Gibbon, 2014, p. 1) as a multilateral partnership for capacity building in Southern Africa, includes many of the factors already mentioned. In addition, Smith (2014, p. 149) confirms the effectiveness of the project approach. He also highlights the "importance of supporting monitoring and evaluation within the programme as well as for the projects themselves" and, linked to that, the importance of tracking of progress (Smith, 2014, p. 154). As far as partner choice is concerned, Smith (2014, p. 150) emphasises the need to work with strong and viable institutions. Furthermore, he notes that a shared ownership model referred to as a "four-legged pot", which included the South African Department of Education, the Norwegian donor, the partner universities as well as an outsourced management team, proved successful for SANTED (2014, pp. 147-148).

To work best, partnerships should be democratic and participatory in nature, bring about positive change and mutual benefits (Foskett, 2010, p. 142). From this vantage point, partnerships have a positive connotation, indicating that "the total is greater than the sum of the parts" (ibid.). In other words, through a partnership, each participating institution or organisation should be able to achieve something that they would not have been able to on their own. However, partnerships can also have different effects. They "can entrench and perpetuate asymmetries of inequality in higher education", as noted by Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 312). They suggest that partnerships should not "uncritically assumed to be a good thing" (ibid.). Why this is particularly relevant in the North-South context is explored in the next section.

2.4.5 North-South Partnerships

While attempts to foster intra-African collaboration have been increasing, African universities have traditionally partnered with their counterparts in the North (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 20). Even after gaining independence, African countries have generally maintained very strong ties to their former colonisers (Teferra & Altbach, 2004, p. 24). "The impact of the colonial past and

of the continuing impact of the former colonial powers remains crucial in any analysis of African higher education" (ibid.). North-South partnerships between Africa and European countries or the US, for example, have expanded in the first decades of the 21st century (Obamba et al. 2013, p. 153). However, they can be particularly challenging. Before discussing these challenges in more detail, it seems reasonable to first zoom in a little further on the notion of North-South and clarify what concepts like global North and global South mean in the context of this study.

2.4.5.1 Global North – Global South

Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 304) indicate two main uses of the compound *North-South*. Firstly, in geographical terms, North-South is used to refer to the divide between countries that are located to the north and south of the equator. Secondly, it is used to indicate a divide based on the spread of wealth, with the North hosting rich nations and the South hosting poor nations. Maringe and De Wit (ibid.) suggest that "Both views are problematic", as countries can be located in the South but not be considered poor such as Australia or, more recently, emerging economies such as the BRICS[19] nations. This means that there is no direct correlation between geographic location and economic status. Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 304) note further that they use North-South "to describe countries differentiated in terms of power, wealth, and especially in relation to previous history of colonial occupation and domination. Those belonging to the South are often poor and tend to have a previous history of colonial occupation".

The first two meanings refer to a divide in geographic and economic terms, respectively. The third meaning adds the notion of power and indicates that there is a link in the history of the North and South that provides an explanation for this divide, which is a shared history of colonialism. In this sense, the third meaning of the term *North-South* as described here introduces a relational aspect, as mentioned earlier (Connel, 2007). This relational meaning is the way North-South partnerships are understood in this study. It refers to, for example, partnerships between higher education institutions in countries in the South, such as South Africa, and their former colonisers in the North, such as the Netherlands and the UK. As previously mentioned, such partnerships are often considered historical (Teferra, 2012) or

[19] BRICS, where the acronym stands for Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is a bloc of emerging economies.

traditional (Jowi et al., 2013). The study is a perspective from the global South, which is a label that "bespeaks a relation, not a thing in or for itself" and "always points to an 'ex-centric' location, an outside to Euro-America" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 127).

However, what is important to note in this regard is that the notion of North-South is dynamic and can be expanded in a number of ways. For example, *North* does not only refer to Europe but also North America, particularly the USA, acknowledging the imperial relationship the USA has with many countries in the world. With reference to research collaborations, Boshoff (2010) observes that "The colonial legacy not only shaped the newly independent African countries' research agendas but also their patterns of collaboration". He points out that in the case of South Africa, colonial linkages could explain why 29 per cent of the country's co-publication are with the UK. However, he also suggests that this is changing, with the US "fast becoming the main Northern collaborator for many African countries" including South Africa where it ranks first with almost 32 per cent of all South African co-publications (Boshoff, 2010, p. 486).

Furthermore, North-South relations can exist outside direct colonial or imperial links. For example, Gallwey and Wilgus (2014, p. 524) note that in the case of Irish – South African school linkages, "the colonial patterns that lie at the heart of DE [development education] in the UK are replaced in Ireland by a pattern established by Irish Catholic missions". Another layer of complexity is added when the notion of North-South is expanded even further and used broadly as a metaphor for inequality, illustrating the divide between the rich and the poor, the haves and have nots. In that sense, it is then possible to speak of "north of the south, south of the north: Detroit as south in the US, Johannesburg as north in Africa, and so on" (Menon, 2018, p. 37). There can be institutions located in the North that are 'South-like', and vice versa.

With all this in mind, South Africa, the country that this study focuses on, merits closer examination. It is geographically South because it is located south of the equator. It is historically South because it has colonial ties to two European countries. Furthermore, South Africa suffered further discrimination under apartheid. Economically, South Africa is often referred to as an emerging economy. However, "Over the course of the past twenty years of democracy, South Africans have become less poor but more unequal (Gaventa & Runciman, 2016, p. 71), as noted in UNESCO's *World Social Science Report* of 2016.

Furthermore, "South Africa has the world's highest income inequality, despite a decrease in recent years" (Caillods & Denis, 2016, p. 19), and the country's "income and wealth indices of inequality have worsened since 1994" (Adesina, 2016, p. 96). According to Statistics South Africa (2017, p. 21), South Africa's Gini coefficient for 2015 was 0.68 based on per capita income and 0.64 based on per capita expenditure. Levels of income inequality are differentiated along racial lines, with the highest levels among black Africans. Figuratively speaking, this indicates that there are rich pockets of North in a vast sea of poor South. Resource inequalities as expressed through the Gini coefficient are mirrored in higher education. In terms of universities, a similar distinction can be made, associating previously advantaged institutions with the well-resourced North and previously disadvantaged institutions with the under-resourced South. In short, then, South Africa has elements of both North and South, depending on what the frame for comparison is. When compared to other countries on the continent in terms of economy or higher education, South Africa would generally be considered the North of the South. With reference to South Africa's dominance within SADC in terms of output and authorship of papers, Boshoff (2010, p. 481) notes in that regard:

> …between 2005 and 2008, South Africa produced 81% of all SADC papers and 78% of all intra-regional co-authored papers. This implies that there is a highly unbalanced and unequal partnership that can best be described as a variant of North–South collaboration with the scientific giant in the South taking on the role of the 'political North'.

With these complexities in mind, South Africa is considered a representative of the global South in the context of this study. In the context of North-South partnerships, which are the object of this study, South African institutions generally represent the South. This study engages the notion of the global South "as a lived reality for those in the Global South" (Menon, 2018, p. 41) and a point of departure, as "an invitation to imagine the world afresh" (Menon, 2018, p. 40). These concepts are discussed in much more detail in Chapter Three as part of the discussion of the study's theoretical framework. At this point, the focus of attention returns to North-South partnerships and the challenges they pose.

2.4.5.2 Challenges of North-South Partnerships

Partnerships between Africa and partners in developed countries are generally characterised by inequalities and a dominance of the global North (Jowi et al., 2013, p. 27). Hagenmeier et al. (2017) point out that "Many international partnerships involving African universities have been established with Euro-American counterparts, and some of them are not truly 'partnerships'. This is due primarily to the gross and sometimes obscene disparity in the financial resources of the partners" (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, p. 87).

North-South partnerships have been critiqued as reproducing patterns of economic and geopolitical as well as other dependencies. Illustrating this, Tedrow and Mabokela (2007) argue that, in their study, the South African institution, a HDI, has 'minority-status' in terms of their relationship to the Northern partners. In this regard, minority does not refer to numbers but rather to power and resources. Because of this dynamic, the Northern partners are seen to be in a position where they can dictate the terms of the relationship, creating pressure for the South African institution to conform. With specific reference to international research collaborations, Boshoff (2010, p. 482) notes that:

> …for many decades the more affluent countries of the world (the political 'North') have been driving—or at least significantly influencing—the science and technology (S&T) and research agendas of poorer countries (the political 'South'). The North's impress on the S&T and research agendas of the South can be explained in terms of a number of factors, the most obvious being the North's ability to unleash significant amounts of funding for global science development.

Imbalances in North-South partnerships can be found in relation to several partnership aspects including, for example, underlying philosophies. Referring to a case study looking into school linkages between Ireland and South Africa, Gallwey and Wilgus (2014, pp. 534-536) note that the schools did not start their relationships on the same page, as a "South African inward" focus contrasted with an "Irish outward focus". They locate the former in South Africa's focus on value education, which has to be seen in the context of the intent to overcome the legacy of apartheid. With different motivations and focus areas, the schools were "'starting on different pages' where broad philosophical perspectives are concerned, undermining the possibility for balanced, equitable partnerships" (Gallwey & Wilgus, 2014, p. 536).

Regardless of the exact partnership constellation, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 308) point out that North-South partnerships are generally characterised by "highly extractive relationships". While colonial relations focussed on the extraction of raw materials, today's partnerships facilitate the extraction of talent or data. In any case, the extractive practice tends to benefit the North. Maringe and De Wit (ibid.) provide a number of examples for this imbalance when they note that "The value of partnerships in generating new knowledge is not evenly distributed between the partner in the North and the South, with knowledge outlets and authorship arrangements favouring the North" (Maringe & De Wit, 2016, p. 308).

Related to the issue of research publication, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 308) point out that the value of partnerships in reputation building as measured, for example, by international university rankings, heavily favours the Northern partners. They note further that partnerships are also seen as "opportunities for rubber stamping the hegemony of the West, which exert its authority using Western knowledge and discourses, money and financial incentives to export solutions to an unsuspecting global South".

Southern partners assume that they are less culturally or linguistically competent than their Northern counterparts. Furthermore, it appears that the North is involved in more strategic and knowledge-based leadership, whereas the South's involvement in leadership enactment is more at the operational level (Maringe & De Wit, 2016, p. 308). In other words, the Northern partners are, generally speaking, in the driver's seat, while the Southern partners assume the role of passengers coming "along for the ride" (Gallwey & Wilgus, 2014, p. 530).

In summary, "International partnerships can be complex, contested, and embedded with multiple forms of asymmetries", as Obamba et al. (2013, p. 172) highlight. They also note that it is useful to find ways of avoiding what they call "the antagonistic pursuit of equality between northern and southern partners". While inequalities are acknowledged, there are ways in which their effects can be mitigated, for example, through adopting a participatory approach to partnerships.

2.4.5.3 Participatory Approach

One way of addressing concerns about inequality in partnerships is to develop a participatory approach. Participation, as defined by the World Bank (1994, p. 1), is "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources

which affect them". If 'development' is replaced by 'partnership', this definition easily applies to partnerships. Participation, in this sense, implies the empowerment of marginalised or disadvantaged people, organisations or countries that are participating in a partnership project or programme.

Foskett (2010) shares experiences of using a participatory approach in an Edulink project between an institution in the UK and partner universities in a variety of Southern African countries, including South Africa.[20] While a participatory approach is not necessarily a recipe for success in partnerships, some aspects can help counteract perceptions of inequality and contribute to success if, for example, all partners in the project need to feel valued and involved and have a sense of ownership. This can be facilitated by involving and consulting all partners when the initial bid is being developed and by organising joint events such as workshops (Foskett, 2010, p. 144).

Participation requires active engagement from all parties concerned. For inequalities to be addressed meaningfully, both the North and the South have to be involved. As Teferra (2012, p. 6) notes:

> …it is imperative that the marketplace of partnerships discoursed in the region is guided by well-informed, responsible, and pragmatic stakeholders in the south and the north. At the end, it is in the best interest of all the stakeholders, both in the north and the south, to have a sustained impact and meaningful outcome in the reengagement with Africa.

However, with regard to higher education, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 312) point out that the South is complicit in engaging in partnerships that cannot "uncritically assumed to be a good thing", as they "can entrench and perpetuate asymmetries of inequality in higher education". If partnerships are not a good thing, particularly from the perspective of the South, the question arises as to why they are still pursued by the South. As Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 309) note, "Universities in the global South tend to accept inequity. Driven by short-term economic motives, institutions seem to look for partners in the North rather than in the region or with other institutions in the South". What seems to be required is an increased sense of Southern agency.

[20] The project title is "Strengthening Training and Regional Networks in Demography (STARND)", with partner universities in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia.

2.4.5.4 Need for Agency

Regarding the need for institutions in Africa and elsewhere in the South to determine the agenda of internationalisation and partnerships, Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 88) suggest that "African higher education institutions should continue to develop partnerships in other world regions whilst firmly invoking their rights as equal partners in them, and additionally focus on ethical and equal continental higher education partnerships". Looking at some practical implications of this, Maringe and De Wit (2016, p. 311) propose the following:

> Perhaps not all money should be accepted as a stimulant for development. More importantly, institutions in the global South should become more centrally involved in determining the agenda behind partnerships, working to ensure that the flows of talent and the mobility of knowledge favours its developmental needs in the same way they do those of the institutions in the global North.

Acting in this way, higher education institution would make a contribution towards achieving continental goals as outlined on the occasion of the 2015 1st African Higher Education Summit as well as in the *Agenda 2063*. Both have collaboration and partnership at the heart. The Summit's *Draft Declaration and Action Plan* (2015) promotes them for the purposes of capacity building and resource sharing within and in between institutions, countries, regions and continents. Such partnerships must be for mutual benefit. Similarly, *Agenda 2063* states that there "will be a self-re-empowerment of Africa; Africa determining its own future, leading its agenda and developing effective partnership frameworks with its external partners" and that the "new strategic role and place of Africa in the global arena will be based on mutually beneficial partnerships with the outside world" (AU, 2015, pp. 42).

This study speaks to the need for agency of Southern institutions, particularly in the context of North-South partnerships. The issue of what the South can do to change the paradigm of such partnerships towards greater equality and mutuality is linked to the study's research questions and is explored in detail in the data analysis chapter.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have located my study in the work of others by reviewing relevant literature. This review had a focus on the concepts of higher education, internationalisation and partnerships, which present the conceptual framework of this study. While each of these concepts describe multi-faceted phenomena in their own right, their interconnectedness is a key concern for this study. The discussion in this chapter has shown that North-South partnerships at the case study institution are firmly embedded in a broader context of internationalisation of higher education with national, regional and global dimensions. In line with the study's focus on a global South perspective, I have particularly highlighted the South African context of higher education, internationalisation and partnerships, including challenges facing higher education institutions in the country. In this discussion, I have noted the complexities of the notions of the global North and the global South, pointing out that South Africa and Wits, while representing the global South in this study, have a position that needs to be contextualised and viewed critically.

Concluding the overview of relevant literature, I note that this case study of Wits' North-South partnerships offers an opportunity for in-depth analysis and nuanced understanding of issues relating to higher education internationalisation and partnerships from a South African perspective. It allows for critical engagement with internationalisation of higher education as a global phenomenon, facilitated by a postcolonial lens, which is explored in detail in the next chapter. The relationship between the global and the local, most notably illustrated in this case by the relationship between internationalisation and transformation agendas of higher education institutions, is of particular interest in this regard.

CHAPTER THREE

A POSTCOLONIAL MODE OF CRITIQUE

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to present the theoretical framework of my study on North-South partnerships in higher education. Hofstee points out that "In academic terms, a 'theory' is a logical explanation for why something is as it is or does as it does" (2006, p. 92). However, Biesta, Allan and Edwards (2014, p. 4) observe that although it is commonly used, it is actually not that easy to define what the word *theory* means. Providing a brief historical account illustrating that the meaning of *theory* changed over time, they note that the original Greek word was "firmly located within the domain of the empirical as it is about direct experience and witnessing" (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 4). Later, in the times of Plato and Aristotle, "Theory became knowledge of a permanent and unchangeable reality 'behind' the empirical world of change, flux and appearances" (ibid.). With modern science, theory's main role was to explain causal connections between empirical phenomena and "to account for or speculate about underlying processes and mechanisms" (ibid.). In the late 19th century, with the rise of hermeneutics and interpretivism, "theory also became a device for *understanding*, that is, for making intelligible *why* people say what they say and do what they do" (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 5).

The role of theory in research will differ in relation to whether the research project is aimed at explanation, understanding or emancipation. However, regardless of the specific approach, theory is deployed to "bring what is strange and not understood into the domain of understanding", which is in line with the main aim of research as a process "that can help us to get 'better' and 'deeper' insights into the natural and social world" (Biesta et al. 2014, p. 5). According to Biesta et al. (ibid.), the main role of critical theory is to expose hidden power structures and how they influence and distort experiences and interpretations, recognising that "the exposure of the workings of power can contribute to emancipation".

Biesta et al. (2014, p. 1) point out that theory is a much debated concept. They refer to what they call "the unhelpful dichotomies such as theory *versus* practice, the theoretical *versus* the empirical, or the theoretical *versus* useful", which have given theory a bad name. However, they do argue that there is a need for theory in educational research (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 1),

emphasising that, while the correlation between observable phenomena can be established empirically, theory is needed to explain underlying causal relationships. After data have been generated, theory is deployed to analyse and interpret the data. Theory helps move from data to understanding (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 6). It can help 'redescribe' educational process and practices, which are already described by those involved in them. For example, learning can be redescribed as a process of empowerment or of control. Education can be redescribed "as knowledge transfer or a concern for newness coming into the world" (ibid.). This suggests that redescriptions can function as hypotheses or starting points for research. They "do not necessarily or exclusively have to be understood as claims to truth" but, rather, they are "possible interpretations of what might be the case" (ibid.).

3.1.1 The Role of Theory for this Study

This study aims to obtain a nuanced understanding of a case study in North-South partnerships in higher education, with a particular focus on the perspective of the global South. It is based on the interpretation of data generated through interviews with people directly involved in such partnerships, sharing their everyday experiences. Through the analysis of such data, an interpretation of lived realities will emerge. As noted by Biesta et al., "In interpretative research a key role for theory lies in deepening and broadening understandings of 'everyday' interpretations and experiences" (Biesta et al., 2014, p. 1-2).

Lochmiller and Lester (2016, p. 11) see a similar role for theory in the context of practitioner-scholarship, where "theory serves as a useful lens to understand, critique, and challenge existing practices". As was mentioned in Chapter One, this study draws on a practitioner-scholarship perspective on account of my background as both a researcher and a practitioner in the field of international partnerships. Thus, theory is used in this study as an instrument for understanding and analysing practice. As is demonstrated in Chapter Four, my study employs elements of self-study methodology. What is important to note in this regard is the interrelationship between theory, experience and practice. In their work, Pinnegar and Hamilton, for example, "invite consideration of the ways we might move theory to experience to practice and back again" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. vi). Furthermore, they "agree with Pagano (1991) who says, 'To act is to theorize' (p. 194). From this perspective we believe that practice is an integrated yet physical expression of both experience and theory" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 4).

Following from all of the above, theory is used in this study to facilitate a deep and broad understanding of the practice of North-South higher education partnerships as illustrated by a South African case study. As far as partnerships are concerned, there are a number of theories that seem suitable, depending on the nature of partnerships under consideration, including distributed cognition, network theory and stakeholder theory.

Firstly, if the focus of interest is the facilitating role partnerships can play for knowledge production and innovation, the theory of distributed cognition (Halverson, 2002; Hollan, Hutchins & Kirsh, 2000; Hutchins, 1995; Wu, Birnholtz, Richards, Baecker & Massimi, 2008) might be a suitable lens. As noted in Chapter Two, higher education institutions around the world play a key role in global development and particularly in addressing complex global challenges such as those posed by, for example, climate change and poverty. As indicated previously, "The grand challenges of the present cannot be solved by any single scholar, leader, university or country working on their own" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 310). They require global partnerships for "pooling and networking of resources" (ibid.). Such partnerships, which are concerned with the distribution and flow of human and knowledge capital (Maringe & De Wit, 2016, p. 299), are based on the assumptions that knowledge is distributed widely, across people, disciplines, institutions and countries, and that knowledge sharing brings about benefits. These assumptions are closely linked to the theory of distributed cognition, where "all cognition can be fruitfully viewed as occurring in a distributed manner", rather than being considered the "property of an individual mind" (Halverson, 2002, p. 248).

Distributed cognition would, therefore, lend itself as a lens to explore why institutions engage in knowledge sharing through international partnerships. In addition, it could be useful in gaining deeper insights into management aspects of such partnerships, especially in terms of combination and coordination of required tasks. At the institutional level, the task of managing international partnerships, which requires the interaction of humans and their environment, could be compared to the tasks of flying a plane or navigating a ship, as discussed by Hutchins (1995).

Another aspect of partnerships that could be explored further is their organisational structure, which would be facilitated through a framework such as network theory (Carmichael, 2011; Castells, 2000). Castells (2000, p. 502) notes that the economy, as it emerged towards the end of the 20th century, is "organised around global networks of capital, managements, and information, whose access to technological know-how is at the roots of productivity and

competitiveness". He notes that it is not only businesses but increasingly organisations and institutions that are organised in networks, and higher education institutions are no exceptions in that regard.

As noted in Chapter Two, in the context of internationalisation of higher education strategic international alliances have become an important tool for universities around the world to achieve their institutional objectives (Knight, 2004). When it comes to strengthening capacity and facilitating research cooperation and exchange, universities seek strategic alliances and memberships in research university networks (Ford & McMullin, 2016; Rensburg, 2016). International partnerships are an expression of connectedness, and network theory would be a useful lens to deepen understanding of partnerships as networks, which are, according to Castells (2000, p. 501), sets of interconnected nodes.

The notion of networks is closely linked to the notion of inclusion. This is particularly relevant in the context of higher education in Africa, where partnerships with institutions in the North are motivated by the need to access resources (Malaza, 2011). Reflections on issues such as inclusion and exclusion are also relevant for a deep and broad discussion of international competitiveness as measured by global university rankings, especially regarding the challenges such rankings pose to African institutions in a context that is characterised by the dominance of Northern institutions and the marginalisation of their Southern counterparts (Nyamnjoh, 2012; Rensburg, 2016).

Finally, if university partnerships are mainly understood as the relationships such institutions have with a variety of stakeholders, stakeholder theory (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar & De Colle, 2010) would be a suitable analytical framework to gain deeper insights into managerial aspects of such partnerships. In the university context, partnerships involve a variety of stakeholders including local and international students, staff, donors, partner universities, funding organisations and governments. While stakeholder theory is grounded in management studies, with the unit of analysis being the "the relationship between a business and the groups and individuals who can affect it or are affected by it" (Freeman et al., 2010, p. 5), parallels between businesses and higher education institutions have been drawn, specifically in discussions around commodification and commercialisation of higher education, as outlined in Chapter Two (Martin & Griffiths, 2012; Mbembe, n.d.; Motimele, 2017). Against this backdrop, stakeholder theory would facilitate a discussion of how an institution responds to the phenomenon of internationalisation by evaluating its performance using models such as

the Reactive-Defensive-Accommodative-Proactive (RDAP) Scale, as described by Clarkson (1995).

In this research on North-South higher education partnerships, which uses a South African case study, I recognise the importance and relevance of all of these theoretical frameworks. However, since my primary interest is a deeper and broader understanding of the dynamics of North-South partnerships, particularly with regard to their underlying power dynamics, I adopt a postcolonial mode of critique for this study. This theory seems relevant for several reasons.

Firstly, the study is located in South Africa, a country that has a colonial history and whose higher education system is a product of colonial times. Postcolonial thought, as critical theory, offers perspectives that interrogate the nature and character of higher education to clarify contemporary pressing issues concerning in South Africa, key among them transformation and decolonisation.

Secondly, this study focuses on presenting a viewpoint from the South on North-South partnerships, arguing that such a perspective is not commonly heard. This is in line with postcolonial thinking in the sense that it creates spaces for multiple voices. Adoption of a postcolonial stance commits this research to "reconsider the colonial encounter and its continuing impact from the perspective of formerly colonised countries, regions and peoples, but within the context of contemporary globalisation" (Crossley & Tikly, 2004, p. 148).

Thirdly, a postcolonial lens opens up the possibility of interpreting North-South partnerships in the framework of internationalisation as a form of recolonisation. However, at the same time, it allows us to consider these partnerships as an opportunity to decolonise future interactions between institutions by focussing on what it means to be human. Before discussing this in greater detail, I briefly reflect on the meaning of the term *postcolonial* in the context of this study.

3.2 The Meaning of *Postcolonial*

The prefix *post* generally means *after* or *subsequent to*. *Post-colonial* can then be understood to mean *after colonialism*. In that sense, post-colonial are countries in the South that "were once colonies or protectorates" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 126). Strictly speaking, as African countries gained independence, this marked the end of European colonial rule in their

territories. In the case of South Africa, the Union of South Africa formally gained independence from Britain in 1910, but, as Frassinelli (2018, p. 4) notes, "the evils of colonialism did not end there". Furthermore:

> They were perpetuated and reinforced. The apartheid system introduced in 1948, which some labelled colonialism of a special type, summed up all that was wrong with colonial systems: the classification and segregation of human beings based on race, cultural domination, the merciless exploitation of black workers and natural resources for the benefit of a white minority, and the denial to the majority of owning land or accessing quality education (ibid.).

Similarly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13) notes that in "Sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa became the last colony to decolonise in 1994 from an internal form of white colonialism called apartheid". Apartheid was a system based on racial segregation and "tied up with white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and deliberate oppression" (Biko, 1987, p. 28).

Despite the formal end of colonialism and, in the case of South Africa, apartheid, postcolonial thinking recognises that underlying principles of colonialism still apply to relations between the former colonisers and the former colonised. As Williams and Chrisman (1993, p. 4) point out, "if colonialism is a way of maintaining an unequal international relation of economic and political power […], then no doubt we have not yet fully transcended the colonial".

Some authors use hyphenation to highlight the difference in meaning. For example, for Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 910) the hyphenated *post-colonial* refers to the period following independence from colonial rule, whereas the non-hyphenated *postcolonial* refers to a critical approach to colonialism. I follow this example and use *postcolonial* whenever reference is made to the latter.

Postcolonialism is not a unified field (Williams & Chrisman, 1993, p. 5). However, there appears to be a common thread in postcolonial discussions, which are critical of colonialism and its legacy and aim to "directly and explicitly reveal and challenge the hegemonic discourses inherent in how the North and the South relate to each other" (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 910).

Colonisation spread from Europe into the rest of the world, with Europe seen as the centre, and the rest of the world seen as the periphery. The centre was considered the norm or "the gold

standard against which the rest of the world was positioned" (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 910). To this day, the "'story' that continues to be told about developing countries today is one which compares them (unfavourably) with the Western standard and as a result alternative cultures, histories and knowledge systems continue to be relegated to the margins and devalued" (ibid.). Regarding the continued dominance of such discourse, Moya (2011, p. 85) notes:

> Unlike the perspectives of those who have the economic means and social influence to publish and broadcast their views, the views of the people who are economically and socially marginalized do not form part of the "common-sense" of the "mainstream", or dominant, culture.

The same seems to be true in the field of higher education internationalisation, where definitions and models that are considered the norm tend to be dominated by Northern perspectives. In this context, my study aims to tell a story from the perspective of the South. Before discussing in detail how postcolonial thinking relates to my study on North-South partnerships in higher education, I discuss the notions of colonialism, coloniality and decoloniality in the following sections.

3.2.1 Was Colonialism any Good?

The question of whether anything good came out of colonialism is not new. It has been re-addressed in recent popular debates in South Africa, on one occasion prominently triggered by Helen Zille, the premier of the Western Cape province and former leader of the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's main opposition party. Zille's social media posts sparked a public outcry when she suggested that colonialism brought benefits to South Africa. On Twitter, she wrote in March 2017, "For those claiming legacy of colonialism was ONLY negative, think of our independent judiciary, transport infrastructure, piped water".

In contrast, Rodney (2010, p. 439) confronts those that say "there was exploitation and oppression, but, on the other hand, colonial governments did much for the benefit of Africans and they developed Africa". He dismantles the argument that Africans benefited from colonialism by noting that any social services that were available for Africans were, in the first instance, established to serve the needs of white settlers and expatriates and "were distributed in a manner that reflected the pattern of domination and exploitation" (Rodney, 2010, p. 440). Their use by Africans was extremely limited.

Furthermore, Rodney notes that "the capital that was invested in nineteenth-century commerce was part of the capital that had been derived from the trade in slaves" (2010, p. 441). He reminds us that "the profits from African ventures continually outran the capital invested in the colonies" (Rodney, 2010, p. 442). Further to the issue of who benefited from colonialism, Wa Thiong'o, referring to two events that changed the course of history, the discovery of America and of the Cape of Good Hope, notes that "Having lived through the consequences, we now know that the benefits went largely to Europe and America, the colonizing nations. The misfortunes devolved on Africa, and on the colonized peoples" (Wa Thiong'o, 2009, p. 106). With specific reference to the country's history of colonialism and apartheid, he points out that "South Africa – more intensely than most nations – embodied the consequences of the benefits to a white minority linked to Europe and the misfortunes to the majority linked to the rest of Africa and Asia" (Wa Thiong'o, 2009, p. 107).

Postcolonial scholarship shares an abiding interest in the legacy and aftermath of colonial rule (Crossley & Tikly, 2004, p. 147). Acknowledging Africa's colonial past allows scholars to identify ways in which colonial legacies continue to have an impact on African societies, including African higher education systems and terms of engagement with Northern partners. In this context, North-South partnerships in higher education can be seen to reproduce colonial dependency patterns (Jowi, 2012a, p. 51), with the former colonisers in the North and the colonised in the South. Before discussing higher education and North-South partnerships in further detail, I look at the nature of such dependencies in general.

3.2.2 Continued Dependencies

Postcolonial thinking recognises that "colonialism has always succeeded in staying on despite its formal ending" (Nyamnjoh, 2012, p. 5). This refers in particular to patterns of dominance and power, where "the South continues to be the suppressed underside of the North" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 115). Continued dependency of the South on the North is also described as 'recolonisation' by Saul, who speaks of "the subsequent continuing subordination – the recolonisation – of the region as a particularly graphic example of the reinforced hegemony, despite decolonisation, of western, quasi-imperial and globally-capitalist, domination over the global South" (2008, p. 14). Such domination persists in different spheres, including the political-economic as well as the intellectual.

Recolonisation is "a new phase of 'colonisation'" that is different from the initial colonisation, being characterised by "the hegemony of finance" and "market-driven and capital-driven economic priorities" (Saul, 2008, p. 73). It is much less visible than colonisation (Martin & Griffiths, 2010, p. 911). For example, it is generally not well known that France's central bank holds the national reserves of 14 African countries. Or, one could ask the question of why former colonies continue to use the currency of the coloniser, as is the case with most of Francophone Africa.

As indicated in the previous chapter, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, and "Economic inequality largely reproduces the racial divisions created by colonialism and apartheid" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 4). Furthermore:

> It is almost exclusively people that the apartheid regime categorised as black, Indian and coloured who still live in townships and informal settlements. In universities, it is black people who do the most menial and lowest-paid jobs, such as cleaning classrooms and toilet, or mowing the campus lawns (ibid.).

Expropriation of land and resources is another indicator of continued dependencies, as noted by Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 17). In South Africa, the issue of expropriation of land has recently received renewed attention when President Ramaphosa (2018, no pagination) announced during the State of the Nation Address, delivered on 16 February 2018, that the government "will accelerate our land redistribution programme not only to redress a grave historical injustice, but also to bring more producers into the agricultural sector and to make more land available for cultivation", and that its approach "will include the expropriation of land without compensation".

While economic dependencies play a key role in discussions on recolonisation, dependencies also continue in other ways. For example, small but powerful Northern institutions such as the World Bank and the EU "have allocated themselves privileged roles of not only dictating whose knowledge matters, but more importantly, what knowledge is worthwhile and to whom" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 295). Nyamnjoh refers to this as knowledge dependency, where knowledge production and consumption are dominated by Europe and North America, illustrated as follows:

> European and North American scholars are only too aware that they can ignore with impunity what is done in peripheral sites like the African continent, while any African

> scholar who similarly ignores western scholarship puts his or her professional competence at issue. (Nyamnjoh, 2012, p. 16)

Regarding neo-liberal approaches to education, postcolonial thinking highlights power differentials by noting that "From a postcolonial perspective, a free market approach to both trade and education is seen as a continuation of those old policies of plunder that characterised colonial times" (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 909). The meaning of postcolonial as described in this section, particularly regarding continued dependencies, is closely linked to the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality, which are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.2.3 Coloniality and Decoloniality

The terms *coloniality* and *decoloniality* refer to "concepts used by a wide range of scholars, artists, and social activists in the Americas and increasingly in Africa, Asia, Australia, and Europe" (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 2). In the sections that follow, I discuss both terms separately.

3.2.3.1 Coloniality

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13), with reference to Maldonado-Torres, notes that coloniality is linked to colonialism, but that it is distinguished from it as follows:

> Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patters of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience.

In this sense, coloniality is intrinsically linked to modernity. As Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 11) writes:

> Western modernity and coloniality constitute each other: the sense of a particular place, the West, and of the majority of people living in it, that alone are able to break effectively with the past, focus on the present, and go toward the future, distinguishing

> themselves qualitatively and naturally from all other peoples in the planet and making Europeans and everything that is produced by them superior to everyone else, makes of Europe the modern place that it has considered itself to be for several centuries.

The notion of coloniality speaks to the experience of formerly colonised people around the world. With specific reference to coloniality in the African context, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 11) notes:

> Africa has experienced the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, neoliberalism (Washington Consensus and Structural Adjustment Programmes), and today globalisation. Taken together, these processes constitute coloniality as a global power structure that sustains asymmetrical power relations between the Euro-American world and the Global South.

Understood as above, coloniality has been in place for centuries. Even after colonialism formally ended, it still matters in the 21st century. Modern subjects in Africa and elsewhere in the global South still need to engage and understand what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 11) calls "the invisible vampirism of technologies of imperialism and colonial matrices of power that continue to exist". Furthermore, Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 11) notes "that the project of Western modernity as a whole is inherently a colonial one and that many of contemporary views of knowledge, good manners, state formation, and education are entangled with and can easily reproduce coloniality".

Coloniality can be understood "as a power structure, an epochal condition, and epistemological design", which is premised on three concepts: (1) coloniality of power, (2) coloniality of knowledge and (3) coloniality of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 11). Coloniality of power "helps to investigate how the current 'global political' was constructed and constituted into the asymmetrical and modern power structure", with "progress, civilisation, modernisation and development" assigned to the Euro-American world and "slave trade, imperialism, colonialism and apartheid" to the non-Euro-American world (ibid.).

Coloniality of knowledge deals with issues of epistemologies and knowledge generation and "questions of who generates which knowledge, and for what purpose" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 11). This includes issues of epistemicides, the marginalisation of endogenous and indigenous knowledges as well as the irrelevant and disempowering nature of knowledge that is Euro-Amercian centric in Africa. Coloniality of being is centred around questions such as "how

whiteness gained ontological density far above blackness" as well as on concepts of African humanity and the objectification of Africans (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, pp. 11-12).

Coloniality, as understood here, is a concept that offers a framework in which a phenomenon such as internationalisation of higher education can be reconsidered. As discussed in Chapter Two, internationalisation of higher education is closely linked to globalisation and shows dynamics that could be described as colonial power matrices, particularly in the context of North-South partnerships. All three dimensions of coloniality, in terms of their relation to power, knowledge and being, are relevant in this context.

Coloniality is not only relevant for internationalisation as an activity that higher education institutions engage in, but also touches on and questions the very notion of the university itself. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 11) highlights the fact that, universities and other educational institutions in Africa are "sites for reproduction of coloniality", which "continue to produce alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them". The role of universities in Africa and their identity as 'African universities', as compared to 'universities in Africa', is relevant to this study, which addresses transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation as pressing issues in the current South African context of higher education. I get back to this issue in greater detail at a later stage. At this point, I introduce the concept of decoloniality.

3.2.3.2 Decoloniality and the Decolonial Turn

Decoloniality recognises that there are different ways of "articulating the history of the construction of the modern world", and in this sense "Decoloniality entails studying Africa as a product of slavery in the first instance and against coloniality today" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 13). Referring to Maldonado-Torres, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 14) notes:

> By decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and the geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.

Decolonial thinking is not something new. As Maldonado-Torres (2011, pp. 1-2) points out:

> Decolonial thinking has existed since the very inception of modern forms of colonization—that is, since at least the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries – and, to that extent, a certain decolonial turn has existed as well, but the more massive and possibly more profound shift away from modernization towards decoloniality as an unfinished project took place in the twentieth century and is still unfolding now.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 14) observes that decoloniality "announces the broad 'decolonial turn' that involves the 'task of the very decolonization of knowledge, power and being, including institutions such as the university'".

The concept of the decolonial turn, which became known at a conference organised by Maldonado-Torres in 2005, refers to the works of Latin American, Latina/o, Caribbean and African American writers on decoloniality, which became more pronounced in the twentieth century and has continued since then (Maldonado-Torres, 2011). The decolonial turn does not represent a unified school of thought. As Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 2) notes:

> The decolonial turn does not refer to a single theoretical school, but rather points to a family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as a fundamental problem in the modern (as well as postmodern and information) age, and of decolonization or decoloniality as a necessary task that remains unfinished.

Another characteristic of the decolonial turn is "the refusal to segregate epistemology from ethics, politics, and other areas of human creation" (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 9). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) summarises the main features of decoloniality. According to him, decoloniality is not essentialist, not fundamentalist and not a singular theoretical school of thought. Furthermore, decoloniality provides a space for judging and exposing Euro-America, involves the "re-telling of history of humanity and knowledge" and calls "for the democratisation of knowledge, de-hegemonisation of knowledge, de-westernisation of knowledge, and de-Europeanisation of knowledge". Decoloniality shifts the "the geography and biography of knowledge", facilitates "the unmasking of racism as a global problem" and accepts "the fact of ontological pluralism as a reality that needs ecologies of knowledges to understand" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15).

I return to these features and discuss them further in the next section, which looks at the meaning of postcolonialism in the context of my study, and I argue that the study aims to make a contribution to the unfinished project of decoloniality and the decolonial turn. Before I do so,

it is important to clarify the terminology used. In this study, I use the terms *postcolonial* and *decolonial* concurrently, as I draw on works by a number of writers, most notably from Africa and Latin America, who make use of one or the other of these terms.

In the context of this study, these terms are used interchangeably, unless otherwise specified. This is done for mainly two reasons. Firstly, both postcolonial and decolonial thinkers do not represent single schools of thought with clearly distinguishable boundaries. Secondly, they share several key characteristics which are relevant to this study. For example, postcolonial and decolonial thinkers have a common interest in exploring how colonialism lingers on and shapes the world we live in today. Furthermore, they are using their frameworks for critical engagement with issues of power, knowledge and being, particularly from an ex-centric position. Finally, both postcolonial and decolonial thinking offer a platform for re-imagining the future.

Having briefly discussed concepts such as postcolonialism, coloniality and decoloniality, I now elaborate why a postcolonial lens is relevant for a study that focuses on a South African case study of North-South partnerships in higher education. As mentioned, I refer back to some of the key features of decoloniality as summarised by Ndlovu-Gatsheni to structure my arguments.

3.3 Postcolonialism in the Context of this Study

As has been argued, postcolonialism is considered a useful lens for this study on North-South higher education partnerships, particularly as it facilitates critical engagement with a number of issues underlying these partnerships. For example, criticality is highlighted in a framework for Pan-African universities partnerships, which suggests that one of the areas that need to be critically engaged is the following:

> Africa's economic development and its trajectories in a world characterised by globalization and a legacy of colonial domination and post colonial economic policy choices and forms of economic management. Such critiques will include debates about the effects of post-colonial and globalizing conditions, and the role of global

> institutions, foreign governments and development aid, seen against the relative levels of influence of African institutions in shaping policy choices (Wits, 2010b, p. 13)[21].

In line with the above, this study takes a critical look at internationalisation in higher education, specifically in the context of North-South higher education partnerships. In doing so, I take the decolonial turn, which aims to decolonise knowledge, power and being, to be a part of this study's postcolonial approach. What this means is further unpacked in the sections that follow.

3.3.1 A Critical View from the South

As noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 15), decoloniality provides ex-colonised peoples with a space to judge Euro-America. Postcolonialism is a critique of colonialism and its aftermath, and postcolonial writing challenges colonial discourse. According to Appiah (1991, p. 353), "Postcoloniality is after all this: and its *post-*, like that of postmodernism, is also a *post-* that challenges earlier legitimating narratives. And it challenges them in the name of the suffering victims of 'more than thirty African republics'".

Moya (2011, p. 84) highlights that postcolonial critical engagement is driven by those that "are judged to be less interesting, less significant, and more parochial than *those who hold the power to institutionalize their views* judge themselves to be". She notes that:

> …the burden will always be on us, as minority scholars, to find a way to institutionalize – and in that way materialize – our marginalized views. Moreover, if we want to dialogue with those who fail to see how what we are saying might be different from what they already believe, it will be up to us to translate our concerns in a way that might challenge them enough to break through their intellectual complacence as well as their (often unconscious) sense of racial, gender, and/or geographic superiority (Moya, 2011, p. 84).

As understood here, postcolonial and decolonial thinking provide a space to critically engage with the concepts that are pertinent for this study, from the perspective of the ex-colonised, represented in this study by South Africa. In this regard, I now briefly re-visit the concepts of

[21] In this quote, two different spellings are used: *post-colonial* and *post colonial*. Given the context, both can be understood as corresponding to the meaning of *postcolonial* as used in this study.

higher education, internationalisation and partnerships, which I discussed as the tree main concepts pertaining to my study in Chapter Two.

3.3.1.1 Higher Education

Higher education institutions are responsible for producing and disseminating knowledge. From a postcolonial perspective, the question of whose knowledge matters is critically addressed. For example, Moya points out that "Latin America is not and never has been situated as a *producer of knowledge*" (Moya, 2011, p. 83). She notes that "the knowledge that *is* produced in Latin America is much less likely to be published, disseminated, and attended to than the knowledge that is produced either in the United States or Europe" (ibid.).

In the neo-liberal global higher education environment, university rankings can be considered an instrument that facilitates Northern dominance. It has been argued that global rankings favour institutions in the North in terms of their positions in the league tables as well as the methodologies applied in the ranking exercise. Nyamnjoh (2012, p. 9) notes that under the banner of international competitiveness, African universities subject themselves to international rankings and "push lecturers to publish in international journals yet do little to promote journals on the continent".

Rensburg emphasises the enormous pressure that Southern institutions are under to improve their positions in global rankings. In his words, they are expected to "perform or perish" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 307), which is "increasingly differentiating not just universities but also nations and regions" (Rensburg, 2016, p. 309). Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 3) notes that "Appealing to rankings is also another way of perpetuating the endless war that the dominant criteria of excellence maintains".

3.3.1.2 Internationalisation

From a postcolonial perspective, the concept of internationalisation can be critiqued at various levels, including models and practices as well as terms and definitions. Regarding models and practices, it is noted, that they are often driven by Northern interests and needs. Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 916) point out that the internationalisation drive of the US can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the country's quest for domination in political, cultural and social spheres.

Furthermore, “The discourse of study abroad appropriates the global to service the interest of the US by re-naming imperialist and nationalist projects with the rhetoric of ‘global understanding’, ‘international education’ and ‘global citizenship’” (N. Cook, as cited in Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 916).

With respect to harmonisation of higher education, Singh (2010) notes that the Bologna model serves to illustrate continued European influence on higher education in Africa and other regions in the world. This influence is direct, for example, when qualification structures and curricula of African higher education institutions are aligned with the Bologna model, or indirect, in terms of borrowing policy models, aiming for greater regional cooperation and articulation or establishing systems for recognition of qualifications as well as quality assurance (Singh, 2010, pp. 275-276). Through the Bologna process, Europe exerts influence through setting norms, which can be described as continued domination of the North (Singh, 2010, p. 278).

As far as terms and definitions are concerned, a postcolonial perspective allows to question the very definition of internationalisation as a “process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service functions of the institution (J. Knight, as cited in Knight, 2004, p. 9). Viewed from the South, this definition can be critiqued as reflecting a colonial understanding of being and knowing from the perspective of the coloniser, not the colonised. If it is acknowledged that universities in Africa are essentially (still) colonial, then it stands to reason that they are international. De Wit alluded to this when he asked if Africa needs to de-internationalise to internationalise, as noted earlier. From a postcolonial perspective, de-internationalisation here needs to be understood as decolonisation.

Within a postcolonial lens, it is also curious to note that Knight’s definition of internationalisation is so widely accepted around the world. In addition to the definition of internationalisation as developed by Knight, “the analytical frameworks devised by Knight and De Wit (1995) have come to function as a global template for analyses of internationalisation in a range of regional and national settings” (Singh, 2010, p. 275). From a decolonial perspective, universalism of definitions and templates is criticised, as situatedness matters, which is further discussed in one of the following sections.

Following from the all of the above, it is possible to think of internationalisation of higher education as a form of recolonisation, when recolonisation is described as follows:

> …to capture a process of quite self-conscious and unapologetic resubordination of much of the global South (or, at least, the bulk of the inhabitants thereof, a process exemplified, at its worst, in Africa) to a western-centred capitalism – this, in turn, to be carried out in the name of and under the guise of "globalization" (Saul, 2008, p. 70).

Given the interconnectedness between globalisation and internationalisation, it is possible to consider internationalisation an instrument of continued Northern domination in the field of higher education, which finds clear manifestation in North-South partnerships.

3.3.1.3 North-South Partnerships

In Chapter Two, North-South partnerships in higher education were described as particularly challenging, especially regarding the underlying power dynamics that associate the North with a status of dominance and power. As Nymnjoh (2012, p. 17) notes, "Cooperation takes the form of North-American and European universities calling the tune for the African pipers they have paid" and "Collaborative research has often worked in the interest of European and North American partners", who are "armed with assumed theoretical sophistication and economic resources".

In this sense, international partnerships in higher education can be described as a form of recolonisation because of their capacity to facilitate colonial attitudes of engagement and continued dependencies on Northern partners and to further entrench existing inequalities. With particular reference to research partnerships, it has been argued that while colonisation was about extracting raw materials from the South, recolonisation is about extracting "raw fact" and "unprocessed data" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 114). Regarding the experience of producing development education materials through North-South partnerships, it is noted that "Overview and analysis rests with the North. Editorial control rests with the North. Presentation belongs to Northern people. These controlling processes usually exclude Southern people" (J. Graves, as cited in Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 918). With this in mind, it is interesting to note that the participatory approach described by Foskett (2010) in relation to the STARND project, as mentioned earlier, did not translate into the area of publication, as Foskett, representing the UK partner, is the sole author of the relevant book chapter. Decoloniality addresses such Northern dominance and is concerned with the process of de-hegemonising knowledge.

3.3.2 De-hegemonisation of Knowledge

Postcolonial thinking challenges the hegemony of Northern knowledge and scholarship, as it calls for knowledge to be democratised, de-hegemonised, de-westernised and de-Europeanised (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15). As Ndofirepi and Cross (2014, pp. 295-296) highlight, "What constitutes knowledge in the African university are privileged western philosophical perspectives based on Euro-American culture and history". In the context of transformation, it is essential that epistemologies in universities in Africa are transformed "as an anticolonial framework to liberate the social practices of unequal power relations emanating from colonialism and its aftermath" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 296). Within the framework of a Pan-African universities partnerships programme, the need to establish an advanced seminar series with "the cream of African and Africa-focused intellectual capital in 'thought-leader' deliberations" (Wits, 2010b, p. 15) is expressed, and it is observed that:

> …one of the major anomalies of scholarship, research and high level intellectual debate on Africa which is the fact that such are more often than not discussed elsewhere rather than in Africa, in particular in Western Europe and North America, with African scholars from the continent present as invitees or guests to provide an 'African' perspective (ibid.).

Similarly, I have attended numerous sessions at internationalisation conferences where higher education collaboration with Africa is being discussed without any African speakers or panellists present.

As far as scholarship on internationalisation is concerned, research in this area is generally dominated by the North in terms of authors, publications and topics. For example, when Sutton et al. (2012, p. 151) point out that the most common partnerships are exchange partnerships, established to facilitate student and staff mobility, such a statement is made from the perspective of the North and underlines that such partnerships serve Northern needs, more specifically the US's demand for study abroad places. From the perspective of the South, a different story would have to be told, one that acknowledges that exchange agreements with European and North-American institutions are often rather problematic if not impossible for Southern partners. It is a reality that practitioners in the South know only too well but that is not necessarily reflected in scholarly writing.

Northern perspectives also tend to dominate other dimensions of internationalisation such as IoC, intercultural experiences and partnerships. As far as IoC is concerned, the question arises

whether it is necessary to internationalise the curriculum in African universities, as it can be argued that the curriculum already has an international dimension because of its colonial heritage. This refers back to the possibility of equating 'international' with 'colonial', as briefly discussed in Chapter Two.

With reference to intercultural experiences such as study visits, Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 915) note that neo-liberal discourse is prevalent in much of the existing literature's focus on procedural and managerial characteristics of such programmes. I would argue that the same is true in terms of much writing on partnerships, which focuses strongly on how to manage such partnerships and how to make them successful and sustainable. Less attention is paid to the human interaction in such partnerships. Generally, engagements between the North and the South continue to be based on Northern terms (Kotecha, 2012, p. 2). Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 913) note that "Within North-South educational partnerships the hegemonic Western discourse is evident in a number of ways, not least in how people and places in the Global South are represented".

Western thinking is characterised by binaries and opposites such as rich-poor, like-unlike, them-us, as noted by Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 910), referring to Said. Similarly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 11) mentions that "At the centre of coloniality is race as an organising principle that hierarchised human beings according to notions and binaries of primitive vs. civilised, and developed vs. underdeveloped". With reference to Irish-South African school links, Gallway and Wilgus (2014, p. 523) observe that such linkages have the "potential to either support sustainable, equitable partnerships between Northern and Southern countries or, instead, promote power imbalances that reify and reinforce stereotypic images of weak, needy Southerners being cared for by powerful, benevolent Northerners".

Such stereotypes are a key feature of colonial and development discourses, which are often characterised by a rhetoric of neediness and care. Referring to their experience with school linkages between Ireland and South Africa, Gallwey and Wilgus (2014, p. 533) note that the "conceptualisation of South Africans as 'weak and needy' facilitates the Irish children's construction of identities for themselves as 'strong and generous'". As Saul (2008, p. 71) notes, colonialism "did retain a certain minimal flavour of 'noblesse oblige'", which carried over "into the very rhetoric of 'development'".

Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 908) use postcolonial theory as a framework for analysis to "critique a Eurocentric, neo-liberal response to the 'Other' as well as neo-liberal understanding of development". In relation to development rhetoric, they point out that a critical look at the millennium development goals (MDGs) reveals that "they are an example of a binary approach to making sense of the world that immediately divides the world into those that have, and those that have not" (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 911). For example, in MDG1, which speaks to the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, these "are assigned to the South while the West is represented as the advanced society with the power to 'help' in a paternalistic way". Furthermore, MDG2, which aims at achieving universal primary education, "represents universalist views of what primary education looks like based on Western conceptions of education taking place in formal school systems" (ibid.).

Given the overlap between development and academic agendas, as described in Chapter Two in the context of global education and collaboration with Africa, such rhetoric is relevant to this study. A critical engagement with the notion of development raises questions about the meaning of development, particularly in the African context. If the starting point is that Africa is underdeveloped and defined as lacking, the question arises whether development for the continent is then only possible if it follows the path of 'developed' countries in the North. Is development, then, automatically synonymous with catching up, or are other trajectories possible? Postcolonial thinking is concerned with telling the history of humanity and knowledge from a different angle, moving beyond the South being described by a single story of lack, to which the North presents solutions in a single story of aid (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 912).

3.3.3 Re-telling the History of Humanity and Knowledge

Decoloniality is concerned with the "re-telling of history of humanity and knowledge from the vantage point of those epistemic sites that received the 'darker side' of modernity" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15). As outlined in Chapter Two, history is important in the context of higher education internationalisation in Africa, as it acknowledges the origins of existing inequalities.

As Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 909) note, with reference to study visits between the UK and countries in the global South, participants generally focus on "inequality in the world *today*, without necessarily understanding the influence of the *past*, (that is, the former colonial

relationship between the UK and Southern countries), which potentially denies an understanding of how that inequality came about". Therefore, it is important to take the historical context into account when discussing concepts such as internationalisation and globalisation, as colonial legacies ensure that the impact of globalisation is not felt evenly across the globe and that global networks are, first and foremost, controlled by the North (Tikly, 2001, p. 156). The same can be said for internationalisation, especially when it comes to establishing who reaps the benefits thereof.

As indicated in Chapter Two, it appears that the benefits and risks of internationalisation are unevenly distributed across the world, with the risks mostly associated with regions in the global South such as the African continent. Martin and Griffiths (2012, p. 919) argue with regard to study visits between the UK and the global South that such visits need "to move away from the neo-colonial tendency of the North to exploit the South for their own emotional and knowledge gains". They note that encounters facilitated by internationalisation activities should be considered opportunities for mutual learning:

> During an intercultural conversation individuals occupy their own cultural space; it is only by stepping out of this space into the space *between*, that learning from the dialogue can take place. It is incumbent on both parties to do this and to create a Third Space in which new meanings and understandings can emerge (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 921).

They emphasise that hegemonic discourses need to be explicitly revealed and intercultural spaces need to be sites of discussion and negotiation rather than simply sites for encounters, making the notion of encounter as relevant to internationalisation as it was to colonialism.

This study is an exercise in writing from the global South. Where debates and scholarship on internationalisation are generally dominated by the North, this study's focus on presenting a South African perspective on North-South partnerships inverts the 'Order of Things', by looking "from a primarily African vantage, one which invites us to see familiar things in unfamiliar ways" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 114). As Singh (2010, p. 279) notes, "The issue of internationalisation in African higher education can be interpreted and managed in a multitude of descriptively neutral and politically charged ways". This is in line with postcolonial thinking, which is about creating spaces for multiple voices instead of what

Nyamnjoh (2012, p. 16) refers to as "'single story' observations". It is about representing the 'other', the non-dominant.

Focussing on the South African context places the country "at the centre, rather than at the periphery of the education and globalisation debate" (Tikly, 2001, p. 152). It acknowledges that "the idea of the Global South is a lived reality for those in the Global South, and not merely a theoretical construct" (Menon, 2018, p. 41) and aims to tell a story of internationalisation and North-South partnerships from the perspective of "the South [that] continues to be the suppressed underside of the North" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012, p. 115). As Moya (2011, p. 79) notes, those scholars that address any kind of oppression in their writing are "usually those situated on the downside of some corresponding and relatively intractable power relation that serves to structure our global society". This is certainly the case in this study, which aims to tell the story of North-South partnerships in higher education from the 'downside', the perspective of the 'receiving end', focussing on presenting the lived realities of such partnerships from the perspective of the people in the South. This is linked to what decolonial scholars describe as 'shifting the geography of reason'.

3.3.4 Shifting the Geography and Biography of Knowledge

Decoloniality aims to shift the geography and biography of knowledge, paying attention to the question of "who generates knowledge and from where" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15), and I see this study as an attempt to shift the geography of reason to the South. Decolonial thinkers note that doing so involves:

> ...the idea that we do not produce rigorous knowledge by adhering to questions, concepts, and standards on the basis of the views or needs of only one region of the world, and even less of a region that has been characterized by either colonizing or ignoring other regions (Maldonado-Torres, 2011, p. 10).

As has been illustrated in previous sections, this study critically examines concepts and terms coined in and dominated by Euro-America from what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 13), referring to Maldonado-Torres, calls an 'ex-colonised epistemic site'. The idea of the global South is seen here as a new point of departure. Menon (2018, p. 34) notes in this regard:

> What ideas like the Global South do is to give pause to conceptions of untrammeled mobility and fluidity and reassert that we need to rethink the world anew from a different standpoint. The notion of the Global South represents an attempt at an Archimedean point, from within rather than outside the earth, a fulcrum with which to realign the world with its multiple inheritances of colonialism, the Cold War, and of the unipolar present.

Menon (2018, p. 38) further says that the global South is also a knowledge project aiming "to bring into our intellectual discourse on the world concepts drawn from the world and not only from Euro-America". Regarding that place in the world outside Euro-America, the concept of identity is important in the context of knowledge production. For Moya (2011, p. 80), identity is "the complex and mediated way that situated, embodied human beings look out onto and interpret the world they live in". To her, all knowledge is situated, and "identity and experience are understood as mutually constitutive, with both being relevant for, but not determinative of, the production of knowledge" (Moya, 2011, pp. 80-81). Furthermore, she says that "Our identities thus bear on how we interpret both our everyday experiences and the more specialized and expert knowledge we encounter and produce through our research and teaching" (Moya, 2011, p. 81). As Moya (2011, p. 84) suggests, "People with different identities are likely (although not certain) to ask different questions, take various approaches, and start with distinct assumptions". Furthermore, postcolonial thinking is concerned with overcoming binaries and attempting "to find new places to speak from", where "subjects are found 'in-between' domains of difference like race and class and gender, in the interstices where these domains intersect" (Bohler-Muller, 2004, p. 152). The ideas of including different identities in the knowledge production and of speaking from 'in-between' spaces, which form an integral part of this study, are closely linked to the idea of ontological pluralism.

3.3.5 Ontological Pluralism

Decoloniality "accepts the fact of ontological pluralism as a reality that needs ecologies of knowledges to understand" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15). Menon (2018, p. 44) notes in this regard:

> The project of the Global South is a project that aims to study the world with the intellectual inheritance of the world and not merely one part of it. It aims to displace a

> practice that has studied Asian/African/Caribbean experience almost exclusively through the lens of European theory. As the migrants at the gates of Europe remind us, the world needs a rethinking of ways of living and thinking together.

Menon's understanding of the global South is one that extends beyond the former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, as he points out that "Noncolonized parts of the world also developed a critique of the West and this is significant if we are to understand that discourses about the Global South need not be rooted in discourses of decolonization alone" (Menon, 2018, p. 39). In the broader global discourse, Menon notes that drawing from different perspectives and archives is an issue that is not only important in the context of the global South. He says:

> Many of the themes that are familiar in the Global South – of cultural diversity and its management; of the negotiation of citizenship as a demand on the state, and of a recourse to community and self-help in the face of limited state resources – are now resonating in discussions of democracy and citizenship in Europe (Menon, 2018, p. 42).

As mentioned earlier, postcolonial writing is about changing the single story narrative and including other voices. In that regard, Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 7) notes that Dussel's concept of transmodernity "recognizes that liberation and decolonization can be told in multiple languages, with unique and rich meanings and conceptual bases". Decoloniality needs to be valued as "liberatory thought that gestures towards the possibility of another world and knowledge" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 15).

As Maldonado-Torres (2011, p. 7) puts it, "from a Dusselian perspective, transmodernity represents the horizon of a possible decolonized world" and is concerned with "the transgression and transcendence of modernity, understood as a system premised on colonizing ideas, institutions, and practices". In other words, it is about a future that is less oppressive. Moya (2011, p. 83) highlights that scholars of the decolonial turn "are interested in transforming our global society into one that is more socially and economically just". Similarly, scholars and practitioners in the South who are engaged with their Northern counterparts in the context of higher education internationalisation are interested in transforming these partnerships and in having more balanced, equal relations.

For this study, which puts the spotlight on South Africa, especially on its higher education institutions and their partnerships with the global North, the future of a more just society is

intrinsically linked to the concepts of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation, which are explored and discussed in the sections that follow.

3.4 Towards the Possibility of another World: Transformation, Decolonisation and Africanisation

In this section, I explore how the concepts of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation apply to my research on North-South partnerships in higher education. As the study's geography of reason is South Africa, these concepts are described with a focus on the South African context. However, it is understood that South Africa is a voice from the South and, as such, what is being described here might resonate elsewhere in Africa and the global South.

3.4.1 Transformation

In South Africa, transformation is an imperative for higher education and other sectors of society to overcome the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. It is a process, "an ongoing activity of challenging the status quo by adopting novel ways of creating a different future from that which is currently in existence" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 283). Postcolonialism and transformation share an element of change and of challenging the status quo, and transformation "is a fundamental constituent of the postcolonial theory whose anticolonial framework is a theorisation of issues, concerns and social practices emerging from colonial relations and their aftermath" (G.S. Dei, in Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 292).

In the context of higher education in South Africa, transformation is a key priority to address inequalities of the past. In the DHET's *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* of 2013, transformation of the post-schooling sector is mainly understood in terms of access and equity as well as the elimination of all forms of discrimination including discrimination based on race, gender and (dis)ability. Transformation efforts have focussed on sector-wide changes such as mergers of previously advantaged and previously disadvantaged institutions, as well as on institutional governance, for example, by changing the racial composition of university structures such as councils and senates (Lebakeng, 2004, p. 113). Transformation has also brought about personnel changes (Nyamnjoh, 2012, p. 10) and the increased representation of designated groups in student and staff bodies (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014). All

these efforts relate to form, and it is form rather than content that transformation of South African higher education has been predominantly concerned with (Lansink, 2004, p. 121).

Content is, broadly speaking, concerned with knowledge. Ndofirepi and Cross (2014) use the concept of transformation to question the power relations in the production, distribution and consumption of knowledge, which suggests that some knowledges are more powerful and dominant than others. The starting point is an understanding that African universities are currently dominated by Western epistemology and that African knowledges are being marginalised. As Nyamnjoh (2012, p. 1) points out, on the African continent "the colonial conquest of Africans – body, mind and soul – has led to real or attempted epistemicide – the decimation or near complete killing and replacement of endogenous epistemologies with the epistemological paradigm of the conqueror". Therefore, transformation in the higher education context is about transforming epistemologies in postcolonial African institutions (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014). This is based on the observation that African universities are still dominated by Western epistemology as a result of colonialism and continued dependencies. Transformation seeks to reverse this process through decolonisation.

3.4.2 Decolonisation

For Maringe and Ojo (2017, p. vii), decolonisation of education is the "prelude to transformation in Africa". Frassineli (2018, p. 6) points out that to decolonise knowledge "means replacing views that see Europe as the centre of the world with knowledge and thinking that look at the world from Africa and the Global South". From the perspective of Africa and other parts of the global South, decolonisation of education and knowledge should also "involve a critical engagement with the ideas and theories produced in other parts of the world, including Europe and the West, from a critical perspective rooted in our contexts and experiences" (Facinelli, 2018, p. 6).

As indicated earlier, transformation efforts of the South African government and universities have, to a large extent, focussed on creating access to higher education for previously marginalised and excluded groups. However, in the context of this postcolonial discussion, access to education needs to be understood to mean more than securing a place to study:

> But when we say access, we are also talking about the creation of those conditions that will allow black staff and students to say of the university: "This is my home. I am not

> an outsider here. I do not have to beg or to apologize to be here. I belong here" (Mbembe, n.d, no pagination).

Decolonisation of higher education in the South Africa of today is about demythologising whiteness, decolonising buildings and public spaces including names, images and symbols (ibid.). It is also about recognising that "our institutions are teaching obsolete forms of knowledge with obsolete pedagogies" (ibid.). Furthermore, it is about finding alternative systems for measurement as well as management. Referring to the current state of higher education in South Africa, Badsha (2016, p. XI) points out that:

> As we have been reminded by the recent rise of social movements on a number of campuses, universities in South Africa remain contested spaces. There is renewed debate about what it means to be a university in Africa and how this should shape institutional culture(s), curriculum and scholarship more broadly, and about how universities and students should be funded.

Much of this renewed debate was brought about by a protest movement formed by "an independent collective of students, workers and staff" (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015[22]), which gained national momentum in 2015 and has widely become known in South Africa as the #RhodesMustFall movement.

3.4.2.1 #RhodesMustFall

The #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement serves to illustrate the complexity of decolonisation and transformation of higher education in South Africa as a recent, real-life example. It has highlighted the need for transformation of higher education at a variety of levels, specifically regarding institutional racism and patriarchy. With direct reference to its name, the movement was about removing a symbol of colonialism in the shape of a statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the campus of the University of Cape Town (UCT). And the statue of Rhodes, "the British imperialist who wanted to colonise Africa from the Cape to Cairo", did fall on 9 April 2015 (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 3). However, the removal of the Rhodes statue from the UCT campus did not mark the end of the movement, highlighting the fact that it was never about just that.

[22] Quotes from UCT: Rhodes Must Fall refer to the movement's mission statement as posted on Facebook in March 2015.

> This movement is not just about the removal of a statue. The statue has great symbolic power - it is a glorifying monument to a man who was undeniably a racist, imperialist, colonialist, and misogynist. It stands at the centre of what supposedly is the 'greatest university in Africa'. This presence, which represents South Africa's history of dispossession and exploitation of black people, is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff. The statue is therefore the perfect embodiment of black alienation and disempowerment at the hands of UCT's institutional culture, and was the natural starting point of this movement. The removal of the statue will not be the end of this movement, but rather the beginning of the decolonisation of the university (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015).

Through #RMF, Black students expressed their frustration about being alienated on white campuses, about not being taught by black staff they could identify with and about not recognising their experiences and circumstances in their programmes and curricula. The movement gave expression to coloniality as a lived reality of students in South Africa, a reality that is centred on black pain and white privilege, black dehumanisation and white supremacy. It was a movement that "flows from the black voices and black pain that have been continuously ignored and silenced" (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015).

#RMF and the public debates that ensued illustrated that transformation begins with consciousness. Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 23) notes that the "most basic expression of the decolonial turn is at the level of attitude, leading to the formation of a decolonial attitude". In this sense, attitude is understood as "the definition of an orientation towards knowledge, power, and being that can make the subject turn decolonial" (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 23). This understanding of attitude as in line with Steve Biko's understanding of Black consciousness. According to Biko, Black consciousness was an attitude and a way of life. He writes:

> The interrelationship between the consciousness of the self and the emancipatory programme is of paramount importance. Blacks no longer seek to reform the system because so doing implies acceptance of the major points around which the system revolves. Blacks are out to completely transform the system and to make of it what they wish (Biko, 1987, p. 50).

Frassinelli (2018, p. 6) notes that Biko's work, as leader of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa, "sparked the youth revolt against apartheid in the 1970s". As mentioned by #RMF activists, it also played a central role in their revolt against institutionalised racism and

patriarchy in higher education. What is important to highlight is that while #RMF arose as a response to racism, it did not only focus on oppression based on race. The movement adopted intersectionality as an approach, bearing in mind that the movement's members are not defined solely by their blackness but also by other factors including their gender, sexuality, able-bodiedness, mental health and class (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015; Mupotsa, 2017). Frassinelli (2018, p. 8) points out that intersectionality refers to the "intersection of multiple forms of economic, sexual, political, spiritual, linguistic and racial discrimination and oppression that scar our contemporary world". This is based on the belief that our place in society is defined by a number of identity markers such as race, gender, economic status, religion, sexual orientation, language and nationality.

Furthermore, "social power and inequality are not determined by a single factor, but by the intersection of multiple structures of domination and discrimination" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 8). Intersectionality is an important component of #RMF, which brought attention to black students, staff and workers as well as to the experiences of other marginalised groups including women, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) community as well as outsourced workers on university campuses. Naidoo (2016) [23] sees the student protest movement in the context of a revolution, of radical change. She points out that the students engaged in decolonisation by calling for a lecture series by black staff and by foregrounding in the debates those voices and experiences that are silenced and marginalised, including voices of blacks, queers, women and service staff, and making them pedagogically valuable. Furthermore, Naidoo (2016) notes that the students focussed on philosophies and practices critical to the movement such as Black Consciousness, Pan Africanism and intersectionality. They also challenged representative forms of democracy and governance. For example, the movement rejected any attempt to be co-opted by the Student Representative Council (SRC), as a "structure specifically designed to work with management" (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015, p. 2).

The list of demands illustrating the long-term goals of #RMF is substantial and includes demands regarding a focus on black history, as regards statues, artworks names of buildings and roads; finance, particularly financial support to students and staff as well as fees, and access, especially concerning admissions policies, race as well as academic performance.

[23] In 2016, Naidoo delivered the 15th annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture entitled "The anti-apartheid generation has become afraid of the future" at Wits.

Furthermore, the demands concern representation, particularly of black lecturers and blacks in senior academic and management positions as well as workers issues, including minimum wage, insourcing, free education and access to services (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015).

With regard to decolonising knowledge, the students demanded that teaching and research should be "linked to social justice and the experiences of black people". The curriculum should be one that:

> …critically centres Africa and the subaltern. By this we mean treating African discourses as the point of departure – through addressing not only content, but languages and methodologies of education and learning – and only examining western traditions in so far as they are relevant to our own experience (UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, 2015).

With all those elements at play, the #RMF movement is an illustration of the complexities that are inherent to transformation and decolonisation, mirroring the characteristics of coloniality and decoloniality described in earlier sections. Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 3) reflects on the role student movements such as #RMF play in the decolonisation project, when he addresses his *Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality* to "fallists and decolonialists in South Africa and everywhere". He recognises the irreplaceable role they play in the decolonisation process and highlights that it will continue to emerge until the university, if not society at large, is decolonised. Furthermore, he notes that:

> The movements for "free and decolonised education" are simultaneously addressing the coloniality of being, power, and knowledge. Many of their actions reflect the idea that just like the *damnès* cannot conform themselves with asking questions, the struggle for decolonization of the university cannot be disconnected from the larger struggle to decolonize society. This means that the struggle to decolonize knowledge cannot be disconnected from the struggle to end the outsourcing of jobs, just like it cannot be disconnected from the struggle to change the ways in which land and resources are distributed (Maldonado-Torres, 2016, p. 31).

According to Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 31), university fees are "a form of reintroducing segregation through the back door as well as of socializing youth into liberal and neoliberal values of individual investment". These issues were addressed in South Africa by another student movement that grew out of the #RMF movement and became known as #FeesMustFall.

3.4.2.2 #FeesMustFall

The #FeesMustFall (#FMF) movement specifically addressed issues around cost and affordability of higher education. In a country that spends less than the African and global average of its GDP on higher education, the cost and affordability of higher education is an important issue, especially as free education was a freedom promise of the ANC which took over the reigns after the end of apartheid. #FMF was, arguably, sparked at Wits University in mid-October 2015 by the announcement of a higher than inflation increase of fees for the following year, which led to a lock-down of the institution.

From Wits, the protests spread across the entire country, causing considerable disruption and damage on university campuses and eventually resulting in then President Zuma announcing on 23 October 2015 that there would be a zero per cent increase in tuition fees in 2016. In January 2016, President Zuma announced the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, chaired by The Honourable Justice Heher, to investigate the feasibility of making higher education and training fee-free in South Africa. The Commission handed its report over to the president in August 2017, and it was finally released to the South African public in November of the same year. Overall, the Commission recommended "that fee-free education for all students is feasible within the terms of the implementation of the principles and practices", as set out in its report (Commission of Enquiry into Higher Education and Training, 2017, p. 540). As one of many recommendations made, the Commission suggested that government should work towards funding the university sector with one per cent of GDP.

Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 3) says the following about reaction to youth movements such as #FMF, which are challenging the status quo:

> Response to the youth "menace" typically start with rejection and indifference, but after pressure from the students it can transform into benevolent neglect disguised as "urgent action". This is reflected in the organization of special conferences and, specially, in the creation of powerless ad hoc committees and task-teams that are meant to take as much time as possible in generating extremely minimal recommendations that hardly anyone will implement and less follow. In the most successful cases, limited measures are implemented, but then contested, sometimes for years, until administrations can

> successfully undermine them or eliminate them with reference to new financial crises or -one-sided reviews and rankings.

At least partly, this description is an accurate prediction of what happened in the case of #FMF in South Africa. With the President at the time giving in to demands by announcing a zero per cent increase in tuition fees without consulting the sector at large and without indicating how institutions should bridge the considerable shortfall in their university budgets and by establishing the Heher commission, a process that took almost two years from establishing of the commission to the publication of its findings. It appears, then, that handling of student movements such as #FMF by those in power is rather predictable.

As movements such as #RMF and #FMF illustrate, coloniality and decoloniality are linked to concepts of dehumanisation, violence, war, criminalisation, militarisation and breathlessness. Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 4) describes the force with which student movements are met, noting that "security forces are brought in and violence ensues. Bodies bleed. Youth are no longer treated as youth, but as criminals. It is convenient to portray them as puppets of infiltrators and of those who oppose government leaders". These words ring in the description of violence on university campuses during the #RMF and #FMF protests, when Canham, for example, highlights that "Campuses have been surrendered to the control of police, intelligence operatives, riot gear, tankers, water canons and endless emails from the Vice Chancellor's Office" (Canham, 2017, p. 2). This is explored further in the context of the case study university, particularly during the presentation of documentary evidence in Chapter Five.

Coming back to the idea that decoloniality involves critical approaches to the current world order and attempts to shift the geography of knowledge, it is noted that decolonisation "involves the critique of the existing power relations and of the hierarchies of value responsible for reducing Africa and the Global South to repositories of raw facts and data – as opposed to sites of knowledge production" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 6). Decolonisation in Africa therefore entails the valorisation of African knowledge. It encourages thinking about how universities in Africa can be transformed into African universities. This process of transformation and decolonisation is intrinsically linked to the notion of Africanisation, as, in general, "a country in Africa, in which the majority of the people are African must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style" (Biko, 1987, p. 25).

3.4.3 Africanisation

It seems paradoxical that African higher education institutions should be in need of being Africanised. A reason for this paradox lies in colonialism and its total destruction of African society, which Biko (1987, p. 30) describes as follows:

> …to impose their imperialism with an unnerving totality the colonialists were not satisfied merely with holding a people in their grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content, they turned to the past of the oppressed people and distorted, disfigured and destroyed it. No longer was reference made to African culture, it became barbarism. Africa was the 'dark continent'. Religious practices and customs were referred to as superstition. The history of African Society was reduced to tribal battles and internecine wars. There was no conscious migration by the people from one place of abode to another. No, it was always flight from one tyrant who wanted to defeat the tribe not for any positive reason but merely to wipe them out of the face of this earth.
>
> No wonder the African child learns to hate his heritage in his days at school. So negative is the image presented to him that he tends to find solace only in close identification with the white society.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Biko's Black consciousness aims "to rewrite the history of the black man and to produce in it the heroes who form the core of the African background" (1987, p. 30). Africanisation is about re-visiting Africa, about re-imagining Africa and about bringing Africa back to the fore. Africanisation can be understood in the context of Thabo Mbeki's conceptualisation as the "re-orientation of persons, institutions, structures, products, processes and ideas towards a fresh, creative and constructive imaging of Africa and African contexts which take past, present and future African reality and African potential seriously, consciously and deliberately" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 294). In light of this re-imagining and re-orientation, *re-Africanisation* might be a more appropriate term.

Prah (2004, p. 99) describes Africanisation as "an antidote to the colonial legacy". As such, it refers to "the systematic and preponderant deployment of Africans, in African societies, into positions which enable Africans to gain control over the running of society". Further, it means that African majorities "must be demographically represented in all areas of social life". As Maldonado-Torres (2016, p. 31) notes, "In order to decolonize education, it is vital to have as many as possible black bodies and bodies of colonized subjects in the university". This

understanding of Africanisation is essentially aligned to transformation efforts focussing on representation. In South African higher education, such an agenda is mostly driven by the need to increase access for Black students and staff, with the latter being informed by relevant legislation such as the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act and the Employment Equity Act.

However, implementing employment equity in universities is a complex undertaking. As Habib (2016, pp. 40-41) notes, transforming the academic staffing components of universities, especially at the most senior academic levels, is more than a numbers game. For example, to increase the number of black professors, one must take into consideration that reaching this senior level requires as many as 20 years of training as well as a pipeline of black postgraduate students.

Furthermore, Africanisation is not only important when it comes to the representation of designated groups of people. In the intellectual sphere, "Western ideas need to be stripped of their specific western packaging and totally Africanized, so that they relate directly to African conditions and requirements. African languages are a requisite matrix for this process" (Prah, 2004, p. 105). Two important elements of the Africanisation process are epistemology and language, which are briefly discussed in the sections that follow, starting with the latter.

3.4.3.1 Language

Language is at the heart of a transformation process termed 'decolonising the mind' by Wa Thiong'o (1987). He notes that the domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised (Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 16). This domination continues, as "African countries, as colonies and even today as neo-colonies, came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of Europe: English-speaking, French-speaking or Portuguese-speaking African countries" (Wa Thiong'o, 1987, p. 5).

In line with postcolonial thinking, the continued use of the languages of the colonisers rather than those of the African majorities entrenches neo-colonialism (Prah, 2004, p. 106). South Africa might serve as an example, where English is most widely used as a means of formal and public communication. Even though the country has eleven official languages, English is overwhelmingly used as the medium of instruction at South Africa's public universities. In

recent years, changes in institutional language policies have been mostly concerned with the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction rather than any of the other official languages. However, African languages are central to Africanisation, to "any reconstruction of an African cultural base for development" (Prah, 2004, p. 105). Wa Thiong'o (1987, p. 16) highlights why language plays such a pivotal role for transformation:

> Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature; the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to nature and to other beings. Language is thus inseparable from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world.

If language is an integral part of how we see ourselves and the world around us, it is not surprising that students feel alienated about being taught in a language that is essentially not their own, as is the case with English as a medium of instruction in South African universities. What is more, alienation and irrelevance are characteristic of colonial education in Africa, and it is important to "locate an African university in the complexity of lived experiences of the Africans" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 292). Consequently, decolonisation of higher education in Africa cannot be complete without transformation of epistemologies in postcolonial universities, which "suffer from eurocentrism characterised by a biased and skewed mainstream scholarship rooted in western scientism" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 295).

3.4.3.2 Epistemologies

Transforming epistemologies involves "probing the power constructions embedded in ideas, cultures and histories of knowledge production and use in the university" (Ndofirepi & Cross, p. 296). As Jowi et al. (2013, p. 26) point out, "Due to weak local capacity, Africa's scholarship continues to be shaped largely by Euro-American intellectual paradigms, and theoretical, epistemic, and methodological orientations that are likely to reproduce and reinforce Western knowledge". The transformation of epistemologies involves challenging the hegemony of knowledge originating in Western societies and their scientific institutions and embracing African identity in an African-centred epistemology. This includes "critically considering

knowledges from local communities and the inclusion of sages and knowledgeable practitioners therein" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 296). Furthermore, African academics need to be capacitated to establish "an Afrocentric epistemological paradigm" (Lebakeng, 2004, p. 115). The curriculum plays a central role in this regard, as it:

> …in the words of Neville Alexander, is the official register of a society's knowledge which is linked to the type of economy and the interests and culture of the dominant class. It includes how knowledge is organised and what legitimate knowledge is. (Lansink, 2004, p. 121)

Regarding internationalisation of higher education in Africa, dimensions such as IoC must be addressed in the context of Africanisation. While IoC will make an important contribution to capacity enhancement, curricula interventions in Africa should not be limited to the infusion of international and intercultural elements into teaching. Rather, it is necessary to additionally enhance local relevance and focus on content which will respond to the specific human capacity needs of the continent (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, p. 86). Furthermore, African curricula "should include a strong focus on African indigenous knowledge systems and languages" and provide students with "an understanding of African needs, interests and cultures in the broadest possible sense" (Hagenmeier et al., 2017, p. 87).

From a postcolonial perspective, epistemology is situated, multiperspectival and relational and does not privilege one knowledge system over another. The main focus "is on specificity, rather than universality" (Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 920), which comes from a critique of universal, objective knowledge. Decolonising the mind involves a deconstruction of assumptions and beliefs about the world, as it is "only by recognising our own worldviews and the ontological and epistemological foundations underlying these that we can begin to 'learn to unlearn'; the moment when transformational learning can begin to take place (Andreotti, as cited in Martin & Griffiths, 2012, p. 919).

Decolonising the university includes, for example, privileging "locally situated ways of seeing, thinking and knowing" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 5). It involves "seeing the world from where we are, not from the perspective of the West" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 6). Theories originating in the West often claim universality. They claim to be universally relevant and valid even when they are "produced in relative, and sometimes absolute ignorance of the majority of humankind – i.e. those living in non-Western cultures" (D. Chakrabarty, as cited in Frassinelli, 2018, p. 6).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 14) highlights that "Africa is a victim of externally generated knowledges that are not informed by geo-and biographical contextual understanding of the African condition". For higher education institutions on the continent, the process of Africanisation therefore involves the inclusion of "an indigenous African dimension in their analysis, research and teaching" (Lebakeng, 2004, p. 116). However, as many of proponents of Africanisation will highlight, Africa is not simply to be included as an add-on. It needs to move (back) to the centre of attention.

3.4.3.3 Re-centring Africa

Africanisation is about moving the centre, which is often used as a synonym for Euro-America or the West. Wa Thiong'o (1993, p. 16) speaks about "the need to move the centre from its assumed location in the West to a multiplicity of spheres in all the cultures of the world". In the African context, decolonisation is about placing Africa and African languages at the centre of the curriculum, highlighting, for example, the contributions of Africa to world affairs (Maake, 2004, p, 158). Africanisation is not generally understood as an exclusionary practice. It does not "amount to jettisoning every western concept" (Lebakeng, 2004, p. 116). However, Wa Thiong'o (2009, p. 124) points out that:

> We must produce knowledge in African languages and then use translation as a means of conversation in and among African languages. We must also translate from European and Asian languages into our own, for our languages must not remain isolated from the mainstream of progressive human thought in the languages and cultures of the globe.

As Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 15) notes, "Decoloniality is against essentialism and fundamentalism", and the concept of the global South is not concerned with reversing universalism, replacing one universalism, such as European, with another, such as African. As Menon (2018, p. 39) notes, "We must be wary, when contesting the hubris of the universalism of the West, of reinstating other universalisms". Rather, he notes, the idea of the global South is an invitation to imagine the world differently (Menon, 2018, p. 40).

Africanisation, then, is not about the exclusion of other knowledges. Rather, it is concerned with shifting the focus by moving Africa to the centre, as a starting point for engagement. Referring to a debate about and subsequent reconstitution of the (English) literature department at the University of Nairobi in the late 1960s, Wa Thiong'o (1987, p. 94) notes that he and his

like-minded colleagues "proposed a new organising principle which would mean a study of Kenyan and East African literature, African literature, third world literature and literature from the rest of the world". This new organising principle gave expression to the determination to "establish the centrality of Africa in the department", justified on the basis of education being "a means of knowledge about ourselves. Therefore, after we have examined ourselves, we radiate outwards and discover peoples and worlds around us" (ibid.).

It is interesting to note at this point that this order is mirrored in South Africa's first draft national internationalisation policy, as discussed in Chapter Two, which notes that in pursuing internationalisation activities South African universities must first give priority to the interests of South Africa, followed by those of SADC states, the rest of Africa and then the global South as well as the world beyond (DHET, 2017b, p. 21). Changes like these put (South) Africa first, not to the detriment of others but to highlight importance, increase relevance and to foster knowledge about oneself.

Ndofirepi and Cross (2014, p. 296) argue for an integrative perspective regarding African university epistemologies in the 21st century, taking "the form of a genuine synthesis of all existing endogenous and exogenous knowledges, as a paradigm shift into a newly reconstructed and reconstituted space in which no cultural or social group's knowledge wields more power than others". Acknowledging the ambivalence of globalisation and Africanisation, they urge that "There is a need to strike an honest balance between the African and the non-African in the curriculum." At the same time, it should be ensured that "Africa and the African come first, before looking to the exportation of the same to the global arena" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 297). Similarly, the Faculty of Humanities at Wits University discusses the concept of curriculum internationalisation in the African context and seeks to develop a curriculum, which "situates the notion of Africanness as a key lever for engaging with the global world in solving its developmental challenges and in seeking to position itself as a competitive entity in the globally competitive HE context" (Wits, 2014b, p. 11).

In this sense, Africanisation provides an approach to not only engage with internationalisation but to bring a distinctly African perspective into global discourse. Hagenmeier et al. (2017, p. 87) make the following statement regarding the relationship between Africa and the world:

> The primary aim of the discourse on Africanisation is to support the needs, interests and aspirations of people living on the African continent. The focus is on raising the

> awareness of students regarding the special and peculiar needs of their own societies, while simultaneously preparing those students for global citizenship. We shall call the process of creating continental and global awareness 'dynamic symbiosis' – a process which will be running concurrently, infusing and buttressing each other.

There is a political and intellectual relationship between Africanisation and internationalisation (P. Crossman, as cited in Singh, 2010, p. 273). It is, then, about a common world enriched by its diversity. Focussing on linguistic and cultural diversity, Wa Thiong'o (1993, p. 42) describes this as a "universal garden of many-coloured flowers", noting that the "'flowerness' of the different flowers is expressed in their very diversity. But there is cross-fertilisation between them. And what is more they all contain in themselves the seeds of a new tomorrow".

Following this, Africanisation and decolonisation involve reimagining the world "with a multiplicity of centres" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 7). On the African continent, Africa would be placed at the centre. Other centres would exist in other regions. Cross-fertilisation between them can be facilitated by processes such as internationalisation. Biko (1987, p. 31) gives an example of how African cultures can contribute to Western knowledge when he notes that "one can extract from our indigenous cultures a lot of positive virtues which should teach the Westerner a lesson or two. The oneness of community for instance is at the heart of our culture". This refers to the African philosophy of *ubuntu*.

In the context of higher education internationalisation, this philosophy might be helpful in imagining new ways of engaging and partnering. What concepts like oneness and *ubuntu* also show is that, as Menon (2018, p. 43) notes, "What we see now as characteristically European or Asian and African ideas were forged in the crucible of encounter". In other words, "pinning down African-centredness and authenticity is not so easy. Since at least the beginning of modernity, Africa has been enmeshed in a global world" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 7). In fact, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, p. 15) highlights that knowledge generated in and on Africa "has never been closed from external influences and currents of thoughts. Instead, it has been excessively exposed to external and imported Euro-American paradigms". Frassinelli agrees, noting that it would be "difficult to imagine African knowledge systems uncontaminated by the exchanges with the rest of the world that have marked modern African history and development" (Frassinelli, 2018, p. 7). Observations like these confirm that re-centring Africa in higher education is not primarily concerned with the inclusion of new elements into, for example, university curricula. Rather, it is about critical engagement with the history of humanity and

knowledge and facilitates processes such as the de-hegemonisation of knowledge, the shifting of the geography of knowledge and the promotion of ontological pluralism, which were earlier identified as key concerns of postcolonial thinking.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

The aim for this chapter was to present the theoretical framework for my South African case study on North-South partnerships in higher education. I started with a brief general discussion of theory, which focussed on its role to deepen and broaden understanding, as well as of relevant terms, most notably coloniality and decoloniality. Following this, I addressed the suitability and relevance of postcolonialism in the context of this study and showed how postcolonial thinking is applied in this research as a lens through which important aspects of the study are critically examined, particularly regarding the main concepts used. In doing so, I illustrated that a parallel can be drawn between dominant discourses on colonialism and those on internationalisation.

Where postcolonialism challenges colonial discourse, postcolonial thinking helps reflect critically on the dominant discourse and scholarship on internationalisation. It provides a lens for a deeper understanding of the unequal relationships between institutions in the global North and the global South, which are characterised by imbalances of wealth, power and knowledge. Furthermore, it enhances understanding of how and why issues such as transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation are pertinent for South African higher education institutions and implies that internationalisation activities, particularly partnerships with institutions in the North, need to be mindful of and responsive to these issues.

I argue that postcolonial thinking makes a significant contribution to this study, which focuses on presenting a critical South African perspective on internationalisation and partnerships that highlights Southern thinking and experiences with North-South higher education partnerships. In the context of such partnerships, a postcolonial perspective connects the present with the past by highlighting how today's practice of internationalisation in South Africa is being shaped by a colonial legacy. However, postcolonial thinking also provides an opportunity to look into the future of higher education and partnerships, particularly with regard to a transformation agenda, which in today's South African higher education environment is inherently linked to processes of decolonisation and re-Africanisation. It is particularly the

latter that opens doors for discussions on international engagements and opportunities to enrich global perspectives by adding an African dimension. In doing so, a postcolonial framework allows for hopeful discourse on internationalisation from the perspective of the global South.

The importance and relevance of a postcolonial lens is revisited in the context of data analysis, which is presented in Chapter Six. While it has a bearing on all data gathered, a postcolonial perspective is particularly relevant for the lived realities of North-South partnerships at the case study institution, as described during the interviews, because they focus on how people in the South experience such partnerships. Before presenting and analysing the data, I provide a detailed account of what forms of data were gathered for my case study. In the next chapter, which focuses on the study's methodology, I discuss methods of data generation and analysis as well as other methodological considerations regarding the overall research strategy, paradigm and approach. I also address such aspects as the role of the researcher, research quality and research ethics.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on presenting a discussion of methodological aspects of my research on North-South partnerships in higher education. According to Gutiérrez, Engeström and Sannino (2016, p. 280), "Methodology is often understood as the collection of methods used in a study or in a discipline". They note that methodology is concerned with "the principles and ground rules" that guide "the researcher to select, construct, and use methods that correspond to the basic ontological and epistemological ideas of his or her theoretical framework" (ibid.).

There is an interconnectedness between methodology, ontology and epistemology. As argued by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 3), the nature of this connection is such that methodological considerations are influenced by epistemological assumptions, which in turn are influenced by ontological assumptions. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 108) note that ontology refers to the nature of reality and asks what can be known about it and that epistemology, on the other hand, deals with the questions of what the nature of the relationship between the (would-be) knower and what can be known is. They also point out that methodology asks in what ways the would-be knower can find out what he or she believes can be known.

In what follows, ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations relating to my study on North-South higher education partnerships are discussed in more detail. First, I address the ontological and epistemological context of my study. Then I deal with key characteristics of qualitative and constructivist research as well as the role of the researcher. Thirdly, I discuss case study research as the approach chosen for this study. This is followed by a discussion of research methods, specifically regarding how the data sets for this case study have been generated and analysed. Finally, I address issues of research quality and ethics.

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

As Creswell notes, ontological issues relate "to the nature of reality and its characteristics. When researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities" (Creswell, 2007. p. 16). As part of the idea of multiple realities, I believe that "no

field of knowledge has all the answers" (G. Augusto, as cited in Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 293). Similarly, I believe there is no one person with all the answers.

When researchers accept the idea that there are multiple realities, they also acknowledge that different realities exist at multiple levels, which is to say at the level of the researchers themselves but also at the level of the participants and the readers. In the context of my study, this means that it is understood that North-South partnerships present different realities for different people, in different places, at different times. In order to understand what people's realities are, it is essential to interact with them to find out what they know and how they know it. This leads us to epistemology, which is concerned with knowledge and the process of knowing.

Epistemology is concerned with the "possibility, nature, origin, scope, validity, and limits of human knowledge" (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014, p. 293). By assigning meaning to their experiences, people define their everyday forms of knowledge. "Existing conceptual frameworks, actions and events inform the process of its creation, distribution and consumption which in turn is influenced by the experiences, resources and the arrangement of social interaction, skills, orientations and interests" (ibid.).

In the context of this study, I set out to create knowledge in order to answer the research questions posed in Chapter One. As Ndofirepi and Cross (2014, p. 293) point out, new knowledge is created when "one comes across a problem that cannot be easily solved by what one already knows". According to Bignold and Su (2013, p. 400), epistemological enquiry is "concerned with the nature of knowledge, often exploring lived experience". For this study, I assumed that in order to reveal how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education, I needed to interact with people knowledgeable in this field, particularly as I was interested in the lived realities of such partnerships.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 85) note that the process of coming to know is "complex and interactive. This is especially true when what we are coming to know involves or is about other humans and human interaction". They believe that dialogue is an important concept for the processes underlying meaning-making and knowledge creation, as "Knowledge emerges in dialogue in these spaces between participants in conversation where, through processes of mediation, agreement, and disagreement, common and different understandings are explored, shaped, expanded, refined, transformed, abandoned, and established" (Pinnegar & Hamilton,

2009, p. 90). The conversations I had with research participants took the form of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which are described in greater detail in the sections that follow, specifically when data generation methods are being discussed.

With the earlier discussion of a postcolonial critique in Chapter Three in mind, it is important to link knowledge to power. In this context, the question of whose knowledge matters becomes a vital question to ask. Whose knowledge is so dominant that it is acknowledged as true, ask Ndofirepi and Cross (2014, p. 293). The available literature seems to suggest that the knowledge of the North is dominant in terms of, for example, definitions of internationalisation and descriptions of partnerships, among other things, which is a hegemony this study wants to challenge. For me, the question of whose knowledge matters is not only relevant from the perspective of North-South, as the study also raises the question of whose knowledge matters in the context of practitioner-scholarship. Regarding practitioner-scholarship, I wonder, for example, whether the knowledge of scholars carries more or different weight than that of practitioners and whose knowledge is more valuable. Similar questions are asked by black students in the current context of decolonisation debates at universities in South Africa, as discussed in Chapter Three.

4.3 Research Strategy

Two types of research strategies are generally distinguished – quantitative and qualitative, with the former for a long time being the more dominant form of enquiry and qualitative researchers feeling the need to justify their existence and work. I fully agree with Creswell's view that qualitative research does no longer need to be legitimised. He says that "Qualitative inquiry represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons to quantitative research" (Creswell, 2007, p. 11). Drawing insights from the concept of being "unapologetically Black" (Young, 2016), this study is unapologetically qualitative.

Highlighting the importance of qualitative enquiry for this study does not take anything away from the legitimacy and value of quantitative enquiry. Given the nature of this study and my background, however, applying a qualitative research strategy was the only choice for me. A lot of this has to do with who I am as a person and a researcher, and I discuss this in greater detail when I reflect on my positionality in the following sections.

Another reason for why qualitative research was the most suitable option for me has to do with the kind of questions I asked and the kind of data I was interested in using to answer these questions. As Creswell (2007, p. 39) points out, "We conduct qualitative research because a problem or issue needs to be explored". In my case, this issue is related to the nature of North-South partnerships as experienced in South Africa. Creswell (2007, p. 39) notes further that qualitative research is needed when we want to "hear silenced voices", obtain a "complex, detailed understanding" of an issue and to "empower individuals to share their stories", all of which applies to my study. As I have already emphasised, in this study Southern voices on internationalisation represent ex-centric and non-dominant perspectives.

As O'Leary (2004, p.11) mentions, the difference between quantitative and qualitative research is more a difference of types of data rather than of methods. Similarly, Babbie (2010, p. 23) points out that "The distinction between quantitative and qualitative data in social research is essentially the distinction between numerical and nonnumerical data". Babbie (2010, p. 25) further notes that while quantitative data can be more explicit and easier to aggregate, compare and summarise, it does not carry rich meaning. Richness of meaning is a characteristic of qualitative data.

Not only does this study rely mostly on non-numerical data, it is exactly that richness that is important in its context, as it aims to obtain a nuanced, in-depth understanding of North-South partnerships in South African higher education. Guba and Lincoln note that qualitative data "can provide rich insight into human behaviour" (1994, p. 106). This richness refers to a description that includes multiple contexts and perspectives. In that sense, Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlight that the difference between quantitative and qualitative research is also epistemological. They note that, particularly in the social sciences, "findings are created through the interaction of inquirer and phenomenon" rather than being "discovered through objective observation" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 107). More characteristics of qualitative research are discussed in the next section.

4.3.1 Key Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Creswell (2007, p. 36) highlights the difficulty of having a fixed definition of qualitative research, as it has evolved over time. Referring to definitions offered by Denzin and Lincoln in different versions of their qualitative research handbook, he speaks of the "ever-changing

nature of qualitative inquiry". Using a metaphor, Creswell (2007, p. 35) suggests that qualitative research is like "an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures, and various blends of material. This fabric is not explained easily or simply". Acknowledging the difficulty of coming to an overarching definition, there are a number of key characteristics of qualitative research that can be pointed out.

Sword (1999, p. 270) notes that qualitative researchers are concerned with learning about and interpreting real life experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) point out that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them". Similarly, Janesick (1994, p. 210) notes that qualitative researchers "study a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in the participants' own terms". For this study, the main aim is to understand the meaning people at a university in the South bring to the phenomenon of North-South partnerships in higher education, aiming to reveal their lived experiences.

Janesick (1994, p. 209) discusses the essence of qualitative research using the metaphor of dance. As she puts it, "Because dance is about lived experience, it seems to me the perfect metaphor for qualitative research design" (Janesick, 1994, p. 210). Janesick points out that a qualitative researcher can be compared to an artist at various stages in the research process, as he or she continuously locates and reconceptualises the study within the shared experiences of the researcher and the research participants. Furthermore, she notes that both dance and qualitative research are interpretive.

Janesick (ibid.) also mentions that all qualitative research begins with a question and that, once the question is clear, researchers choose the appropriate methods to proceed with a study. Continuing with the dance metaphor, she notes that decisions are made at three stages of qualitative research: (1) at the beginning of the study, the warm-up stage, (2) throughout the study, the total workout stage and (3) at the end of the study, the cool-down stage (Janesick, 1994, p. 211). According to Janesick, qualitative research is elastic (ibid.), requiring flexibility. The qualitative researcher, who she compares to an artist, situates and reconceptualises the research at its various stages (Janesick, 1994, p. 210). Flexibility is important in this regard, particularly during data generation, as the researcher might have to adjust schedules or replace participants (Janesick, 1994, p. 213). As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 185) highlight, flexibility is required "as questions and methods evolve within the study" and that "researchers consciously consider the process and the people" throughout the research process.

Creswell (2007, p. 37) describes the different stages in the process of qualitative research from conceptualisation to the final report as follows:

> Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.

Personally, I am more comfortable with the description put forward by Creswell than with Janesick's dance metaphor, perhaps because I am not a dancer. However, in this instance it does not seem necessary to pick a side, as the two are not in contrast to each other but rather complementary. From their discussions of characteristics of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007, pp. 37-39; Janesick, 1994, p. 212), it appears to me that the most important features can be summarised as follows: Qualitative research focuses on studying phenomena in their natural settings with the aim to understand these phenomena and to describe them holistically, using inductive and interpretive methods and acknowledging the role of the researcher as a research instrument and active participant.

Similarly, Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p.135) note that qualitative approaches to research may vary but they seem to share two main characteristics. Firstly, these approaches focus on studying phenomena in the 'real world', and, secondly, these phenomena are studied in all their complexity. As Leedy and Ormrod highlight, "In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep: We collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation" (ibid.). After researchers have made the choice to conduct this kind of research, the next step is to consider how it will be shaped by their worldview or paradigm (Creswell, 2007, p. 19), which is the focus of the following section.

4.4 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm can be understood to be "a model or frame of reference through which to observe and understand" (Babbie, 2010, p. 33). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) define it as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways". It is, therefore, important to clarify which paradigm informs and guides this study. Guba and Lincoln (1994) distinguish between four basic belief systems: (1) positivism, (2) post-positivism, (3) critical theory and related positions and (4) constructivism, which differ in the way in which they answer ontological, epistemological and methodological questions.

For this study, I adopt a constructivist frame of reference. Schwandt (1994, p. 125) remarks that constructivist thinking assumes that the "mind is active in the construction of knowledge". He argues that social constructivism focuses on the "collective generation of meaning as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). Creswell (2007, pp. 20-21) sums up social constructivism as follows:

> In this worldview, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. Often these subjective meanings are negotiated socially and historically. In other words, they are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives. Rather than starting with a theory (as in postpositivism), inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning.

Following Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 110-11), constructivism implies that the ontology is relativist, the epistemology transactional and subjectivist and the methodology hermeneutical and dialectical. With regard to ontological considerations, this study assumes that there is no single truth but rather multiple social realities. These realities are apprehendable in the form of "multiple, intangible mental constructions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110), which are variable and personal.

As far as epistemological considerations are concerned, constructivism adopts a subjectivist position and considers knowledge to be produced in interaction between the researcher and the participants. As Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) note, they are interlinked in such a way that "the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds". Constructivism assumes that the researcher will only be able to find out about the multiple realities by interacting with the research participants. Finally, the constructions will be interpreted using hermeneutical techniques. They will be compared and contrasted through dialectical interchange (ibid.).

As a constructivist researcher, I start from the assumption that there is no such thing as a single truth. This is something I realised early in life, growing up as a child in East Germany, where we were generally not encouraged to think independently and critically but rather to follow the (party) line. I vividly remember an argument with one of my teachers in a German literature class regarding my interpretation of a poem. She insisted that my understanding was wrong and that there could be only one possible way in which to interpret what the poet meant and that was, of course, the interpretation prescribed in her teacher's handbook. I disagreed, and so the only way I could resolve this matter was by accepting that my teacher's truth was different from mine.

The entire experience of having lived in East Germany is an example that easily lends itself as an illustration of constructivism. People are often curious when they learn that I was born and raised in East Germany and want to find out what it was like to grow up in that country. This curiosity might be fuelled by the fact that it no longer exists and that there are, to this day, many myths about what happened behind the so-called 'iron curtain'. Perhaps it also has to do with the fact that people wonder about what it must have been like to grow up as a black child in a predominantly white East German community.

Whatever the case might be, I am always keen to highlight that there is no such thing as a single story about East Germany and that I can only share examples of my experiences, knowing that the experiences of others could vary considerably. Living in East Germany up to my teenage years, I know that this experience was different based on a variety of factors including age, place of birth and residence as well as educational background. It also had to do with how open your parent and teachers were and whether there were any diversions from the party line at home or at school.

I remember encounters with teenagers from other cities, who could have just as well been from another country in terms of how much their experiences differed from mine. Only if we combine all the different perspectives will we begin to be able to understand the complexity of life in East Germany – and any other place, for that matter. In the context of this study, this means that the experiences of the research participants and my experience are all being woven together to paint a detailed, intricate picture of North-South partnerships at a particular university in South Africa. It is understood that this picture represents but a snapshot of experiences in a particular place at a particular time. It is not complete and, thus, does not claim representativity.

Once it is acknowledged that there is no single truth but rather multiple social realities, as a result, the interactive and collaborative nature of knowledge creation comes to the fore. In the constructivist paradigm, knowledge and meaning are created collectively, in interaction between all research participants, including the researcher. As a constructivist researcher, I believe that people have their own understandings of what reality is and that I will only be able to find out about the multiple realities that exist by interacting with them. In the context of this study, this means that I engage my research participants regarding their experiences with North-South partnerships. This interaction takes the form of interviews in which I ask the participant questions. Creswell (2007, p. 21) notes in this regard:

> In terms of practice, the questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting.

In this study, the researcher and the research participants are engaged in a process of collaborative knowledge production through interviews, which are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Chasi (2018, p. 57) is of the opinion that it is important to link knowledge to human needs and to have the production of knowledge "guided by the lived needs of Africans". As an expression of African wisdom, "researchers can reflectively recognise that other people, not just researchers, are knowledgeable actors" (Chasi, 2018, p. 57). An underlying assumption of my study is that all research participants, including the researcher, are knowledgeable, which is why our voices are equally important. What is important to note in this regard is that our

collaboration did not take the form of participatory research, where the participants are directly involved in the research process. I did not engage my participants as active collaborators in the research process in terms of "designing the questions, collecting the data, analyzing it, and shaping the final report of the research" (Creswell, 2007, p. 22). However, I did focus on representing the participants' voices truthfully and involved them in member checks, which is explored further later in this chapter as part of a discussion of research quality.

Creswell (2007, p. 19) points out that constructionist and participatory worldviews are compatible. However, for him an action agenda for reform is one of the most important features of participatory research (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). While I hope to contribute to improvement of my practice, as is discussed in the next section regarding my role as a researcher, this research does not advance a specific agenda for change. Based on my belief that what is presented here is localised and situated, I would find it rather difficult to develop a change agenda that can be generalised. However, I do hope that the study's findings will contribute to discussions which might encourage readers to develop an agenda for change that suits their needs and contexts, as I address issues of power and empowerment as well as domination, hegemony and alienation in the context of North-South partnerships in higher education, facilitated through a postcolonial lens. In that sense, the study has an emancipatory element.

What this study presents is meant to inform and, possibly, inspire by sharing experiences of the participants and myself. While the study does not aim to bring about change directly, it might facilitate it by sparking conversations and transformation. I am happy to invite the reader to reflect on, critique and question the circumstances depicted in this study as well as their own. In this context, I see my role as a facilitator, which coheres with a facet of my work-life roles I am very passionate about. The role I play, as a researcher, in this study is discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.5 Role of the Researcher

One characteristic of qualitative research is that it incorporates the role of the researcher as well as his or her own biases and ideological preferences (Janesick, 1994, p. 212). In line with the constructivist paradigm, I acknowledge that I was part of the researched world and a key instrument in the research process.

Writing in the first person gives expression to this, as it means that I do not hide myself but rather emphasise me being part of the study. Bourke (2014) points out that the qualitative researcher is the instrument for data generation. As such, the researcher's background and beliefs might affect the research process, and being mindful of these possible influences is important.

Researcher subjectivity "will come to bear on the research project and any subsequent reporting of findings" (Bourke, 2014, p. 2). Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 115) note in this regard that constructivist researchers assume the role of a "passionate participant" and facilitate the constructions of all research participants, including themselves. On the role of the researcher as a research tool, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 238) point out that:

> This is an understanding that data are filtered through the eyes of the researcher and decisions about the data are made as a result of the way the researcher views it. The researcher interprets the data and is not detached from interpretation, which requires of the researcher self-conscious rigorous examination of bias and evidence in each step of the research process.

Sword (1999, p. 270) notes that qualitative researchers are concerned with learning about and interpreting real life experiences, saying that "Reflection on the influence of self not only creates personal awareness of how the research is shaped by one's own biography but also provides a context within which audiences can more fully understand the researcher's interpretation of text data". As far as personal awareness is concerned, I acknowledge that, as a practitioner in the field of higher education with a particular focus on international higher education partnerships, I assumed a subjective viewpoint and played a collaborative role in the research process. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 152) highlight, "Recognizing our subjective view does not mean we must relinquish it. Rather, that realization requires us to be vigilant in our questions and representation of it". It is, therefore, important to indicate and examine how I, as a researcher, relate to the research project overall, with a particular focus on how I am positioned towards the topic, the participants and the data. As indicated in Chapter One, I am not removed from the research topic. On the contrary, my relation to the study is characterised by proximity, owing to the fact that I, as a practitioner-scholar, am part of the practice under investigation. I identify with the description of Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 64) who highlight that:

> …studies based in professional curiosity are usually externally prompted. By this we mean that we read something or listened to a lecture about an idea and that prompted us then to consider our practice further or in relationship to the idea. Often in these cases we may be more interested in simply observing and understanding what we do or how the idea is evident or not in practice rather than in creating new practice.

I was 'externally prompted' to examine my practice and that of others in the field to gain a deeper understanding and, hopefully, to inspire change. This element of transformation is linked to postcolonial discussions around a better future for all, particularly in the case of more balanced North-South partnerships in higher education. Locating myself in the research becomes possible through a discussion of researcher positionality. As Creswell (2007, p. 18) points out:

> All researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers like to make explicit those values. This is the axiological assumption that characterizes qualitative research. How does the researcher implement this assumption in practice? In a qualitative study, the inquirers admit the value-laden nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the field. We say that they 'position themselves' in a study.

My research is deeply personal in the sense that it is in many ways informed by my biography, by who I am as a person, which is what I have addressed at the outset, in Chapter One. Reflecting on my position helps explain how I came to the research in the first place and how my decisions regarding the what, where, how, why and for whom have been influenced by my identity since I embarked on the research journey.

4.5.1 Where is my Self? – Positionality and Reflexivity

Referring to positionality, England (1994, p. 87) notes that "we need to locate ourselves in our work and to reflect on how our location influences the questions we ask, how we conduct our research, and how we write our research". Positionality and reflexivity are interlinked. I now discuss these concepts in more detail, with direct reference to my study on North-South partnerships.

4.5.1.1 Positionality

Positionality is an important aspect of qualitative research, as it highlights the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Bourke (2014, p. 4) states that "Just as with any aspect of the research process, my voice and my positionality are intermingled and intertwined into the project, both in part and parcel". Positionality facilitates the credibility and authenticity of the research by recognising who researchers are and how they make sense of their data. It acknowledges the complexities of identifiers such as, for example, gender, race and class (Carlton Parsons, 2008).

Positionality seems particularly relevant for feminist researchers (England, 1994; Rose, 1997) and in the context of race-based research (Vakil, McKinney de Royston, Suad Nasir & Kirshner, 2016). As discussed in Chapter Three, positionality is also important for postcolonial and decolonial writers. My focus here is on positionality in the context of practitioner-scholar research. Similar to Sultana (2014, p. 516), who engages in "doing development as a critical development scholar", I am doing internationalisation as a critical internationalisation practitioner-scholar. What we share is the belief that such engagement leads to insightful, enriched and nuanced understanding of the issues at hand.

Researcher positionality is closely linked to reflexivity. As Bourke (2014, p. 1) notes, "The act of examining the research process in the context of my positionality can be described, at least in part, as reflexivity". As such, reflexivity is a tool the researcher can use to position him- or herself.

4.5.1.2 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a "strategy for situating knowledges" (Rose 1997, p. 306). According to England (1994, p. 82), it entails "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher". This introspection and scrutiny does not only involve reflecting about the researcher in terms of his or her background but also about his or her relation to the research topic, the research participants, the research process and experiences made (Bourke, 2014).

With regard to these relations, Rose (1997, p. 309) points out that reflexivity means both looking inward and outward. Inward looking involves the researcher reflecting on his or her

identity. Outward looking, on the other hand, means that the researcher reflects on his or her relation to the research and the world in general.

In Chapter One, I included inward reflection by looking into my biography and relation to the research topic. I specifically spoke about me being implicated in this study on North-South higher education partnerships with two main dimensions in mind: a North-South dimension as well as a Practitioner-Scholar dimension. I also briefly touched on the fact that this research was motivated by professional and personal curiosity. At this point, I would like to address what it means for me to look outward, towards the overall research process. As interviews are the main data generation tool for the study, I specifically discuss my relation to the research participants.

4.5.1.3 My Self and the Research Process

England (1994, p. 82) considers qualitative research a process, rather than a product. With this in mind, I believe that my positionality affected all stages and phases of this study on North-South higher education partnerships. Major decisions were influenced by who I am and what I care about, from decisions about the focus of the research to choices concerning its methodology, specifically regarding the research design as well as methods of data generation and analysis. Positionality is also taken into account when looking at issues around quality and ethics. I would like to illustrate this with the help of an example, the study's focus on the South.

The aim of this study is to explore North-South partnerships from a Southern perspective, providing a platform for South African voices. This focus finds expression throughout the research in different ways. Even before work on this research project formally started, it influenced my decision to register at a South African institution and to work with a supervisor from the South. When reviewing available literature, I deliberately looked to include voices from the global South.

As far as the theoretical framework is concerned, the choice to apply a critical, postcolonial critique to the study was intentional. Having a strong emphasis on the South also influenced the selection of the site and participants for the case study. Furthermore, my aim to make South African voices heard is particularly relevant for the presentation of findings, where I employ strategies such as the extensive use of direct quotes to hold the voices of the participants in integrity. At the same time, I allow my own voice to come through in the research. I believe

that the description and analysis of the findings will be even richer by taking my positionality as a researcher and practitioner into account, specifically those that relate to the considerable time I have worked and lived in South Africa. Being reflective allows me to bring elements such as personal thoughts, professional experiences as well as knowledge and experiences shared by colleagues into the discussion. It also includes reflecting on my own research journey, on insights gained and discoveries made along the way.

As indicated, I acknowledge the centrality of my positionality in the context of my research overall. However, at this point I would like to zoom into one specific aspect – my relation to the research participants. This relation deserves a special mention, as interaction with research participants in the form of interviews was one of the main tools of generating data for this study. The importance assigned to interviews was based on my belief, as a constructivist researcher, that people have their own understanding of what reality is and that I will only be able to find out about the multiple realities that exist by interacting with them. In that sense, the researcher and the research participants are engaged in a process of collaborative knowledge production. We are interlinked in such a way that "the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p. 111). This is why the relationship I had with my research participants is now looked at in greater detail.

4.5.1.4 My Self and the Research Participants

In qualitative studies, researchers try to get as close as possible to their research participants. They conduct their studies in the "'field', where the participants live and work – these are important contexts for understanding what the participants are saying" (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). At the beginning of this study, I did not have to go into the field as such because I was already immersed in it. My place of work was part of the field, as I was employed at Wits, the case study institution. Later on, when I left the employ of that institution, I remained a colleague working in the same sector and, in some instances, with the same colleagues. I was still part of the field in terms of the broader higher education sector in South Africa.

For the period of the study, proximity to the participants was facilitated by the fact that I knew many of them personally before conducting the interviews. Not only did we share the University as a place of work at some point, but, in many instances, I had worked together with the participants to varying degrees regarding the institution's international partnerships. As the

manager responsible for the institution's international partnerships, I regularly engaged with a wide variety of colleagues, in both academic and support staff capacities.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 184) note that "The level of entry you gain influences the kind of data generated". In my case, entry to Wits was facilitated by my employment at the University and my familiarity with many of the participants. I am confident that this circumstance facilitated my access to these participants and contributed positively to their trust and willingness to engage with me as a doctoral student.

Furthermore, at an institution where there are clearly drawn lines between academic staff on the one hand and support staff on the other, it is rather unexpected when a member of the support staff pursues academic activities, particularly at doctoral level. Most academic colleagues were very encouraging and supportive in that regard, welcoming this example of crossing institutional boundaries as an opportunity to deal with each other on a different level, focussing on intellectual engagement rather than administrative practicalities.

In some instances, they reflected on the different terms of engagement, with me being a student rather than a colleague, and offered advice on what it means to do doctoral research and how to go about it. I really had only one negative response, which was the initial reaction of one of my line managers, who did not feel that I should engage in doctoral studies. However, that disagreement was resolved, and the manager later became a participant in the study and was interviewed as part of the pilot.

During the interviews, it was important for me to allow the participants to respond freely to the questions, without imposing my own views on them. One way of doing that was to interrupt as little as possible. Having said that, I am aware of my privileged position as researcher and acknowledge that I set the direction for the interviews by indicating my position. In this regard, Bourke (2014) highlights the importance of being clear from the outset about what the motivation to generate the data is, both with the researcher and with his or her participants. Reflecting on North-South partnerships is sometimes difficult, due to the nature of challenges involved, particularly as they relate to the notion of inequality. In this regard, it is important to create spaces where difficult and contentious issues can be addressed. Like Bourke (2014, p. 5), who "aided in creating spaces in which voices that are often silenced were sought and heard", I wanted to create an atmosphere in which the participants felt comfortable to speak openly, even about the uncomfortable. I believe that the relationship I had with the participants,

which was to a large extent characterised by familiarity, collegiality and mutual trust, enabled this process, as they felt comfortable to share with me experiences, thoughts and feelings that exposed discomforts and vulnerabilities. Negative feelings and emotions evoked in North-South partnerships are discussed in more detail as part of the data analysis in Chapter Six.

Having acknowledged my presence in this research, I would like to briefly discuss how this position manifests itself methodologically. Within the framework of qualitative research, two approaches seem particularly relevant in this regard: autoethnography and self-study, both of which are addressed in the following section.

4.5.2 How do I Account for my Self? – Autoethnography and Self-Study

In recognising the role of the researcher as a research instrument and active participant in the research process, qualitative research generally allows for the presence of the researcher's self. Some approaches to qualitative research such as autoethnography and self-study do not only acknowledge the self but place particular emphasis on it. While both foreground the self, the focus is somewhat different. Autoethnography can be considered "a look at self within a larger context", and self-study can be seen as "a look at self in action, usually within educational contexts" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 70). Before discussing the relevance of these two approaches in the context of this study, I briefly touch on their main characteristics in the following section.

4.5.2.1 Main Characteristics of Autoethnography and Self-Study

Autoethnography is a form of ethnography, where *auto* brings in the self (Ellis, 2004, p. 31). Dyll (2018, p. 144) notes that "There has always been an autoethnographic element to qualitative inquiry". According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011, no pagination), autoethnography is "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience". Ellis (2004, p. 38) points out that an autoethnographer is an insider, a member of the group being studied. She notes that in the social sciences, the term is used to refer to "stories that feature the self or that include the researcher as a character". According to Crawley, Curry, Dumois-Sands, Tanner and Wyker (2008, p. 24) autoethnography refers to research where "I, not some

generalizable sample of an abstract population, am the data". Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 75) observe that:

> For autoethnography, researchers look broadly at their setting to include social and cultural aspects of their lives. Providing multiple layers of information and understandings contributes to understanding of self and self-in-relation to context. Importantly, the autoethnographer brings the vulnerable self to the work and explores the tensions of the contest and self.

Self-study, on the other hand, "explores practice, the self in relation to practice, and the self in relation to other" (ibid.). It is about the researcher's self, actions and ideas and therefore "autobiographical, historical, cultural, and political" (ibid.). Self-study draws on the life of the researcher "but it is more than that. Self-study also involves a thoughtful look at texts read, experiences had, people known and ideas considered" (S. Hamilton & M.L. Pinnegar, as cited in Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p.11).

Autoethnography and self-study share a number of characteristics, as they are both examples of qualitative research that place the self in the foreground of the research and provide insider perspectives. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, pp. 76-77) specifically mention four key features in that regard: They are both characterised by using narrative prominently, by assigning a critical role to the *I* position as well as by focussing on lived experiences and on a commitment to making a difference. These features, which are not unique to autoethnography and self-study and might also be found in other qualitative methodologies, are relevant to this research, which is a qualitative case study with traits of autoethnography and self-study.

4.5.2.2 Relevance of Autoethnography and Self-Study for this Study

The inclusion of self is an important aspect of my study, which manifests in elements found in autoethnography and self-study research. I now take a closer look at what each of the four key features mentioned in the previous section mean in the context of my study.

4.5.2.2.1 Use of Narrative

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 76) observe that the "use of narrative or story features prominently" in autoethnographic and self-study research. Similarly, my study aims at telling

a story of North-South partnerships in South African higher education by providing a thick, rich description of a case study of such partnerships. The data is presented in narrative form, with a focus on story telling. What is important in this regard is the multiplicity of voices included in the narrative, based on different types of data obtained from different participants, including myself. The use of narrative is not only important in the context of data presentation and analysis but has significance for the study overall, as my personal story is intertwined with it from beginning to end, with memories and anecdotes from my personal and professional life interspersed throughout the thesis.

4.5.2.2.2 *I* Position

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 76) point out that "For each methodology, the *I* position becomes critical. Part of this *I* position is the recognition of vulnerability in the research". Ellis et al. (2011, no pagination) note that "Autoethnographers recognize the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process. For instance, a researcher decides who, what, when, where, and how to research". I have already illustrated the position of *I* in this study in the previous discussion on positionality, and I continue to refer to the location of my self in the study throughout this write-up, giving expression to my own voice.

What is important to note is that while the *I* position is acknowledged, it is not the only position represented in this study. Regarding self-study research, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 177) point out that it "always begins with the self, but the study fairly quickly moves into consideration of that space between the self and the other". Self-study always "connects with the larger research conversation about practice" (ibid.). In this study, I include a number of voices of practitioners and scholars in the field.

4.5.2.2.3 Lived Experience

According to Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 76), "Lived experience is a similarity since each methodology attempts to reveal the lived experience – of self, of other, of practice, and of culture". My study aims to reveal the lived experience of North-South partnerships at a South African public university, focussing on the lived experiences of the research participants, my lived experiences and those of others in practice.

My lived experience is part and parcel of this study. In Chapter One, I recounted an experience I had at an international conference and how this encounter, in a way, triggered the entire research project. It was an experience that provoked me, and provocation can mark the first step in self-study research (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 105). I was particularly provoked because the conference encounter was not an isolated incident. Rather, it referred to an experience that had played itself out differently on a number of similar occasions. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 176) note that we are sometimes "caught in a memory of our own experience, and we wonder what that experience reveals to us about our practice". As practitioners, revealing something about our practice is often linked to a wish of making it better.

4.5.2.2.4 Making a Difference

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 77) note that "A final similarity among the methodologies is the commitment to improvement, to make a difference in the world". This is a statement that resonates with me. As a practitioner scholar, I trust that my research will "create a public record" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 160) of the practice I am part of, especially since this practice does not seem to be well represented.

I agree with Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 49) when they observe that "We realized our desire to study our practice related to our desire to understand it and know how to improve it. We felt that the insider knowledge about practice we developed could make important contributions to educational research". This is aligned with my aim for this study, which is to provide a deep, rich account of a case study with a view to deepen understanding, facilitate further engagement and inspire change. I trust that the findings of this study will speak to practitioners and scholars as well as Northerners and Southerners alike, building bridges between them and having different areas of expertise inform each other.

4.5.2.2.5 Further Observations

Apart from the four features discussed above, there are a number of other parallels between autoethnography and self-study on the one hand and my study on the other. For example, self-study researchers and postcolonial thinkers seem to have a shared understanding of the epistemological underpinnings of their work. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 54) put it,

"We came to understand more fully that we do not think of knowledge as absolute and separate from the knower but part of the knower and relative to the individual experience of the knower". This understanding of the situatedness of knowledge relates to postcolonial discussions about knowledge being contextual and situated. Another parallel is a connection regarding the concept of in-betweenness. As mentioned in Chapter One, my positionality is characterised by a location of somewhere in between on a North-South axis as well as a Practitioner-Scholar axis. Self-study also has an element of in-betweenness, as its location is between self-awareness and enquiry, history and biography as well as between theory and practice (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). In addition, the concept of in-betweenness resonates with the postcolonial third space of meeting and knowing, as discussed in Chapter Three.

From a methodological point of view, self-study might be considered "a trend away from a modernist approach to research" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 104). This echoes with postcolonialism being a move away from 'modernist' theory. Both speak to each other, and it makes sense to have both play a role in the context of this study. Another way in which autoethnography and self-study relate to a postcolonial approach is regarding the focus on self and on specificity as well as on the intent not to overgeneralise, that is, not to speak universal truths.

While autoethnography and self-study feature have been discussed in this chapter, my study is neither one nor the other. The truth, again, seems to lie somewhere in between in so far as my study shows elements of both methodologies. If I had to choose between them, I would indicate that I lean more towards self-study than autoethnography because of its strong focus on practice. Having said that, it is important to highlight at this point that I do not consider my study a full-fledged version of either approach. Apart from not using techniques associated with autoethnography and self-study including, for example, "consistent and detailed field notes", recording of events (Dyll, 2018, p. 149) or diaries, the main reason for why this study is neither an autoethnography nor a fully-fledged self-study is that I am not the subject under investigation. My main interest is not to foreground myself by examining my own life or my own practice but rather to incorporate it in a case study. I am not *the* data but I am part of it. Without ignoring my own experiences, the main focus is on exploring the experience and practice of others, using the case study design, which I describe in more detail below.

4.6 Research Approach

Research can be done in many different ways, and Creswell (2007, p. 7) notes that "there is no lack for classification systems for types of qualitative research". Different ways of doing research have been referred to as, for example, *approaches* (Creswell, 2007; Chadderton & Torrance, 2011), *research styles* (Cohen et al., 2011), *research strategies* (Yin, 2003) and *research designs* (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The term *approach* is the preferred one here, as the sections that follow rely heavily on Creswell, who uses it.

4.6.1 Case Study Research

Choosing an approach largely depends on the type of research question, the control the researcher has over actual behavioural events as well as on whether the research investigates contemporary or historical phenomena (Yin, 2003, p.1). Case studies, which originate "from the human and social sciences and applied areas such as evaluation research" (Creswell, 2007, p. 9), can be defined as follows:

> Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007, p. 73).

According to Yin (2003, p. 1), case studies are the preferred choice when researchers ask 'how' or 'why' questions, when they have little control over the events and when they focus their investigation on contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts. Chadderton and Torrance (2011, p. 54) consider it an approach that "seeks to engage with and report the complexity of social and educational activity, in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to those settings and manufacture in them".

My study looks at North-South partnerships in higher education as a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life setting, where I, as a researcher, have no control over related events. I am interested in the meaning that my research participants bring to this environment. While the 'how' and 'why' are taken into consideration, my study focuses primarily on the 'what'. It is descriptive in nature and aims to take an in-depth look at how North-South partnerships are conceptualised and managed at a selected public higher education institution in South Africa.

In this context, "Description is placed before explanation. i.e. 'what' before 'why', understanding before generalising, depth before coverage. In this respect, case study is 'within the 'social constructivist' perspective of social science" (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 54).

Case studies can be concerned with, for example, an individual, a community, school, organisation, family or event (Bryman, 2008, pp. 52-3). In the context of my research, the unit of analysis is a university. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 126) note that a case study is about "the One", where "The One may be a teacher, a student, or a school, but the focus has a boundedness and a specificity".

Regarding boundedness, case studies can be bounded by time and place (Creswell, 2007). In terms of time, there were no particular boundaries set for this case study, which was generally guided by the overall timeframes relating to the registration of doctoral students. However, due to considerable work pressures, I was unable to conclude my studies in the minimum registration period for part-time students, which is four years. In hindsight, I consider this delay a blessing in disguise, as it allowed me to draw on important events of 2015 and 2016 illustrating significant developments in South African higher education, most notably issues around transformation and decolonisation of higher education brought to the fore by the recent #RMF and #FMF student movements.

Chadderton and Torrance (2011, p. 53) point out that while the emphasis on in-depth study is common to all case studies, there seems to be no agreement on "how to draw the boundaries of a case, and the extent to which the researcher can produce a definite account of 'the case'". They note that the boundaries of a case are no longer assumed to coincide with the physical boundaries of the location. To illustrate this point, they mention, for example, that schools involve local authorities and parents and that manufacturing involves suppliers and customers.

Historical and social contexts have to be taken into consideration. In this study, the university, as a case, is bounded by its location and legal entity. While it is understood that universities have a variety of external stakeholders, including their international partners, the participants for this study were all internal in the sense that they were directly employed by the institution and based in South Africa. With regard to partnerships, the main focus is on how they are experienced by the participants. For the purpose of this research, the institutional level is the most important level, as this is where partnerships are being implemented. However, it is recognised that institutions operate in an environment where they will be influenced by, for

example, national and regional policies and regulatory frameworks as well as needs and priorities. This is part of the context of the case, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5.

4.6.2 A Single Case

In terms of its intent, my research is a single instrumental case study, where "the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects one bounded case to illustrate this issue" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). Originally, my proposal for this research envisaged a multiple case study with two institutions. However, this was changed during the process of applying for ethics clearance. At that point, I was no longer convinced that comparing two cases would benefit the study in terms of the findings and the conclusions that could be drawn. This realisation came as my research progressed, specifically as it became more evident that the study would not aim to make generalisable statements. As Creswell notes, generalisability can be a motivating factor for more than one case. However, it is also noted that "The study of more than one case dilutes the overall analysis; the more cases an individual studies, the less the depth in any single case" (Creswell, 2007, p. 76).

In the end, I took a decision in favour of depth and richness of description. Creswell notes that a single case is best when a need exists to study a critical case, an extreme or unique case, or a revelatory case (Creswell, 2007, p. 196). As indicated previously, my research falls into the latter category, focusing on examining what a selected case study reveals on how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education.

4.6.3 Case Study Data, Description and Analysis

In this case study, I gathered data from a variety of sources to provide an in-depth portrayal and analysis of the research problem as it currently presents itself (Cohen et al., p. 129). Richness of the description depends on richness of the data. As Creswell observes, "the researcher needs to have a wide array of information about the case to provide an in-depth picture of it" (Creswell, 2007, p. 95). Yin (2003, p. 8) highlights that case studies allow for richness at the level of variety of evidence, as documents, artefacts, interviews and observation can all be included. The data gathered for this case study is mainly based on interviews and documents, which are described in further detail in the section on research methods below.

As Creswell notes, “It is important, too, for the researcher to have contextual material available to describe the setting for the case” (Creswell, 2007, p. 95). The contextual material includes mostly documents such as reports, policies and articles but also notes, observations and memories.

Following the presentation of documentary and interview data in Chapter 5 and Appendix G, the findings are discussed and analysed in Chapter Six. The analysis includes an indication of themes emerging from the data. In line with the constructivist paradigm, this study recognises that “A case study can be seen as providing an interpretation of a situation rather than a single representative truth” (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 59). Taking the role of the qualitative researcher in case studies into account, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 126) point out that “it should be stressed that the data collected and the conclusions drawn from the data are qualified by the researcher’s role within the research site”, which is why my positionality and role as a researcher were discussed in detail in previous sections.

Because of its specificity, case study research has been criticised for the fact that its findings cannot be generalised from the case being studied to the population as a whole (Yin, 2003; Bryman, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Chadderton & Torrance, 2011). However, Yin (2003, p. 10) points out that case studies can help researchers expand and generalise theories, which he refers to as analytical generalisation, rather than statistical generalisation. Similarly, Chadderton and Torrance (2011, p. 54) note that case study findings are often of general relevance and interest. In this context, “the reader recognises aspects of their own experience in the case and intuitively generalises from the case to their own situation”. Flyvbjerg highlights that human learning is based on context-specific knowledge. He states that:

> Context-dependent knowledge and experience are at the very heart of expert activity. Such knowledge and expertise also lie at the center of the case study as research and teaching method or to put it more generally still, as a method of learning” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 222).

In line with Flyvbjerg’s observation, it is hoped that this study’s context-specific knowledge will be shared and thus help build expertise. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 114) mention that constructivism assumes that “Knowledge accumulates only in a relative sense through the formation of ever more informed and sophisticated constructions via the hermeneutical/dialectical process”, and knowledge transfer can occur, for example, through

"the provision of vicarious experience, often supplied by case study reports". This transferability of knowledge is discussed in more detail in a later section of this chapter.

In summary, the case study approach is very-well suited to an enquiry into a South African perspective on North-South higher-education partnerships, as it allows for focus on a single, in-depth case. Within this, it allows for individual stories and perspectives, values the experiences of the target group and utilises many types of data (Gallwey & Wilgus, 2014, p. 526). What is more, it can cover context.

In the following sections, I unpack what was discussed in this section and provide more detailed information about the study's research methods, specifically with regard to data generation and analysis.

4.7 Research Methods

The term *research method* can be defined narrowly or broadly. Bryman (2008, p. 31), for example, defines it rather narrowly as "simply a technique for collecting data", which can involve a number of instruments. Hofstee (2006, p. 107), on the other hand, points out that *method* is what happens in between posing a problem and coming to a conclusion about it. It provides a map that will allow the reader to understand how conclusions were reached. Method also provides the researcher with a path by which to move from problem to conclusion. As Creswell observes, "The procedures of qualitative research, or its methodology, are characterized as inductive, emerging, and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data" (Creswell, 2007, p. 19).

Chasi (2018, p. 54) emphasises that "It is important to understand the idea and the role of method in how people arrive at different truths". Tracing the meaning of *method* to its etymological origins in the Greek *methodos,* which combines *meta* meaning the practice of study with *hodos* meaning ways or paths, the word denotes "the study of diverse paths or ways people take in the search for truth(s)" (Chasi, 2018, p. 55). With this in mind, in the sections that follow I illustrate the paths I took in search of my truths. The main focus is on methods of data generation and analysis. I also discuss the types of data that are relevant to this study.

4.7.1 Data Generation

The process of obtaining data for research processes is often referred to as *data collection*. To me, the word *collection* suggests that data are easily and readily available and that the researcher just needs to collect them in an activity that I would understand to be similar to picking ripe fruit from a tree. However, this study is based on the epistemological assumption that knowledge is created in part through human interaction and collaboration between the researcher and the research participants. With this is mind, the term *data generation* seems more appropriate to me, as it speaks to the process of bringing data into existence, and I will use it as a synonym for *data collection*, a term used by other authors, including some quoted here such as Janesick (1994) and Creswell (2007).

Janesick (1994, p. 211) notes that each researcher "needs to decide on the most appropriate data collection strategies suited to the study", and Creswell (2007, p. 118) highlights that data generation essentially is "a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions". These activities include "locating a site or an individual, gaining access and making rapport, sampling purposefully, collecting data, recording information, exploring field issues, and storing data" (Creswell, 2007, p. 117). In line with this list, I now take a closer look at relevant aspects regarding the data generation process in the context of this study, including the following: (1) site, access and rapport, (2) purposeful sampling, (3) field issues and (4) recording and storing data.

4.7.1.1 Site, Access and Rapport

The research site is Wits, a public university in South Africa, which is also the institution where I worked at the time the site was chosen. There are some concerns about the researcher selecting his or her own organisation or workplace as the site of study. Creswell, for example, notes that "Although studying one's own "backyard" is often convenient and eliminates many obstacles to collecting data, researchers can jeopardize their jobs if they report unfavorable data or if participants disclose private information that might negatively influence the organization or workplace" (Creswell, 2007, p. 122).

When choosing Wits as my site, I did not have these kinds of concerns, as I did not think that there was a risk that I could lose my job or jeopardise it, even if my findings contained critical or unfavourable elements. This confidence was mostly informed by the type of institution I worked at – a public university, which regards, among others, independent enquiry, academic

freedom and critical engagement as core academic aims and values (Wits, 2010c, p. 11). If anything, I did not expect such an institution to punish me for thinking and writing critically. Having said that, I also had no reason to expect that any details revealed during the interviews would pose a serious threat to the reputation of the institution or any individuals linked to it. If such information had emerged, I would have consulted my supervisor and the relevant university authorities to decide on how to deal with it. As it was, however, I believed that the risks and concerns of choosing my own 'backyard' would be outweighed by the benefits.

In any case, the framework of qualitative research allowed me to acknowledge my bias and make them transparent. As far as benefits are concerned, the main advantages of working with the selected site were accessibility of individuals and documents as well as established rapport with potential participants, which would ultimately facilitate the generation of in-depth insider knowledge. As Creswell notes, the researcher needs to find participants that are "accessible, willing to provide information, and distinctive for their accomplishments and ordinariness or who shed light on a specific phenomenon or issue being explored" (Creswell, 2007, p. 119). I believed strongly that I could best find such individuals at my own institution. Furthermore, from a self-study perspective, focussing my research on the organisation that I was part of at the time was reasonable and appropriate, as this would allow me to examine my own practice as well as that of the participants at the same institution. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 184) note in that "Often, since we work in our own classrooms, site selection and entry appear to be givens".

Once the site has been chosen, gaining access to it involves several steps. As far as Wits is concerned, access was a given by virtue of the fact that I was employed by the institution selected for the study. However, regardless of the approach to enquiry, permissions need to be sought from relevant authorities such as review boards to assess the study's potential harmful impact on and risk to participants (Creswell, 2007, p. 123). For my study, which did not include any involvement of minors or populations categorised as sensitive or high risk, ethics clearance was granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the Wits School of Education (WSoE) as well as the office of the Deputy Registrar: Academic, copies of which are attached as Appendix E and Appendix F, respectively.

With access granted, the researcher needs to build rapport with the potential participants of the study. As indicated, I had an established working relationship with many of the potential participants, and some were already aware of my research interest and topic. To engage them

specifically regarding this study, I followed a number of steps. Wherever possible, I first had an informal conversation with the individuals to gauge their interest in participating in the study. If they indicated interest, as was the case for everyone approached in that way, I followed up with a formal email, which contained an invitation to set up an appointment for an interview. This email also provided more information about the study and included a participant information sheet, a copy of which is attached as Appendix A. The sheet contained information about what the study was aiming for, why the participants were chosen, what they could expect in terms of their time required and how the results would be reported. In cases where I did not know the identified individuals or had not been in touch with them for a while, the first point of contact was the email I sent inviting them to participate in the study by being interviewed. If the response was positive, we continued to communicate via email until a suitable date and time for the interview was agreed on.

4.7.1.2 Purposeful Sampling

Sampling implies that researchers may not work with an entire population, which, according to O'Leary (2004, p. 102), is "the total membership of a defined class of people, objects, or events". In the context of this research, for example, the unit of analysis for the case study was a public higher education institution. At the time when the sampling decision was taken, the total population of the study was the public higher education sector in South Africa, which comprised 24 institutions. Rather than working with the entire population, I decided to generate data from a sample, digging deep rather than going for coverage. In line with the goals of qualitative research, the focus of this study is not on representativity and generalisability but rather on a particular context and its specificities. Purposive samples are a characteristic of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 451; Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156; Creswell, 2007, p. 125). According to Creswell, purposeful sampling implies that the researcher "selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). In other words, researchers can hand-pick their samples based on their judgement and research needs (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 156). This means that the selection made is not random. Non-random samples are also referred to as *purposive* or *theoretical* (O'Leary, 2004, p. 109) or *non-probability* samples (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 153).

The selectivity of non-probability samples implies that the researcher targets a particular group in the wider population, particularly in small-scale research such as this study, where each type of sample first and foremost represents itself rather than the "whole, undifferentiated population" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 155). As a strategy, purposive sampling is not without drawbacks. For example, there might be a concern that when individuals are identified and selected based on the judgement and needs of the researcher, such a selection will be biased towards like-minded people, thus creating an echo chamber where the participants reiterate the views of the researcher. In this study, I mitigated against such bias by selecting individuals not based on their views but based on other criteria including their experience and involvement in North-South partnerships. It was also important to include a diversity of positions and functions from across the university, and some individuals were chosen by virtue of the position they held.

Researchers can sample at different levels including the site level and the participants level (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). At the institutional level, one public university was hand-picked as the case at the heart of this study. As mentioned, the university selected for the case study was 'mine' in the sense that it was the institution where I was an employee at the time. This could be described as a 'convenience case', which has "sites or individuals from which the researcher can access and easily collect data" (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). However, convenience alone would not have been a sufficient criterion for selection. To be suitable as a case study institution, the university needed to meet several other criteria. It needed to be known as an institution that actively pursues internationalisation and has, as a university located in the global South, entered into international partnership agreements with institutions in the global North. It also needed to offer a wide range of people knowledgeable in the areas related to the study. That all these criteria were met was established based on the researcher's experience and knowledge of the institution and the South African higher education sector in general. At the time of my first registration for doctoral studies, I had worked at Wits for a total of seven years, more than three of which in the position of partnerships manager in the institutional international office. My knowledge of the broader South African context of higher education was mainly facilitated through my IEASA networks, as outlined in Chapter One, which included colleagues from all universities in South Africa.

At the level of the individuals, the sampling strategy used was also purposeful. Cohen et al. (2011, p. 157) highlight that purposive sampling is employed to access "knowledgeable

people". Participants selected for this study had to have substantial knowledge of North-South partnerships through direct or indirect involvement in them, either in a managing or participating or facilitating capacity.

As a qualitative researcher, my aim was to gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon under study and to include multiple sources of information and diverse perspectives. The first group of individuals targeted included academics and researchers from a variety of different faculties and academic disciplines. The second group of individuals invited to participate in the interviews comprised people who might not have been directly involved in such partnerships but played a role in facilitating them. This group included, for example, representatives of the senior leadership team, senior managers such as deans, directors and heads of schools as well as staff working in a variety of administrative support units such as the institutional international, partnerships and research offices. In addition to considerations regarding their location and function within the University, it was my intention to have a diverse sample in terms of the gender and racial composition of the participants. A breakdown of the participants' profiles is provided in Section 4.7.2.1 below.

In addition to interviews, data was gathered from a variety of documents which included policy documents, strategic plans and reports, which were also purposefully selected. As with interview participants, a possible drawback of such a sampling strategy is that the documents are chosen at the discretion of the researcher. To mitigate this concern, I will be transparent about why and how the documents were included in the study. First and foremost, they had to be relevant to the research questions and, as such, address issues around internationalisation in general and partnerships in particular. More detailed information about the documents included in the case study is provided in Section 4.7.2.2 below.

4.7.1.3 Field Issues

With reference to field issues, Creswell (2007) notes that researchers can experience a number of challenges in the field regarding, for example, gaining access, conducting interviews, searching for documents as well as dealing with ethics concerns that may arise. With this in mind, I would like to state upfront that I did not experience any major challenges with any of these aspects during the data generation phase of my study. As already mentioned, I did not experience difficulties in gaining access to the site and to potential participants, and building

rapport with the participants was to a large extent facilitated by existing relationships characterised by collegiality, respect and trust. At this point, I would like to follow Sword's (1999) example and acknowledge some of the feelings that emerged during the interaction with the participants. I generally did not feel uncomfortable about the interview process, especially after my confidence was strengthened as a result of the pilot study interviews. I felt that I could engage the participants at eye level and was looking forward to working together with them on finding answers to my research questions. For the most part, I felt elated during the interview phase, reaffirmed in the belief that my project was worthwhile and that I was 'on the right track'. With each conversation, my appreciation for the complexities of issues involved grew.

As far as the interview participants are concerned, the responses to my invitation were overwhelmingly positive. Apart from challenges in coordinating busy diaries, I was able to set up a meeting with almost every person that had indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Flexibility was required, and fortunately, I was able to structure my work hours flexibly to accommodate the participants at the dates and times that were most convenient for them.

Overall, the interviews went very well, without any major disruptions or technological failures. More importantly, the participants were generally very collaborative, prepared, open and eager to share their experiences, which resulted in productive conversations. There was only one instance where I left the interview feeling unsure about the usefulness and value of that particular conversation. Regarding ethics concerns, the participants of my study did not engage in any unethical behaviour and, while they shared information that was sometimes private and confidential and was treated as such, they did not provide me with information that was highly sensitive or potentially harmful.

4.7.1.4 Recording and Storing Data

Creswell (2007, pp. 142-143) lists a number of principles about data storage and handling that are especially well suited for qualitative research. They include, for example, developing backup copies of computer files, using high-quality tapes for audio-recording interviews, developing a master list of types of information gathered, protecting the anonymity of participants by masking their names in the data and developing a data collection matrix as a visual means of locating and identifying information for a study.

From this list, I adopted a few guidelines for my study. For example, I regularly backed up all research-related computer files. In addition, I regularly copied and saved all files on an external hard drive. When recording the interviews, I did not make use of a specific recording device but used my mobile phone instead, and the quality of the recordings did not cause any major difficulties during the transcription process. After each interview, the recording was transferred from my mobile phone to my computer. Using the recordings, the interviews were later transcribed either by myself or by an external person as a paid service. Interview recordings and transcriptions were saved in separate files on my computer.

Concerning the anonymity of the participants, it was protected in so far as their names were replaced by numbers in the files created for interview recordings and interview transcriptions. The numbers were assigned chronologically, which means the first person interviewed is Participant 1, shortened to P1, the next person interviewed is Participant 2, shortened to P2, and so forth.

As mentioned earlier, the main sources of information used for this case study were interviews and documents. Before discussing how these data sets were analysed, I describe each form of data in more detail in the following section.

4.7.2 Forms of Data

Qualitative researchers use different forms of data such as participant observation, interviews and documents (Janesick, 1994, p. 211). Creswell extends this list by adding audiovisual materials and notes that all data can be "grouped into four basic types of information: observations (ranging from nonparticipant to participant), interviews (ranging from close-ended to open-ended), documents (ranging from private to public), and audiovisual materials (including materials such as photographs, compact disks, and videotapes)" (Creswell, 2007, p. 129).

With specific reference to case studies and their complexity, Creswell (2007, p. 132) notes that data generation "involves a wide array of procedures as the researcher builds an in-depth picture of the case". Yin (2003, p. 83) observes that case study data can be obtained from many different sources, and he briefly discussing six sources of evidence: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation and physical artefacts (Yin, 2003, p. 85-97). In line with case study research, data for my study are generated from multiple

sources, most notably interviews and documents. These types of data are briefly addressed separately. I start with interviews, which Yin (2003, p. 89) considers one of the most important sources of case study evidence.

4.7.2.1 Interviews

Generally speaking, an interview is a conversational interaction in which one person asks questions, and another person answers these questions. This can be done for different reasons. As Wengraf (2001, p. 3) notes, in the context of qualitative research an interview is "designed for the purpose of improving knowledge". In this instance, the person asking the questions is the researcher, and the person responding to the questions is the research participant. Researchers engage participants in this way to generate data. They want to find out about "participants lives in the participants' own terms" (Janesick, 1994, p. 210), as the goal of constructivist research is to understand "the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). The best way to achieve my goal of revealing people's experiences of North-South partnerships at Wits was to talk to the people involved, to hear their perspectives, and an interview provides a format for this to happen.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 115) consider interviews a method that is "often employed to establish peoples' views about issues through questions that can be open ended and informal or formal and structured depending on the intent of the researcher. Interviews can elicit personal opinions, knowledge, and feelings". I was interested in exploring the participants' opinions, experiences, feelings and knowledges with regard to the North-South partnerships that they were involved in.

The interviews were conducted "based on a set of topics to be discussed in depth rather than based on the use of standardised questions" (Babbie, 2010, p. 318). They were aimed at eliciting "perceptions, meanings, and thoughts from various participants on specific issues that have influence on the study" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 116). These issues and the topics were aligned to the research questions and focus on how North-South partnerships are conceptualised and managed at Wits Specifically, the research participants were asked about their experiences with North-South partnerships, challenges as well as factors for success and failure. Furthermore, they were asked about the role of partnerships in the broader context of

internationalisation of higher education as well as about the alignment of partnership objectives and institutional policies.

The interview questions were open-ended to allow the participants to provide their own answers rather than choosing an answer from a list of options provided (Babbie, 2010). They were broad and general so that the participants could construct their own meanings (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). As the participants were asked to reflect on their work life, it seemed appropriate to conduct the interviews at their workplace. For most participants, this was also the most convenient option, and so with the exception of two participants, one of whom I met in a public restaurant and the other at their home, the majority of interviews took place on the university campus, either in my office, the participant's office or an alternative venue such as a meeting room.

The interviews conducted for this study were formal, face-to-face, semi-structured and in-depth. They were what Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 116) refer to as formal in the sense that they were set up as appointments for a specific amount of time and covered questions previously designed by the researcher. I had chosen face-to-face interviews as the preferred interviewing technique and was prepared to consider telephone interviews as an alternative in cases where circumstances did not allow for a one-on-one conversation to take place. In the end, all interviews were conducted face-to-face, with the researcher engaging one participant at a time.

A total of 17 interviews were conducted over a five-month period, between September 2017 and January 2018. The total duration of these interviews was 819 minutes, which means that each interview lasted 48 minutes on average, with the shortest interview lasting 28 minutes and the longest 78 minutes. The interviews were semi-structured, which means they had a degree of flexibility. As O'Leary (2004, p. 164) notes, semi-structured interviews include previously defined questions but also allow for a more conversational style. In such a setting, the interviewer can probe and ask for examples or more information when somewhat vague answers are given (Wengraf, 2001, p. 23).

The flexibility that comes with semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions could be considered a drawback in the sense that it makes working with the data generated through interviews challenging. For example, responses provided by different participants will be more difficult to compare than close-ended questions, which are typically administered through

questionnaires. However, comparing responses was not the main concern for this study. Rather, I was interested in how they complement or contradict each other, combining diverse insights and a multitude of unique contexts to achieve a rich and thick description of the case.

Interviewing is a complex form of communication, and research interviews are no exception (Wengraf, 2001, p. 33). Factors such as race, gender and age can impact the relationship between researcher and research participants, as can their experience, both in terms of the subject matter as well as the interviewing process itself. For face-to-face interviews, the participants need to be "individuals who are not hesitant to speak and share ideas" (Creswell, 2007, p. 133), and the interviewer relies on them to be honest and open (O'Leary, 2004, p. 162).

It was, therefore, important to ensure that the participants did in no way feel threatened or offended. As previously indicated, the relationship I had with the participants was one that was generally already characterised by collegiality, respect and trust. I assured the participants that that all information shared by them would be used for research purposes only and that ethics principles of anonymity and confidentiality would be upheld.

O'Leary (2004, p. 162) notes that interviewing carries the risk of miscommunication, as questions and answers are interpreted by both the interviewer and the interviewees. Likewise, Wengraf (2001, p.67) notes that it is not helpful to ask research questions directly as interview questions, as interviewer and interviewee have different ways of speaking. While miscommunication can perhaps never be entirely avoided, I attempted to mitigate this risk by establishing common ground. At the beginning of each interview, I briefly discussed the objective of my research as well as the main research question. This was a standard part of my interview protocol, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B. Regarding this protocol, Creswell (2007, p. 133) observes that:

> The questions are a narrowing of the central question and subquestions in the research study. These might be seen as the core of the interview protocol, bounded on the front end by questions to invite the interviewee to open up and talk and located at the end by questions about "Who should I talk to in order to learn more?" or comments thanking the participants for their time for the interview.

The front end of my interviews was essentially dedicated to establishing common ground, as mentioned, to clarifying the interview process and to signing the consent forms. The first

question was of a very general nature, enquiring about the experiences that the participants had with North-South partnerships in general. Depending on the issues brought up in this first response, other questions would follow. With the last question, the participants were always invited to indicate if anything had not yet been mentioned, and, finally, I asked the participants to complete a questionnaire to capture biographical details. In closing, I thanked the participants for their time and collaboration and indicated that I would send them a draft of the findings for their review and comment. This process was part of the member checks, which is discussed in greater detail in Section 4.8.2.2 below.

To facilitate the process of using interview data to answer the research questions, the interviews were recorded, as video or audio recordings facilitate the data analysis process by providing "an exhaustive record that permits careful analysis of what happened" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 133). Each participant gave permission for this at the start of each interview by signing the relevant consent form, a copy of which is attached as Appendix C.

In addition to audiotapes, which I recorded using my mobile phone, I compiled extensive interview notes to capture the main flow of the interview, mostly as back-up in case the technology failed. Wengraf (2001, p. 24) points out that it is useful to pay attention to the overall context of the interview, especially noting the overall atmosphere in which it was conducted and any non-verbal cues that can help interpret the interview. Wherever possible, I took notes after each interview to capture my overall impressions, especially any points made during the conversation that stood out, brought up a new aspect or a connection to something another participant had said. I consulted these notes again during the data analysis phase.

At this point, it seems worthwhile to provide a more detailed overview of the interviews conducted for this study, particularly regarding the people who participated in the main interviewing phase of the study.

4.7.2.1.1 Interview Participants: An Overview

This section is based on information provided by the research participants through biographical questionnaires, a copy of which is included as Appendix D. Of the 17 participants that were interviewed during the main phase of the study, 16 completed and returned the questionnaires to me. The questionnaires captured information about the participants' gender, citizenship and

race as well as their location and function within the university. These details are illustrated in Table 3 and Table 4 below, respectively.

Table 3: Wits participants by gender, citizenship and race.

Gender			**Citizenship**		
	Male	Female	South African	Non-South African	
	11	5	12	4	Ghana: 1 Canada: 1 USA: 1 Undisclosed: 1
Race[24]					
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Undisclosed
	3	1	4	6	2

Table 4: Wits participants by faculty or administrative unit and function.

Faculty or Administrative Unit					
Commerce, Law and Management	Engineering and the Built Environment	Health Sciences	Humanities	Science	Administrative Unit
2	2	0	5	2	5
Function					
Senior Executive	(Senior) Manager	Academic	Researcher	Administrative Staff	
2	5	11	3	4	Research Office: 1 SPO: 1 ISO: 1 Legal Office: 1

As these tables illustrate, the participants represented a diversity of people in terms of their biographical details as well as their positions and functions across the university. As far as the University's faculties are concerned, the Faculty of Health Sciences is the only one not represented. The reason for this is that interviews with two participants, who had initially indicated their willingness to participate in the study, could not be scheduled in the end due to

[24] The race categories used in Table 3 reflect South African conventions and are commonly used in official domains. As defined in the *Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013*, "'black people' is a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians" (The Presidency, 2014, p. 2).

time constraints and difficulties in coordinating relevant diaries. After several unsuccessful attempts, I decided to conduct interviews with other participants who had responded positively to my request and were available to be interviewed. They were mostly from the Humanities Faculty, which explains why the number of participants from that Faculty is higher than the average.

While most of the categories used in Tables 3 and 4 are self-explanatory, the category referring to the participants' function within the university deserves some additional comments. The term *senior executives* refers to members of the Senior Executive Team, which includes the vice-chancellor, deputy vice-chancellors and deans of faculties, whereas the category of *senior managers and managers* includes heads of schools and departments as well as directors of research units and university centres.

The total number in this category is higher than 16, the number of participants who had provided information via the questionnaire, as several of them chose to select more than one category. Four participants selected two categories (for example, academic and researcher or academic and manager), one participant selected three categories (academic, researcher and manager) and another one chose four categories (academic, manager, researcher and senior executive), illustrating that academic and administrative roles and responsibilities often overlap. This applies to positions currently held as well as previous ones.

Apart from the details captured in Tables 3 and 4 above, the participants were asked to indicate how many years of partnerships experience they had. The combined total of partnerships experience is 215.5 years, which means that each participant had an average of 13.5 years of partnerships experience, with the minimum number of years specified as 4 years and the maximum as 30 years. Five participants had less than ten years of experience, of which only one participant had less than five years. As this shows, even the participants with the least number of years had considerable experience in the area of partnerships.

4.7.2.1.2 Partnerships: An Overview

At this point, I would like to briefly comment on the partnerships that were identified by the participants. While all participants indicated that their partnerships experience was based on several partnerships, six participants chose not to share any specify details of these

partnerships. Based on the responses received from the remaining ten participants, an overview of partnerships is provided in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Overview of Wits partnerships.

Level	Purpose	Partner Regions and Countries	Funding Organisation or Programme
Bilateral Multilateral	Capacity building Curriculum development External examiners Research Student exchange Winter school	Africa: Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia Asia: China Australia: Australia Europe: Finland, France, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK North America: USA	AusAid British Academy CDR-USAID Erasmus+ Ford Foundation Friedal Sellschop Governments: Finland, Norway and Switzerland Linnaeus Palme Programme Pareto Limited
Note: The information provided in this Table is given in alphabetical order, rather than in order of importance or scope.			

As Table 5 illustrates, the participants that provided specific information were involved in a number of diverse partnerships in terms of their scope, purpose and funding arrangements as well as partner regions and countries. The diversity of the participants' experiences and perspectives contributed to the richness of the data that was generated for the study.

After completing 17 interviews, saturation was reached in the sense that I felt confident that I would be able to answer the study's research questions and present a nuanced study of how partnerships are perceived and managed at Wits. This is further explored during data presentation in Chapter Five and Appendix G as well as data analysis in Chapter Six.

4.7.2.2 Documentation

Documentary information is used as a source of evidence in most case studies (Yin, 2003, p. 85). As Yin (2003, p. 87) mentions, documents play an important role in case study research, where they are used mainly to substantiate and augment evidence obtained from other sources such as interviews. According to Yin (2003, pp. 85-86), a variety of documents can be collected for case study research such as letters, agendas, meeting minutes, reports, proposals, newsletters and articles.

O'Leary (2004, p. 177) extends this list by including other documents such as television commercials and photographs. In this study, the main focus was on formal institutional documents relating to partnerships and internationalisation in the form of partnerships and internationalisation policies and strategic plans. Other relevant documents included concept papers, reports, newsletters and blogs. These documents were not all obtained as hard copies. Some were received via email or downloaded from internet sources. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 132) note that "technology enhances the use of other methods and/or serves as a tool to facilitate the research process". They go on to say that:

> Qualitative researchers also use aspects of technology and the internet to facilitate the ways they access information. For example, use of blogs, e-mail, websites, and so on has become common research practice in qualitative research. These tools are used to collect assignments, perspectives and other information to capture aspects of the study (ibid.).

Regardless of how documentary data were obtained, Yin (2003, p. 87) cautions against overreliance on documents by highlighting that they are written for specific purposes and audiences and might therefore also not be free from bias. Taking this into account, Yin suggests that documents be carefully analysed. I have taken this recommendation on board by contextualising the sources used, and an overview of the documents gathered for the case study is included in the following section.

4.7.2.2.1 Institutional Documents: An Overview

For the institutional perspective, the documentation gathered and analysed for this study included general documents such as the university website, strategic plan, several annual reports as well as information and marketing materials. These documents are valuable, as they provide insights into the institutional vision and identity, including challenges and opportunities. In addition, the case study specifically focussed on institutional documents that speak directly to internationalisation and partnerships matters including the institution's internationalisation policy, a framework document highlighting curriculum internationalisation as well as a concept paper on Pan-African partnerships. An overview of these documents is given in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Overview of Wits documents.

Name of Document	Year	Author	Type/ Purpose of Document	Mainly Internally or Externally Facing		Available to Researcher as Hard Copy or Online	
				Internal	External	Hard Copy	Online
University website	2018 2019	University Communications	Information and marketing		✓		✓
Annual Report	2014, 2018	Manager Communications and Publications	Information and marketing		✓		✓
Wits Matters	2015	Not specified[25]	Information and marketing		✓		✓
Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework	2010*	Director of Strategic Planning	Information and marketing		✓		✓
Internationalisation Policy	2010*	Director of Strategic Planning/ Director of Wits International Office	Information and marketing		✓	✓	
Pan-African Universities Partnership	2010	Not specified[26]	Concept note, discussion paper	✓		✓	
Draft Framed Guidance for Curriculum Internationalisation – Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence	2014	Faculty of Humanities	Information and guidance		✓	✓	
Information marked with an asterisk (*) is not specifically stipulated in the document but inferred from the information provided							

[25] The document seemingly targets potential donors and was therefore most likely developed with the involvement of the institutional Development and Fundraising Office (DFO).
[26] To the best of my knowledge, the document was developed by the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor Partnerships and Advancement.

Table 6 illustrates the diversity of institutional documents that were considered for the case study. They are for the most part externally facing and publicly available and can be downloaded from the University website, including the institutional vision, annual reports and information materials. It is understood that such documents will have passed the required scrutiny before publication, and they are therefore considered official institutional mouthpieces and trustworthy sources of information.

There are two exceptions to this: Firstly, the *Pan-African Universities Partnership* is a concept paper that was primarily developed for internal discussions and is not publicly available. However, it is referenced in both the University's strategy as well as its policy on internationalisation. The second exception is the *Draft Framed Guidance for Curriculum Internationalisation – Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence*, as it is a document that was developed by the Faculty of Humanities. It represents the thinking of one faculty rather than an institutional position. However, in light of the fact that the Humanities Faculty is the only faculty at Wits that has a dedicated Internationalisation and Partnerships Committee, the inclusion of this document as representation of a faculty stance seems justified.

4.7.2.3 Multivocality

In general, the nature of data that are generated is informed by the overall approach to the research project in question. From a self-study perspective, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 109) seek to find out the nature of the evidence that can be gathered to capture the voice of practice and the voice of the researcher.

I note that in this study the voice of practice is captured first and foremost through the interviews, which are supported by documents that provide a broader context for the case and the answers to the research questions. My voice, as a researcher, is captured through observations in the form of a variety of notes. While I did not keep a research diary, I did make use of field notes directly related to the case study. For example, I took notes after the interviews to capture comments on the overall context of the interview as well as record any thoughts, themes, ideas and linkages that immediately came to my mind.

Other notes were taken in different contexts but had relevance to the issues discussed in the study. These are notes that I took, for example, when I conducted partnerships workshops to capture the issues raised, experiences shared and feedback provided by workshop participants.

Finally, I took notes based on what I will refer to as self-observation. These notes were made throughout the writing up process, mostly using the comments function in draft versions of this thesis. If, for example, a particular memory was triggered while I was going through my writing or the data, I would note this in the comments column on the right side of the page. These were notes that related to my own personal and professional experience as well as to my journey as a researcher and included some of the key moments of the research process in terms of major realisations and epiphanies.

I reviewed my notes on an ongoing basis and included them in relevant sections of this thesis, particularly during the data analysis process as well as in reflections on what I have learnt as a result of this study. It is in this sense that I can say I am part of the data used for this study, as expression of an element of autoethnographic and self-study research.

Once the researcher has gathered all the data sets, he or she moves towards making sense of them. This process is generally referred to as data analysis, which aims at moving from raw data to meaningful understanding (O'Leary, 2004, p. 195). What this process involved for me is discussed in the sections that follow.

4.7.3 Data Analysis

Through undertaking qualitative research, a way or ways are found to, on the basis of solid descriptive data, enable the researcher to lead "the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study" (Janesick, 1994, p. 215). This understanding aligns with how several scholars understand data analysis within the qualitative perspective. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 148) describe data analysis "as a process of breaking down something with a desire to make sense of it". They note that "researchers deconstruct data to reconstruct them in ways that make meaning from what we think we see and what others seem to say". During the analysis process, the qualitative researcher uncovers and discovers themes running through the raw data and interprets their implications for the research questions. Regarding the relationship between theory and research, qualitative research tends to make use of inductive reasoning (Bryman, 2008, p. 54; Janesick, 1994, p. 215). In many instances, this means that categories, themes and patterns are allowed to emerge from the data (Janesick, 1994, p. 215). In this regard, Creswell (2007, p. 148) notes that:

> Data analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.

What I would like to highlight is that, as Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 148) point out, data analysis in qualitative research generally involves "the organization, classification, and categorization along with a search for patterns and a synthesis of patterns in the recursive research process". In my understanding, it is important for the qualitative researcher, among other contextual factors, that the unique research problem, the nature of the data gathered and the unique qualities and capabilities of the researcher are creatively taken into account to ensure that data analysis is done in ways that give readers new understandings of the issues that are being studied. To achieve this, the researcher has to be prepared to craft and justify methodological choices, which is what I try to explain in this section. I outline how I approached data analysis in this study, explaining my choices, arguing that these choices enable me to work the data in ways that yield an insightful set of findings and conclusions.

To begin with, I note that my study represents an analysis of case study data that Creswell refers to as a holistic analysis, as it refers to the entire case, aiming not for "generalizing beyond the case, but for understanding the complexity of the case" (Creswell, 2007, p. 75). I approached the process of analysing my case study data in four main steps, as follows:

Step 1: 'Winnowing' the Data

As a first step, I engaged with the raw data by reading the documents and interviews transcripts to get an overall sense of each of them. Creswell uses the term 'winnowing' the data, which means sifting through the data to separate the useful from the not useful (Creswell, 2007, p. 53). At the end of this step, I had established that all selected documents and all conducted interviews would provide useful information for the study, albeit to varying degrees. It emerged more clearly that not all documents or interviews would speak to relevant issues or weight them in the same way.

Step 2: Reading and Memoing

As a second step, I re-read the documents and interview transcripts several times, making notes on each of them separately to highlight pertinent issues and ideas as well as emerging patterns and themes. This is a process that Creswell refers to as reading and memoing (Creswell, 2007, p. 151). These notes were later brought into conversation with each other as well as with notes made at other stages of the research process, for example, after an interview was conducted.

Step 3: Reducing the Data

After I had read, re-read and annotated the documents and interview transcripts I set out to reduce the data. The process of data reduction was different for the two main forms of data gathered for the case study. In the case of documentary data, I summarised the main points and pertinent issues raised by highlighting relevant sections and making notes in each document, and these summaries are essentially presented in Chapter Five. Aiming to provide a detailed contextualisation of Wits as the case study institution, the chapter provides a general overview of the institution, followed by a discussion of how internationalisation and partnerships related matters are addressed in specific institutional documents.

The process I used to reduce the considerable amount of interview data was slightly different. Listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts, I made rough notes capturing major categories coming up in the interviews, which included key words and concepts such as internationalisation, partnerships, North-South, South Africa, challenges and Southern theory. Each category was further divided into sub-categories. For example, sub-categories in the North-South category dealt with issues regarding the global North, the global South, North-South partnerships, South-South relations as well as North-South-South relations. In most instances, the sub-categories were divided even further. For example, the category of internationalisation was divided into sub-categories dealing with meanings, rationales and indicators of success. Under the sub-category of rationales, different issues were addressed including competitiveness, reputation, funding, best practice and quality. I used these rough notes as an intermediate process to write up the narrative summary of interview data, which is presented in Appendix G.

Step 4: Making the Data Work

Once I had completed steps 1-3 above, I felt confident that I had reached saturation in the sense that, based on the data I had gathered from documents and interviews, I would be able to answer the study's research questions and present a nuanced and in-depth case study of how North-South partnerships are perceived and managed at Wits. I then moved to what I call 'making the data work', by which I mean a process of thorough analysis and sense-making, which was done in three main phases.

Firstly, I brought the documents and interviews into conversation. Secondly, I looked at how the data helped me answer the research questions. Thirdly, I re-theorised my findings by linking them to the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks. All three phases are described in further detail in the data analysis presented in Chapter Six, which is structured in accordance with the three phases mentioned here. At this point, I move on to address issues of data presentation in some more detail in the following section, as I had noted that the narrative form is important in this qualitative case study.

4.7.4 Data Presentation

In the context of my study, data presentation is essentially the description of what the field revealed. As Creswell notes, data presentation for case studies refers to "a detailed description of the case and its setting" (Creswell, 2007, p. 163). As far as the form of this presentation is concerned, Creswell (2007, p. 154) points out that researchers present their data, "a packaging of what was found in text, tabular, or figure form", and I make use of all three of these forms. I use tables and figures mostly to summarise relevant information in a format that makes information easily accessible and visually appealing. However, the main form of data presentation in this study is text, which means I present my case study data primarily in narrative form.

As Janesick (1994, p. 214) states, the narrative form is suitable for the presentation of qualitative data, supported by evidence from the documents and interviews analysed. When narrating findings from the field, the goal is to have a rich, thick description that enables the reader to gain an in-depth understanding of the issues and their complexities. In other words, through detailed description "the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other

settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred 'because of shared characteristics'" (Creswell, 2007, p. 209).

Transferability is discussed in more detail in the section that deals with research quality. At this point, I would like to reflect a bit more on the readers because, as Creswell (2007, p. 180) notes, "all writers write for an audience". My study's readers consist of multiple audiences. Firstly, since it is a thesis written in fulfilment of the requirements for a doctoral degree, my first audience is composed of my supervisor and examiners. Secondly, the people who participated in the research as participants might have a particular interest in reading the 'whole story', not only their part in it. Thirdly, the audience is extended to readers who are colleagues working in the field of higher education internationalisation in South Africa and beyond. As previously noted, I hope that my study is of interest to scholars and practitioners alike. In that sense, it is important to strike a balance between 'academic' and 'non-academic' language. Whoever the audience in question, my intention is to have a style of writing "that is personal, familiar, perhaps 'up-close', highly readable, friendly, and applied for a broad audience", with a "level of detail that makes the work come alive" (Creswell, 2007, p. 182).

4.7.4.1 Writing Style

In terms of writing style, I am aiming for a language that is personal and engaging. As Creswell notes, "The story and findings become believable and realistic, accurately reflecting all the complexities that exist in real life. The best qualitative studies engage the reader" (Creswell, 2007, p. 46). Some techniques that qualitative writers use include writing in the first person, using metaphors and story-telling techniques (Creswell, 2007, p. 18). As Janesick (1994, p. 215) notes, it is the responsibility of the researcher to find the most effective way in which to tell his or her story, and the most powerful way of telling the story is to stay close to the data. This is why I am using direct quotes from my data sources extensively, especially from the interviews, which also aims to reflect the voices of the participants in the narrative.

4.7.4.2 Multiplicity of Voices in the Narrative

I have previously emphasised the collaborative nature of knowledge production in qualitative research in general, and specifically with regard to the constructivist paradigm, and the writing

needs to reflect this interactive process. As a qualitative and constructivist researcher, I am interested in multiple voices, diverse perspectives, multiple realities and complexities as well as in the interactive relationship between the research participants and the researcher. To create a complex, rich and nuanced picture of North-South partnerships, I work with the concept of multivocality, which means that voice is given to the research participants as well as the researcher in the narrative. This "inclusive approach creates a multidimensional image of the field" (Dyll, 2018, p. 150).

4.7.4.2.1 Participants' Voices

As Dyll (2018, p. 147) notes, "Revealing the constructedness of the research is especially important when working with groups other to the researcher". What is important to note is that I am not isolated from the 'others', as the research participants and I are all part of the field of higher education internationalisation. While I have a privileged position regarding the overall research process, I do not assume authority over the meaning making and knowledge production related to this study. I acknowledge that the research is co-constructed, and knowledge is created through interaction. As Creswell (2007, p. 16) highlights, "When studying individuals, qualitative researchers conduct a study with the intent of reporting these multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple quotes based on the actual words of different individuals and presenting different perspectives from individuals" (ibid.). The research participants are given voice in this study, particularly through the extensive use of direct quotes from the interviews in the presentation of data as well as the study's findings. By using quotes, the immediacy of the voices of the research participants is foregrounded, which brings them into close contact with the readers.

4.7.4.2.2 Researcher's Voice

My voice, as a researcher, is included in this narrative, indicated by the extensive use of *I*. Using the first person pronoun is an essential element of reflexivity. As Dyll (2018, p. 147) notes, it helps create "a researcher's (i) identity; (ii) commitment to his or her position/argument; and above all (iii) a strong personal voice". In a case study, Creswell and his colleague used an epilogue to reflexively bring their "personal experiences into the discussion without disrupting the flow of the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 93).

My approach is somewhat different, as I, at different times throughout this work, reflect on my identity, experiences and viewpoints. None of this is done for the sake of being self-obsessed. As Dyll (2018, p. 147) highlights, when researchers write themselves into their texts, they must do this for a specific reason. I do it to illustrate my positionality, specifically regarding the role I play as a practitioner-scholar and active research participant.

Reflexivity is seen here as a technique that helps illuminate "the *constructedness* of representation" (ibid.). This means that "Researchers must know what parts of themselves to reveal to the reader as producers to help the reader understand the process that was used in constructing the end product" (ibid.). In other words, I use reflexivity to negotiate my position, in dialogue with myself, the data and the research participants. For example, I might include an experience from my practice to confirm or dispute a point made by a research participant or other author. I share such observations to provide context to the research process. As Creswell notes, "Researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they 'position themselves' in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Therefore, expressing my voice and being transparent about my positionality is part and parcel of my interpretation of the data. Issues such as this are of key concern in qualitative research, linked to the concept of research quality, which is addressed in the following section.

4.8 Research Quality

It is widely accepted that research quality matters. However, there does not seem to be general consensus regarding how such quality is described and measured in qualitative research. In what follows, I discuss a number of different concepts used to describe quality of qualitative research. This is followed by a discussion of validation strategies that can be employed in order to enhance research quality as well as piloting.

4.8.1 Key Concepts of Qualitative Research Quality

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 114) specifically associate four key concepts with the quality of qualitative, constructivist research: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In the context of my study on North-South partnerships in higher education, my

main concern was to ensure my research is credible and transferable. In addition, I ensure that it is trustworthy.

4.8.1.1 Credibility

Qualitative research has to do with "whether or not a given explanation fits a given description. In other words, is the explanation credible?" (Janesick, 1994, p. 216). Credibility might be addressed through, for example, the depth and richness of the data (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 179). In this regard, I note that the data I gathered helps mitigate concerns regarding researcher bias, as mentioned in the context of the purposive sampling strategy applied in this study. The depth and richness of my data, representing a diversity of perspective that extend and challenge my own views as well as each other, support the credibility of the study's findings.

Furthermore, truthfulness of findings and conclusions is important (O'Leary, 2004, p. 61). Referring to Toulmin, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 164) use the term 'reasonableness', meaning that "in seeking to establish reasonableness, we seek to avoid arguments that are without reason or that are unreasonable". When researchers commit to generating rich data and analysing and interpreting them truthfully, there are a number of other strategies they can employ, which include member checks and audit trails, by allowing participants to review the work or by asking outsiders to read it (Janesick, 1994, p. 216).

The credibility of the research process is key, most notably with regard to the way in which data sets are generated, analysed and interpreted. In a study like mine where the self has a strong presence, it is necessary to discuss credibility with regard to the researcher herself. Janesick (1994, p. 214) notes that the credibility of the data can be further strengthened by describing the role of the researcher in the research process. Bourke (2014, p. 7) reflects on the personal character of research and involvement of the researcher by noting that the "research in which I engage is shaped by who I am, and as long as I remain reflective throughout the process, I will be shaped by it, and by those with whom I interact".

By locating myself in my study, I engage in what Sword (1999) refers to as 'accounting for presence of self'. Sword (1999, p. 277) points out that "We cannot separate self from those activities in which we are intimately involved". She notes that accounting for the self enhances the legitimacy and credibility of the research and its findings rather than jeopardising its objectivity. She says that "Reflection on the influence of self not only creates personal

awareness of how the research is shaped by one's own biography but also provides a context within which audiences can more fully understand the researcher's interpretation of text data" (Sword, 1999, p. 270).

I argue that, in addition to rich information obtained from interviews, reflections on my experience add an additional layer to the data's depth and richness. I base this on the assumption that trustworthiness and credibility can be brought about by experience and prolonged engagement, in my case, through having varied and extensive experience as a practitioner in the field. In this context, it is important to note that my credibility is closely linked to my experience, which is understood to carry authority.

As indicated in Chapter One, my experience in working in the field of internationalisation of higher education, specifically in the context of North South partnerships spans almost 20 years. These include time spent working in different institutions and countries, initiating, supporting, managing and evaluating university partnerships, which afforded me the opportunity to gain nuanced insights and varied perspectives.

As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 153) note, self-study researchers "recognize the power of the authority of experience". In the context of this study, the authority of experience is considered as one way of knowing, as compared to dialogue and interaction as other ways of knowing. It is the basis for those instances in this study where I bring my experience into it, where I let my voice come to the fore. In a way, it is a case of me asserting that 'I know what I am talking about' because it is drawn from my extensive practice.

In some ways my experience is informed by the experience of others. For example, in the many partnerships workshops I have facilitated over the years, I have obtained insights into 'other' thinking and practice. This applies to colleagues from South Africa as well as from all over the world. What has been important for me in these contexts as well as in this study is that the term 'authority of experience' does not have exclusionary undertones. It does not mean that I assert my authority at the expense of others. I acknowledge that there are multiple voices of people with experience, and each carries weight and is valued. I would like to confirm that this multivocality is valued, like all the voices in a choir. Apart from doing work that is credible, I hope that my research will be useful to others. In my workshops in particular, I have experienced the power of sharing and learning from each other. It is in this context that I hope my work will be transferable to others.

4.8.1.2 Transferability

In qualitative research, it is not expected that the findings are generalisable or directly applicable to a larger population (O'Leary, 2004, p. 62). However, the qualitative researcher hopes that the 'lessons learned' can be transferable, which means they can be applied to alternative settings or across populations (O'Leary, 2004, p. 63). For this study, transferability is relevant at several levels. Firstly, it is aligned with the case study design, whose purpose it is to present a specific context, not the world.

Specificity makes generalisation difficult, and the same applies to the case's complexity. This is in line with postcolonial thinking, which does not carry a claim for universal truths and single stories but rather favours specific, localised accounts. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 150) note, "We are not attempting nor do we desire to adopt a principle of generalizability that allows our work to be exported to any context. Indeed, we recognize that our work is situated in particular places and times". While my findings are not generalisable, I do hope that the study will offer insights, perspectives and inspirations that will be useful for other partnerships contexts.

Another reason why generalisation is difficult lies in the nature of self-study research. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 4) point out:

> …what we study is not just about understanding what we do and how we do it, but also about how we can improve it (practice). In this way, we stand in a place of growth and change. Such ground is never solid and secure; it is not a ground from which foundational claims about what we know can be made, since what we know changes and evolves as we act upon it.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 150) hope that self-study researchers can "develop insights and descriptive actions that can be used as tools for thinking and acting with adjustment by others to their situations and contexts". I find the latter part of this statement significant, as it highlights that transferability does not follow a 'copy-and-paste' approach. Transferability needs to be looked at critically, insights need to be questioned and thinkingly adopted to and adapted for the relative context. What this means for this study is that the institution presented here does not represent South Africa. Similarly, South Africa does not represent the global South. However, in both instances, the one is part of the other and might therefore offer others

in similar contexts the opportunity to transfer elements to their respective contexts. Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 54) point out that self-study researchers are "not developing objective generalizable truth claims but assertions for action and understanding or depictions of contexts for further wondering".

As initially noted, apart from credibility and transferability, research quality can also be described in the context of dependability, which I briefly address in the section that follows.

4.8.1.3 Dependability

In the context of this study, dependability refers to "methodological protocols that are designed and developed in a manner that is consistent, logical, systematic, well-documented, and designed to account for research subjectivities" (O'Leary 2010, p. 60). For example, for this study to be dependable, instruments have been used consistently, and processes have been well documented. However, it is recognised that even if the same instrument is used consistently, it might not yield the same results if repeated. To illustrate this, I used the same format and protocol for all the interviews conducted for this study. However, I concede that each interview was a unique event. Furthermore, the findings might be different if the interviews were conducted in the same way with the same people again. The main reason for this is that interviews are a form of human interaction, and people are not necessarily consistent and predictable. O'Leary (ibid.) aptly illustrates this as follows:

> People are complex and multifaceted and at any given time, for any given reason, they may only reveal part of themselves. People provide information about themselves that can shift for any number of reasons. Who does the asking; what mood they are in; and what happened the night before may lead to varied, yet possibly all authentic, presentations of self.

Therefore, it cannot be guaranteed that the same person would deliver the same response if asked the same question on different occasions. Similarly, I, as researcher, may interpret even the same response differently on different occasions. Different decisions taken during the interview process might yield different results (Wengraf, 2001, p. 28). A degree of unpredictability is also noted by Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 53) relating to self-study research. They highlight that "the research ground we work from [is] dynamic, and we must recognize that the knowledge we develop is always contingent".

As Janesick (1994, p. 217) points out, case studies are valuable because they are unique. Their uniqueness renders "reliability in the traditional sense of replicability" meaningless. It is worth noting that uniqueness may affect other aspects of my research such as the process of analysing data, which did not follow a standard template. Rather, I developed and followed my own method to suit the research, including my role as a research instrument, as documented in earlier sections of this chapter. Having been transparent about it, I believe that the end product of the research is systematic, persuasive and rigorous.

With a view towards credibility, transferability and dependability, this study also aims to be trustworthy. Trustworthiness is a concept that is linked to all of the above, particularly as discussed by Pinnegar and Hamilton in the context of self-study research.

4.8.1.4 Trustworthiness

Regarding trustworthiness, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 50) note:

> …the value of research is best established by the readers' judgment of the trustworthiness of the researcher of the study, the integrity of the study, and the assertion for practice presented in the account. In other words, trustworthy studies attempt to establish the accuracy of the account of the practice. They do this by constructing an account that resonates with the reader and provides insights that have the potential to improve or enlighten practitioners.

For me, it is particularly the last sentence in the quote above that illustrates the link to credibility, as resonating with the reader, and transferability, as providing insights. Ultimately, trustworthiness will be judged by the reader, as Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 55) put it. For self-study researchers, establishing trustworthiness might include vulnerability in the sense that the researcher talks about what is uncomfortable or unflattering. He or she needs to "provide the examples, details, and illustrations that interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions and push forward the understanding in the field regardless of how such accounts may make them appear as human beings" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 161).

In order to convince the reader that their work is meeting the requirements of research quality as described here, researchers work rigorously. The importance of rigour has been noted by many scholars (O'Leary, 2004; Creswell, 2007; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). With regard to

self-study research, within a qualitative framework, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 68) note that researchers:

> …identify the *I* aspects of their methodology in ways that speak to and enhance rigor. The use of the *I*'s in research makes explicit the role of the researcher in research and the strength of the relation of self in relation to other.

When discussing rigour, emphasis is often placed on its importance with regard to the analysis of data. Creswell's notion is a bit broader when he highlights that qualitative researchers adopt a rigorous approach when they generate and analyse data and write reports. Furthermore, he observes that:

> Rigor is seen when extensive data collection in the field occurs, or when the researcher conducts multiple levels of data analysis, from the narrow codes or themes to broader interrelated themes to more abstract dimensions. Rigor means, too, that the researcher validates the accuracy of the account using one or more of the procedures for validation, such as member checking, triangulating sources of data, or using peer or external auditors of the accounts (Creswell, 2007, p. 46).

As indicated here, rigour is linked to the concept of validation. Creswell (2007, p. 207) states that his "framework for thinking about validation in qualitative research is to suggest that researchers employ accepted strategies to document the 'accuracy' of their studies". Such validation strategies are looked at in the section that follows.

4.8.2 Validation Strategies

Creswell, noting the link between research quality and validation, points out that "Many perspectives exist regarding the importance of validation in qualitative research, the definition of it, terms to describe it, and procedures for establishing it" (Creswell, 2007, p. 202). Creswell (2007, pp. 207-208) mentions eight validation strategies, including prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias from the outset of the study, rich and thick description as well as external audits and member checking. He recommends "that qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study" (2007, p. 209). From Creswell's list, I have employed the following strategies for my study: triangulation; researcher bias; rich and hick

description and member checks. Two of these have already been addressed in previous sections – researcher bias in the discussion of the role of the researcher and a rich description in the section on data presentation – and will not be discussed here again. However, I touch on triangulation and member checks.

4.8.2.1 Triangulation

Stake (2005, pp. 453-454) points out that triangulation helps reduce the possibility of misinterpretation, as it allows for meaning to be clarified. From a self-study perspective, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 155) note:

> Our design should make certain that voices from the self and the other are both present in the data and that we have identified ways in which we will engage others to provide alternative interpretations and multiple perspectives. Participants, collaborators, and voices from the field should be utilized to constantly challenge the personal interpretations we construct.

For this study, triangulation is primarily based on the use of different sources of data, including interviews and documents. Typically, triangulation "involves corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). This is what is also referred to as data triangulation (Janesick, 1994).

Yin (2003, p. 97) highlights that using a variety of data sources is a particular strength of case studies such as this one. Wengraf (2001, p. 28) points out that a semi-structured interview aims to discover the participant's subjective world. However, what he or she says is not taken at face value but analysed critically. This analysis includes, for example, that the interviews are not only studied individually but also jointly. In this study, the interviews are brought into conversation with each other as well as with the documents. Furthermore, the data in this study is interpreted using multiple perspectives. This is what Janesick (1994) refers to as theory triangulation. Regarding theory triangulation in this study, I take the conceptual and theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Two and Chapter Three into account when re-theorising my findings as part of the data analysis. All of this is done in Chapter Six.

Creswell notes that the researcher presents the data hoping to reflect the participants' accounts accurately and truthfully, and member checks, which are discussed in the next section, are a suitable validation strategy.

4.8.2.2 Member Checks

Member checks are an expression of a collaborative approach, which is based on the etymological assumption that knowledge is created in interaction. Researchers "seek to have our account resonate with the participants, to be an accurate reflection of what they said" (Creswell, 2007, p. 45).

Through member checks, a researcher approaches participants with a request to review his or her writing to establish whether the findings and interpretations are credible (Creswell, 2007, pp. 208). The participants' feedback on the draft of the case can be incorporated into the final writing, highlighting that "This technique is considered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to be 'the most critical technique for establishing credibility' (p. 314)" (Creswell, 2007, p. 341).

For this study, it was important to me to hold the voices of the research participants in integrity and to represent them truthfully. Member checks allowed me to test if my understanding of the participants' practices is truthfully reflected in the research findings. In this context, Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 53) speak about the importance of developing "confidence in the veracity of the assertions we wanted to make about practice and our understanding of it". Furthermore, they note that, in the end, it is the reader who will judge the quality of my research.

> We think others should be able to review our data and findings, data collection and analysis processes, to determine for themselves the value, rigor, and trustworthiness of what we have done and how we have represented what we came to understand (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 108).

The member checks procedure applied in this study relates mainly to its data analysis process, as I gave my research participants the opportunity to review how the data generated for the study had been used, which was particularly relevant for the information they had provided as part of the interviews. To do this, I shared my preliminary findings in the form of a draft version of Chapter Six with all 17 participants, inviting them to provide me with feedback. Despite the

fact that I made my request at a very busy time towards the end of the South African academic year, I received responses from ten participants.

In Tables 7 and 8 below, I have summarised the participants' comments according to two main categories. I have captured comments referring to the accuracy of the account as well as the overall content and style of the chapter in Table 7, and I have included comments expressing the participants' appreciation for having been given the opportunity to review the chapter as well as their support for the project overall in Table 8. The comments, which are extracted from the email responses I received, are presented in no particular order, and not all participants provided feedback for both categories.

Table 7: Member checks - Feedback on draft findings chapter – Accuracy of account.

Account Accuracy and/or Chapter Style and Content
"Please go ahead and submit. You have my full support."
"I scanned through, it looks very thorough."
"I've scanned it very quickly and it looks very interesting and insightful."
"I have only had a broad scan and read of selected sections. I see no inaccuracies."
"It is very well structured and easily readable. I enjoyed reading it. With respect to your use of my own contributions via our interview I can confirm that there are no misrepresentations of my views."
"It was a really interesting read and I found the material really elegantly compiled…I think it's an important document in working through numerous conflicting, commentary and contradictory positions on this really increasingly important issue across intuitions globally."
"Read through the first two parts as suggested: well argued and lays out the landscape of issues very well. No feedback but learnt a lot."
"I have read through the material and am quite impressed with the work. I think I have worked out which of the quotes are from me and I am happy with what you have written. It was also informative to read some of the comments of the other colleagues and that will influence what we do in the future."
"I don't do qualitative research so this was very educational on how the data is used and very interesting to read on the substantive issues. I am satisfied with how the interview was used. Am also intrigued by the views of the other respondents – I only now understand what you've been working on and I hope our guys read it. The only question I have is, will you be required to publish a paper out of it?"

Table 8: Member checks - Feedback on draft findings chapter - Appreciation and support.

Appreciation and Support
"Thanks for giving me the opportunity to have a look at it before submission."
"Thanks for sending this my way."
"Thanks so much Samia! I wish you all the very best in your examination!"
"Good luck with the final submission."
"Good luck"
"Congratulations, you seem to have come a long way in a short time with your research and work."
"Congratulations."
"I've just finished reading your Chapter. Firstly, congratulations!"
"Well done and good luck."
"Good luck with the next steps…I wish you well and I hope the next time we meet you will have Dr before your name!"
"Well done on arriving at this point. Looking forward to calling you Dr Chasi!"

As these comments illustrate, the feedback provided by the participants was overwhelmingly positive. The most important reason why I had given them an opportunity to review the findings was to establish whether the participants felt that their voices and perspectives were represented accurately and truthfully in the analysis.

Based on their responses, as captured in Table 7, I conclude that this was indeed the case, as none of them pointed out any inaccuracies or misrepresentations. In addition, their comments indicated that they found the reading interesting, insightful, enjoyable and educational, which was really encouraging feedback for me. Overall, conducting the member checks gave me the confidence to believe that, firstly, my data analysis is a credible representation and interpretation of the participants' accounts, which strengthens the quality of my study, particularly with regard to its trustworthiness, and that, secondly, my study has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the field.

In addition to the research participants, I conducted another member check with Professor Habib [27], Wits' Vice-Chancellor and Principal. As Professor Habib holds the overall institutional responsibility for internationalisation, I sent him my draft data analysis chapter for his perusal. We also discussed my findings in a face-to-face meeting. During this conversation, which I, with his permission recorded and recount here, Professor Habib confirmed the overall

[27] Professor Habib has granted me permission to disclose his name.

institutional functions, which are presented in greater detail in Chapter Five, as a reflection of the need for institutional structures to primarily support international students and visitors as well as international research partnerships. He also shared his thinking on the broader context of internationalisation in South Africa, specifically the need for its equitable advancement in the global South, which I discuss in Chapter Six.

Concluding this discussion of research quality, I address, in the section that follows, piloting as another strategy researchers can employ to enhance the quality of their research.

4.8.3 Piloting

A pilot study is essentially a brief exploratory investigation into the suitability of procedures, instruments and methods of the research. Piloting can help determine the feasibility of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, pp. 110-111). For case study research, pilots are recommended to refine data generation plans and develop relevant lines of questions (Yin, 2003), which is why I decided to conduct a pilot study.

According to Sarantakos (2013, p. 266), the main aim of pilot studies in qualitative research is to establish the accessibility of the participants, the convenience of the site and the suitability of the data generation tools. Drawing from a list compiled by Sarantakos (2013, pp. 266-267), the most important goals of my pilot study included the following: testing how suitable the research methods and instruments are, confirming that the sampling frame is suitable, establishing what the participants' responses to the overall research design are and discovering any possible weaknesses, inadequacies, ambiguities or problems in all aspects of the research.

Referring to these goals, the pilot allowed me to establish that the selected research method of interviewing was suitable. It revealed that the data generated through interviews could help answer the research questions. The pilot also confirmed that my sampling frame was adequate. Non-random, purposive sampling was used as a sampling strategy, and three participants were hand-picked for the pilot based on my judgement and research needs, in line with Cohen et al.'s (2011, p. 156) suggestion. They were knowledgeable with regard to Wits' North-South partnerships through direct involvement in partnership activities as well as managerial or strategic oversight.

The three participants represented diverse categories: one academic, one head of school and one member of SET. Two participants were selected because I felt that the North-South partnerships they were involved in at the time deserved particular attention. The decision regarding the kind of partnerships to focus on was influenced by the background information that was available to me because of my position as the institutional manager of international partnerships.

One of these partnerships involved mainly student and staff exchanges, while the other was focused on teaching and student mobility. Both partnerships had been in existence for more than five years. In addition, both partnerships were in a phase of evaluation and re-conceptualisation; one because of the end of a funding cycle and the other due to challenges in the management and implementation, which had led to a temporary suspension of the partnership in 2013.

The participants' responses to the overall research design were positive, and no evident weaknesses, inadequacies, ambiguities or problems were discovered. The questions asked seemed to be clear and did not contain issues that were considered too sensitive to tackle. The time frame of an hour was adequate. Overall, I concluded that the study was feasible and could proceed without any substantial changes.

I believe that the pilot made an important contribution to the quality of this case study by confirming its feasibility and the suitability of interviews as the main data generation method. In line with the view that qualitative research is a process rather than a product, it was a pivotal moment in the research process and an occasion for me to reflect critically on the research being done.

On a more personal level, the pilot provided me with a welcome opportunity to do a trial run of interviews before investing considerable time and effort in conducting the main study. This was important, as I did not have much experience in conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews. Furthermore, I produced a write-up of preliminary findings, engaging with themes emerging from the data, which I shared with fellow students and colleagues through a presentation at the Wits School of Education as well as at the IEASA Global Conference in 2016. Overall, conducting the pilot increased my confidence as a researcher and strengthened my belief that the study is important and relevant and will make a valuable contribution to the discussions and debates around internationalisation and partnerships by providing a perspective

from the South. Acknowledging my role as a research instrument, it was important for me to have this confidence about interviews as a data generation method and the overall aim and design of the study.

4.9 Research Ethics

Ethics considerations are an integral part of all qualitative research. As Creswell (2007, p. 44) highlights, researchers have to be sensitive to them throughout all phases of the research process. Furthermore, he notes that ethics considerations are "especially important as we negotiate entry to the field site of the research; involve participants in our study; gather personal, emotional data that reveal the details of life; and ask participants to give considerable time to our projects" (ibid.).

As indicated, ethics concerns arise particularly in qualitative research, as it brings the researcher in direct contact with research participants (Babbie, 2010, p. 328), especially when the researcher spends time in the field. However, ethical issues can also surface during analysis and dissemination of qualitative reports (Creswell, 2007, p. 141). As Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 115) point out, ethics considerations are intrinsic to the constructivist paradigm. This is because constructivist research encourages disclosure of information, including beliefs and values. While it is agreed that close personal interaction between the researcher and the participants requires that ethics be taken into account, different authors use different key concepts in that regard. For example, Bryman (2008, p. 134) summarises the main areas of ethics concern as relating to harm to participants, informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. Piper and Simons (2011, p. 26) advocate informed consent. Further, they note that conducting ethical research includes key concepts such as confidentiality, anonymity and pre-publication access.

In the context of this case study on North-South partnerships, ethics considerations arise predominantly because of direct interaction with individuals who participated in the interviews. In that regard, the main concepts that are considered particularly important and are elaborated on here are informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality as well as the right to withdraw. However, ethics considerations are addressed here not only with a view towards the participants but also with a view toward the researcher herself. In this context, issues relating to integrity, transparency and trustworthiness are addressed in the following sections.

4.9.1 Ethics Considerations in Relation to the Research Participants

As interviews were conducted as part of this study, the relationship between the researcher and the research participants needs to be considered from an ethical point of view. This is particularly important for this study, where my relationship to the participants was one characterised by familiarity and proximity, as was discussed in more detail earlier in this chapter regarding my role as a researcher.

4.9.1.1 Informed Consent and Right to Withdraw

Informed consent refers to each individual's right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 77). This means that the research participants need to be able to decide for themselves whether they want to take part in the research. Participation in my study was entirely voluntary. In case they agreed, they were requested to confirm their choice by signing a written informed consent form (see Appendix C). In seeking the consent of the participants, I provided information to them about the research, specifically its purpose and procedures. The information was made available in the form of a participant information sheet (see Appendix A), which was sent to the potential participants together with an invitation to participate. It was also part of the opening of each interview. Based on this, the participants exercised their right to participate or not. All the individuals that accepted an invitation to be interviewed gave their consent. However, informed consent does not only refer to the initial decision to participate in the research. Once the research has begun, the participants still have the right to withdraw, which none of my participants exercised.

As Cohen et al. (2011, p. 78) observe, "informed consent implies informed refusal". Refusal to take part in the research can be established at the beginning of the research process or while it is ongoing. The latter refers to the participant's right to withdraw from the research. In cases where the participants exercise their right to withdraw, the consequences of this action should be documented by the researcher. Should the participants not withdraw, which was the case in this study, the researcher needs to respect their right to privacy. This is closely related to the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality, which I address in the following section.

4.9.1.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity means that the identity of a participant is not revealed (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 91). This implies that the information provided by the participants does not enable the reader to identify them. In this study, I ensured anonymity by not using the names of the participants[28]. Consequently, when generating and analysing interview data, I referred to the participants by using numbers rather than names. As indicated in Section 4.7.1.3, the participants are referred to as P1, P2, P3, and so on. Where names of people were mentioned in the interviews, these were replaced by brackets indicating the function of that person or providing another reference.

Anonymity is closely linked to the protection of privacy of the participants, and another way of protecting their privacy through confidentiality, which refers to non-disclosure of information. This means that I promised the participants not to disclose the information provided by them in a way that might identify them (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 92). Treating participants' information as confidential also includes that the researcher will not discuss it with any third party in a way that impedes the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants.

4.9.2 Ethics Considerations in Relation to the Researcher

As far as the researcher is concerned, ethics considerations regarding his or her behaviour have to do with issues around integrity, transparency and trustworthiness. Leedy and Ormrod (2010, p. 103) note, for example, that findings must be reported with honesty and integrity. This means that the researcher should not misrepresent or fabricate data. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher does not only disclose information about his or her research, but also about his or her own background, values and beliefs, as I do throughout this thesis. Believing that transparency of positionality is important, I briefly spoke about the motivation for and focus of my study at the beginning of each interview. As Bourke (2014) notes, it is important to be clear from the outset about what the motivation to generate data is, both with the researcher and with his or her participants. While all participants, including the researcher, have a role to play in the research, the researcher holds a 'privileged' position – by deciding what questions to ask, directing the flow of discourse, interpreting interview and observational material, and deciding where and in what form it should be presented (Rose, 1997).

[28] The only exception is the member check with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, where I disclose Professor Habib's name with his permission.

While this study had collaborative elements in the sense that the participants were involved in the research process through interviews and the possibility to review preliminary findings, I acknowledge that the power of making decisions about the research firmly invested in me, with the exception of the participants having the right to withdraw, which none of them exercised.

Regarding the researcher, Creswell raises the question of whether he or she should share personal information with the participants, as "sharing minimizes the 'bracketing' that is essential to construct the meaning of participants in phenomenology and reduces information shared by participants in case studies and ethnographies" (Creswell, 2007, p. 142). In this study, I did share some personal information with the research participants, especially regarding my background and motivation for the study.

The interviews conducted for this study were not one-way conversations with all questions directed to the participants. Rather, they were dialogues, and so it did happen that the participants asked me questions about my experiences or opinions on certain issues. When that happened, I did respond as openly and honestly as possible. In any case, in the broader context of this study sharing personal information is inevitable for me, as I am an integral part of my study, acknowledging my role as a qualitative researcher and research instrument. I have reflected on my positionality as a researcher and provided information about my background, my relation to the topic under study, to the research participants and to the research process overall. In doing so, I have indicated that this study carries elements of autoethnography and self-study.

Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 77) note that methodologies such as self-study and autoethnography involve "a commitment to ethical behavior in interactions with colleagues and other participants in the study". They also note that ethical action in self-study research is concerned with integrity, trustworthiness and transparency. Paying attention to integrity "requires more vigilance because the work seems more intimately connected to the researcher and more vulnerable to questions", and ethical action involves "taking actions in which we operate from a position of humility and love" (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 106).

Transparency is important so that choices made by the researcher can be understood by the reader. As Pinnegar and Hamilton (2009, p. 155) point out, "Readers and community members must be able to see the progression of our ideas, the support provided by the data and the processes we employed to establish trustworthiness". Trustworthiness, as described here, is an

ethics concern as well as a contributing factor to research quality. As such, it has been discussed in the relevant section and will not be taken up again here.

As a final point regarding ethics considerations, I note that as a researcher I am interested in conducting research that is applicable and fed back into the system, which is in line with self-study researchers' commitment to making a difference in their areas of practice.

4.10 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have given a detailed overview of the methodological aspects of this study on North-South partnerships in higher education. After briefly outlining ontological and epistemological considerations pertaining to this study, I embedded the case of Wits' North-South partnerships in the context of qualitative, constructivist research.

I highlighted the importance of the collaborative nature of knowledge production and the role of the researcher. Regarding the latter, I extended an earlier discussion of positionality in Chapter One by reflecting on how my 'researcher self' relates to the overall research process and the research participants. I also indicated that my 'self' is accounted for in the study by using elements taken from autoethnographic and self-study research, particularly regarding a focus on the narrative form as well as the lived experiences of all research participants including myself.

I have shown that case study research is an appropriate approach to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of North-South partnerships. More specifically, I argued that the examination of a single case facilitates the study's objective of gaining a deeper understanding of the South African context of these partnerships by using various forms of data for in-depth analysis of a complex phenomenon.

As an important part of the description of the study's methodology, I discussed in detail the forms of data that were used in this case study and how I went about generating and analysing the data from documents and interviews. I also addressed issues of research quality, particularly with regard to the study's credibility and trustworthiness, as well as research ethics. In doing so, I have provided a map for the reader to understand how I moved from stating the research problem to answering my research questions and reaching my conclusions. Before I analyse my findings and offer my final conclusions, I contextualise the case by presenting a detailed

documentary perspective on internationalisation and partnerships at Wits in the following chapter, which is complemented by a narrative summary of interview data contained in Appendix G.

CHAPTER FIVE

A DOCUMENT PERSPECTIVE ON INTERNATIONALISATION AND PARTNERSHIPS AT WITS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the documentary data generated as part of my study on North-South partnerships in higher education. I provide a detailed contextualisation of the institution selected as the case, which is Wits. As noted in Chapter Four, data for the case study was generated from documents and interviews, which are presented separately. The documentary data is summarised in this chapter, and a narrative summary of the interviews is presented in Appendix G. I discuss both data sets more thoroughly in Chapter Six, which is focused on the analysis of all the data gathered and includes, as a first step of that analysis, a discussion of how the documents and interviews relate to each other.

The presentations of the study's documentary and interview data are descriptive in the sense that they show what the field revealed, with the summaries driven by the data and not by the research questions. However, they also have an evaluative element because they provide a first indication of how I make sense of the data. I acknowledge that my decision about what is included in the summaries is influenced by my bird's eye view of the study as a whole, which is a reflection of the main issues and concepts this study aims to address.

Regarding the relationship between the main forms of data in the context of my case study, the documents are understood to be predominantly associated with the theory of internationalisation and partnerships at Wits. The interviews, on the other hand, are an indication of the lived experiences of North-South partnerships in the broader context of internationalisation at Wits. This can be understood as an extension of the theory, as 'theory-practice', reflected in the participants' experiences as well as their own theorising about their practice. It is important to point out in this regard that I do not consider theory and practice as opposites. Rather, I believe they complement each other, and the study is not about theory versus practice but rather speaks to theory in practice and vice versa, linked to and informed by the experiences of the research participants including myself.

In presenting the case study data, documents are considered the 'voice' of the institution, bearing in mind that they are, in most cases, externally facing and publicly available. The voices of the participants are represented in the interviews. As previously noted, I consider them important because my study intents to illuminate the human experiences and lived realities of North-South partnerships at Wits. To hold all these voices in integrity and to let them ring throughout the narrative, I use direct quotes from both documents and interviews extensively when presenting and analysing the data.

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of Wits. The main aim of this section is to give an overall description of the case study university and the environment it operates in, with a view towards how the institution relates to internationalisation and partnerships in general. In providing an institutional overview, I mainly rely on official institutional documents such as the institutional website, annual reports as well as information and marketing materials, as indicated in Table 6 in Chapter Four.

From these documents, I gathered information that helps paint a picture of Wits as a research intensive university. I also extracted information about issues that have been identified as important in the context of this study, most notably regarding financing and transformation of higher education in South Africa. Regarding the latter, the description includes an illustration of the institutional context of transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation, which were identified in Chapter Two as major issues facing higher education in South Africa today. To do this, I draw on additional external sources such as news articles as well as two publications, one of which is a book focussing on reflections of South African university leaders and the other a collection of writings by South African students and staff on their experiences with coloniality and decoloniality. In my discussion, I do not refer to these two publications in their entirety but focus on voices representing Wits such as Professor Nongxa, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University.

As mentioned, what is presented here is an overview, and it is understood that the documents included here are not exhaustive. However, they do help contextualise this research by showing the relevance of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks discussed in previous chapters in terms of the institutional context of Wits, informed by documents published by or about the University.

Following the general overview, I take a closer look at selected key institutional documents that were analysed regarding their relevance in the context of my study, specifically their stance

on matters related to internationalisation and partnerships at Wits. These include the university's strategic plan and internationalisation policy, a concept note on Pan-African partnerships as well as a draft guide for curriculum internationalisation. These documents, which were also included in Table 6 in Chapter Four, together with the presentation of interview data in Appendix G serve as a backdrop for the data analysis in Chapter Six.

5.2 About Wits[29]

Wits is located in Johannesburg, South Africa. The University's origins lie in the South African School of Mines, which was established in Kimberley in 1896 and later transferred to Johannesburg. The institution was granted full university status in 1922. Wits is proud of its liberal tradition as an "open university with a policy of non-discrimination – on racial or any other grounds". As a historically white institution, Wits did allow black students to register during the apartheid years, and Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first democratically elected president, counts as one of its most illustrious alumni[30].

In 2017, Wits offered 3,416 courses in 33 schools across five faculties: Commerce, Law & Management; Engineering & the Built Environment; Health Sciences; Humanities and Science. In the same year, Wits had a total student population of 38,343 of which 9.78 per cent were international students, and 1,114 full-time, permanent academic staff members, of which 25.94 per cent were international. The University's official languages are English, isiZulu and Sesotho (Wits, 2018b).

Wits is a research intensive university that hosts a considerable number of the country's top-rated researchers, coveted research chairs and centres of excellence. In 2017, the University had 27 A-rated[31] researchers (Wits, 2018a, p. 38). Since 2014, research outputs have increased by 42 per cent, and Wits aims to further increase the amounts of research, particularly research that is considered impactful by changing disciplinary thinking, influencing policy and practice as well as helping generate economic activity.

[29] In this section, a lot of information about Wits is drawn from the institutional website (http://www.wits.ac.za). Whenever quotes from the website are used, I indicate the relevant homepage where more information can be found.
[30] For more information: http://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/.
[31] Such ratings are awarded by the National Research Foundation (NRF) for researchers that "are unequivocally recognised by their peers as leading international scholars in their respective fields, for the high quality and impact of recent research outputs" (http://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf-awards/a-rated-researchers).

Referring to the University's research achievements, it is noted in the *Annual Report 2017* that "In 2017, Wits announced 16 major discoveries with an accumulated advertising equivalent of R15.7 million. These announcements are key as they support Wits' vision of a leading world-class research intensive university" (Wits, 2018a, p. 34). As this indicates, Wits is ambitious about its role as an internationally leading research intensive university. Before its international outlook is unpacked further, it is useful to first address some of the main challenges the University is facing to better understand the environment in which it operates.

5.2.1 Challenges

In *Wits Matters*, a brochure seemingly aimed to market the University to potential donors, the Vice-Chancellor notes the following on the circumstances the University finds itself in:

> In the challenging environment of a young democracy, Wits is a robust presence in South Africa's civil society, determined to maintain an open space for the vigorous debate of ideas, unafraid to speak truth to power, and a staunch advocate for human rights and non-discrimination, as well as ethics in government and the marketplace. It is in the vanguard of a burgeoning and globally-engaged Africa – one that seeks solutions to challenges that impact not only Africa but the world.
>
> None of this is easy.
>
> Wits must maintain a globally competitive university while playing a critical role in building a nation and continent that is undergoing complex transformation. This requires hard trade-offs that are not simply managerial and strategic, but also ethical and moral. We cannot ignore the entrenched inequality in South African society and the severe capacity constraints that are limiting Africa's economic growth, but we must find the resources to educate the best young minds on the continent, while also providing the funding and infrastructure for globally relevant research (Wits, 2015, p. 3).

Transformation and resource scarcity are two of the key challenges mentioned in this statement. Regarding the latter, as a previously advantaged institution and top-ranked research intensive university, Wits is generally considered one of the best-resourced universities in South Africa. However, the University still faces financial challenges, especially as "traditional sources of

income – government support and private tuition fees – now constitute less than 60 per cent of our funding needs" (Wits, 2015, p. 18). To illustrate this further, the University noted in 2015 that out of an annual turnover of 5.4 billion Rand, only 25 per cent of the University's budget came from state subsidies and grants, as compared to about 28 per cent from tuition fees. This means that 47 per cent of the University's income was from non-governmental support such as research grants, private gifts and endowments as well as other sources (Wits, 2015, p. 16). In terms of overall funding needs, the following challenges are specifically highlighted (Wits, 2015, p. 17):

- Diminishing state subsidy support in real terms,
- Insufficient bursary and academic support for disadvantaged students, contributing to an unacceptable number of students leaving Wits before they graduate,
- Insufficient financial aid for international students, particularly from the rest of Africa, who are not eligible to receive South African government-funded bursaries,
- The need to import expensive, sophisticated equipment required for advanced scientific and technological research and teaching,
- Ongoing infrastructural needs such as the renovation of ageing buildings and the construction of new facilities to accommodate state-of-the art teaching and research.

Financial constraints and lack of support are particularly impacting the lives of black students, who continue to bear the brunt of the country's legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Issues of financing of higher education are an important part of the transformation agenda in South Africa, which was discussed in Chapter Two. As mentioned earlier, the present environment of universities in South Africa cannot be fully understood without reference to transformation, decolonisation and Africanisation as 'burning' issues affecting higher education in the country. In the sections that follow I show how these issues manifest themselves at Wits, based on the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality, which were discussed in Chapter Three.

5.2.1.1 Experiences of Coloniality and Decoloniality at Wits

Professor Nongxa, who was the first black Vice-Chancellor of Wits when he took office in 2003, reflects about some of the challenges he faced during his ten-year tenure, including race and gender relations. He says:

> Universities have a hierarchy; the higher one goes in the university system, there is this hierarchy which had a 'racial complexion', if one can call it that. The people who were more senior and respected in authority were mostly white and male. Then there was this tension between academic staff and support staff, which also had a 'racial complexion'; there were usually more females and black people amongst the support staff, and I would relate it to the disrespect for back people and for women (Nongxa, 2016, p. 153).

As a black leader, Nongxa (2016, p. 156) recalls that people said about him: "This man does not understand the workings of the institution; he has made a mess of this University". He also points out that often people do not "need facts about these things. Popular wisdom has it that black leaders are bad, corrupt, crooks, and so on. Here is this bad black VC[32] of this historically white university. Many people would simply believe that caricature" (ibid.).

The racial complexion of engagements described by Nongxa is echoed and magnified in the accounts of students and staff trying to capture the essence of how the recent student protest movements in South Africa found expression at Wits. These accounts are included in *Publica[c]tion*[33], a collection of writings from members of university communities sharing their experiences with a "a decolonial moment", while at the same time reimagining publication as a "process and a collective project rather than a thing on its own" (Publica[c]tion Collective, 2017, p. 3).

As far as Wits is concerned, 11 students and staff members made contributions to the collection, and some of their voices are included here to illuminate their lived realities of decoloniality in the context of the recent #RMF and #FMF student movements. These voices represent individuals, who, while not directly involved in the research as participants, nevertheless add extra nuances and complexities to the case study of Wits by contributing first-hand experiences with aspects related to processes of transformation and decolonisation at the institution.

[32] The acronym VC stands for Vice-Chancellor.

[33] I received a copy of *Publica[c]tion* in 2017, at a PhD seminar at the Wits School of Education. Since it does not seem widely available, I offer the following background information: The publication comprises about 50 pieces written by South African students and staff from 20 different institutions across the country as well as two contributions from international universities, one in India and the other in Puerto Rico. Sharing their experiences with decoloniality, students and staff cover topics such as violence, poverty, patriarchy, rape culture, suicide, intersectionality, securitisation, students' living conditions including residences, finance (fees, student debt, financial exclusions), workers' struggles, radical student activism, outsourcing, transgender issues, black feminism, revolution, resistance, language, history, memory, epistemology and pedagogy. This list is in no particular order, reflecting the incoherent nature of *Publica[c]tion*, which did not "try frame the unframeable, and attempt to cohere the incoherent" (Publica[c]tion Collective, 2017, p. 3).

During the student protests related to #RMF and #FMF, many violent scenes played themselves out on South African university campuses, and Wits was no exception. Often broadcast nationally, TV audiences could witness considerable physical violence, for example, burning buildings and vehicles as well as students clashing with police and private security companies. Canham (2017, p. 2) offers the following description:

> Violence is the order of the day. Campuses have been surrendered to the control of police, intelligence operatives, riot gear, tankers, water canons and endless emails from the Vice Chancellor's Office. Instructions come from dizzying heights. The police commissioner controls his troops. Rubbish bins crushed for stones that sing in the air. Bullets riddle the back of students and tare tendons from ankles.

However, the violence experienced on university campus is not only of a physical nature. As Motimele (2017, p. 5) points out, apart from such "spectacular moments of violence", the system itself is violent. The neo-liberal nature of institutions such as the university is in direct contrast with demands for decolonisation, which see the university as a public good and in the context of social justice, freedom and equality. In this regard, Motimele urges us to "think 'violence' alongside 'power'", where power means "the ability to act violently in good conscience. To control the resources. To control the narrative. To control the institutions of recourse". Furthermore:

> The status quo is violent. More violent than any brick or rubber bullet or canister of teargas. The commodification of education, the professionalization of management and the relegating of students to the class of consumers have serious consequences for what it means to come into the university space as an activist for free, decolonized and quality education (Motimele, 2017, p. 5).

In addition, White (2017, p. 28), speaking about the link between violence and power, notes:

> The function of power in part serves to maintain order and this order is only sanctioned through and because of domination and control. The premise of an 'ordered' society is exactly this; we are ordered because we are coerced into being controlled. White supremacist power maintains itself. So sophisticated an institution of violence, it has been able to replicate itself as patriarchal domination, as capital, as heteronormativity and so on. If this sophistication of power breeds domination, and this domination takes

> root as violence it follows that there can be no hope for a future outside of the serious interrogation of all institutions and systems of power.

Mthunzi (2017, p. 20) takes up the point that the colour of power is white and highlights that it is black people who find themselves at the receiving end of it, pointing out that "Our speech as black people is always tempered with. Black speech is never voluntary speech. Whiteness makes us, black people; think twice before we speak and after we have spoken".

Furthermore, Magano (2017, p. 46) highlights that despite the end of apartheid, 'the beautyful ones'[34], the ones that were 'born-free', continue to feel alienated and oppressed on university campuses, intertwining their race with their poverty and, especially in the wake of the student protests, their criminalisation. Given such circumstances, the students rebel against the conditions they find themselves in more than 20 years into South Africa's democracy. Comparing the student protest movements to a revolution, White (2017, p. 28), looking towards the future, wants "the Revolution to be on-going even when there are no camera lights; especially then. I am interested in living out a revolutionary future in community with my people; one that belongs to all of us". Such calls for 'a revolutionary future in community with my people' are reminiscent of the anti-apartheid struggle and ring in the ears of those who remember it. Canham (2017, p. 2), for example, points out that:

> As black allies to the students, we know their pain in the body for we too lived with the precarity that characterises their lives. With this knowledge that resides inside, we cannot dither with our support. We can disagree but we must avoid zero-sum positions.

In working towards a better future, he urges us to remember our love for the university and for education in general.

> There is no doubt that university management; senators; non-protesting and protesting students, and allies all love the university. It belongs to us all. Policing some of us against each other suggests that some love the university in more legitimate ways than others. It suggests that some belong more than others. It is exactly this narrative that asks to be disrupted by rocks. Stop it! Let's talk about our love for education even through the fire (Canham, 2017, p. 2).

[34] In reference to *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, a novel by Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah published in 1968.

These are some of the reflections that Wits students and staff share regarding their thinking about and experiences with 'a decolonial moment', specifically in the wake of the #RMF and #FMF movements. They are included here to provide insights into the lived realities of people at Wits, bringing concepts such as transformation and decolonisation to life. What permeates the accounts is an overall feeling of dealing with something that is all-encompassing. Emotions are raw. Feelings of pain and rage are strong and create environments in which it is difficult to exist, live, study and work. But there is also love – love for the university and for education in general – which will hopefully serve as a common ground on the basis of which we can move forward. With this in mind, there are some encouraging signs pointing into the future, which I now briefly reflect on.

5.2.1.2 #TransformWits

The #RMF movement that started at UCT in Cape Town might have gained most prominence in terms of public awareness and might be seen as an overarching movement in South Africa. However, it is important to note that there were a number of collectives formed on university campuses across the country, raising issues relevant to their respective campus communities[35].

At Wits, the movement was established as #TransformWits. It comprised of Wits students "concerned and dissatisfied with the slow pace of curriculum and staff transformation" and "tired of European universities in Africa". They formed an "intersectional movement that centres the struggles of Black South Africans" in a country that is equated with a "white supremacist capitalist patriarchal" society. The five key demands of #TransformWits were indicated as follows: (1) Africanisation of university symbolism and institutional memory (#OppenheimerMustFall and #SobukweMustRise); (2) revision and Africanisation of all university curricula to ensure that they reflect African and Global South context ("Teacher Don't teach Me Nonsense"); (3) fast-tracking of Africanisation of academic staff; (4) end of worker discrimination and (5) end of financial discrimination and financial exclusion of students (Publica[c]tion Collective, 2017, p. 32).

[35] As mentioned in *Publica[c]tion* (Publica[c]tion Collective, 2017, pp. 29-32), these movements include, for example, Black Students Stokvel (Nelson Mandela University), #BlackStudentMovement (Rhodes University), #October6 (University of Johannesburg and Wits), #OpenStellenbosch (University of Stellenbosch), ReformPUK (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus) and TUKS #Uprising (University of Pretoria).

There are recent signs that Wits is putting decolonisation, as referred to in such demands, into practice, which I illustrate with the help of four examples. Firstly, several university buildings have been renamed[36], starting with Senate House on the University's East Campus, which houses, among others, the senior executive team as well as key central administrative functions of the University. In 2016, Senate House was renamed and is now known as Solomon Mahlangu House, in commemoration of the struggle stalwart Solomon Mahlangu. The students had demanded that #SobukweMustRise, and, tellingly, Central Block, another building on the University's East Campus, was renamed to Robert Sobukwe Block in 2017.

Secondly, as far as worker discrimination and outsourcing is concerned, it was reported that Wits agreed to insourcing in principle in November 2015 (ANA reporter, 2015) and that "There was a lot to celebrate when the first cohort of insourced workers reported to work as official Wits employees in January 2017" (Wits, 2017).

Thirdly, in March 2018, Wits launched the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), a research centre to generate new knowledge of the US in Africa. In response to the question of whether this centre was part of a larger decolonisation project, Professor Kupe, then Vice-Principal, said the following:

> Definitely, in the sense that the creation of the Centre is testimony that Africans are seeking to understand the United States from their own multiple perspectives and primarily for themselves. Decolonisation in relation to dominant nations and societies operates through not accepting the self-definitions of that society, but generating your own knowledge and understandings. In that respect this is going to be an exciting intellectual exploration that bucks the dominant trend to receive knowledge instead of creating it. (Malec, 2018)

As a final example, Wits (2018c) announced in July 2018 that Dr Dlamini had been elected as its new Chancellor, making her the first black female chancellor in the history of the institution. Signs like these are encouraging, as they address various elements of the transformation and decolonisation debate regarding institutional symbolisms, worker issues, changing the paradigms of knowledge production as well as increasing the representation and participation of underrepresented groups. Furthermore, they illustrate that Wits is being responsive to the

[36] For more information: http://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/history-and-heritage.

needs of the time, particularly with regard to the transformation of higher education, and aims to make positive contributions to South African society.

5.2.2 Contributions

Amidst all the challenges it faces, Wits pledges to serve as a catalyst for the development of South Africa and the continent. This commitment is evident in how the university generally presents itself and finds expression in the institution's aspiration for the future, which is described as follows:

> We will contribute to transformation in South Africa and sustainable prosperity in Africa by building on our foundation of intellectual excellence, international competitiveness and local responsiveness.
>
> We believe we are uniquely positioned to respond to the challenges of our era by more vigorously exploring local and broader African contexts as a basis for groundbreaking, globally significant research (Wits, 2015, p. 16).

Statements such as these indicate clearly that Wits sees a role for itself in South Africa, Africa and beyond. As an internationally competitive and locally responsive institution, Wits connects the global with the local, and vice versa. As such, transformation, which is mostly associated with the local, and internationalisation, which is typically associated with the global, are intrinsically linked in the institutional context. Having addressed transformation, I now reflect on the University's international outlook as well as its central internationalisation functions.

5.2.3 Wits' International Outlook

When consulting the institutional website[37], visitors get an immediate impression of Wits' international outlook when the University presents itself as "a remarkable university that is internationally distinguished for its excellent research, high academic standards and commitment to social justice". If global rankings are taken as a measure of internationalisation, Wits is an internationally competitive university, evidenced by its overall positions in a variety of global university rankings, as shown in Table 9 below:

[37] For more information: http://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/.

Table 9: Wits' position in global university rankings.

Ranking	Year	Position
Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings	2018	251-300
QS World University Rankings	2019	381
Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)	2018	201-300
Center for World University Rankings (CWUR)	2018/19	230

With positions like these, Wits has been consistently ranked as the first or second university in South Africa and Africa over the last five years. Furthermore, Wits' international outlook is reflected in its international linkages, particularly in the area of research. On the institutional website, Wits shares the following information about its 'global footprint':

> From trying to discover what lies beneath the Earth's surface to saving lives through better healthcare systems, Wits is on the ground, making a difference. We have over 50 active projects on the African continent and the University is represented globally through our partnerships, collaborations, staff and student exchanges and our alumni around the world. Wits was also the co-founder of the African Research Universities Alliance.

Global engagement through research and partnerships are alluded to in this statement, as is a strong focus on Africa. Apart from the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), Wits is also a member of the BRICS Network University[38] and the World Cities World Class University (WC2) Network[39]. Membership in these three international networks indicates that Wits places considerable emphasis on its international engagement in Africa, within BRICS and beyond, working with partners in both the global South and the global North. Referring to these international partnerships, the University has numerous engagements with other universities around the globe, as highlighted on the map below (Figure 2).

[38] For more information: https://nu-brics.ru/.
[39] For more information: http://wc2network.org/.

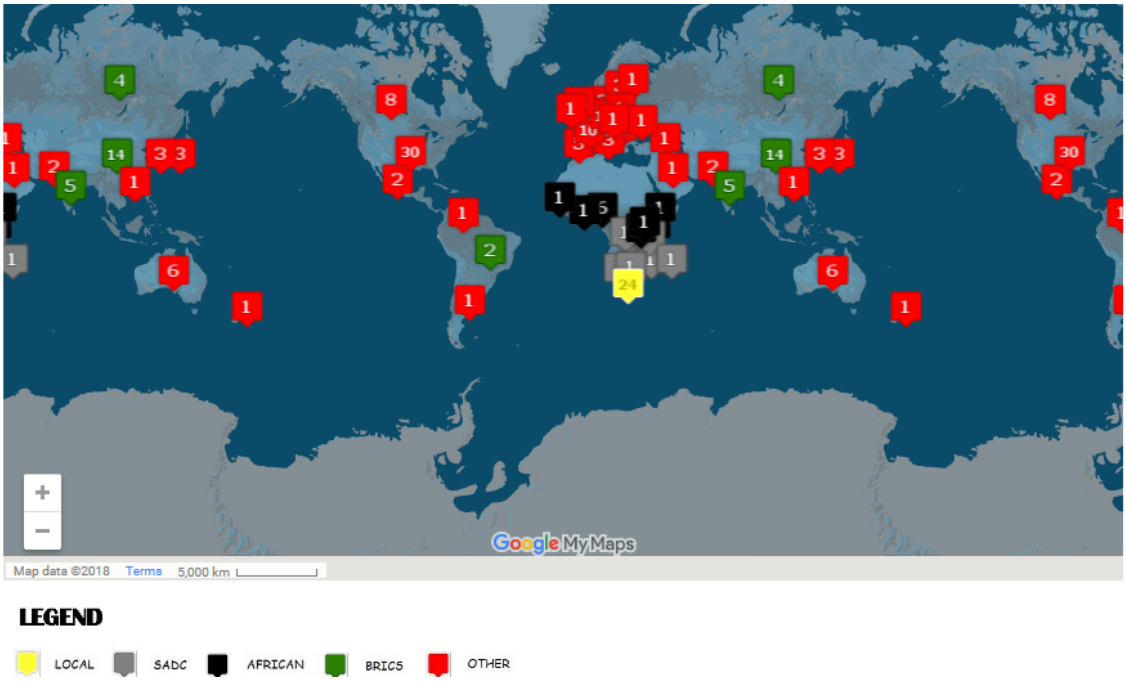


Figure 2: Wits' partnerships map.[40]

As a research intensive university, Wits emphasises that it collaborates "with the best researchers and institutions across the globe", particularly with reference to publications in accredited international journals, which is further illustrated in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: Countries collaborating with Wits in 2017, based on the number of ISI indexed research publications.[41]

[40] Source: Wits website, https://www.wits.ac.za/research/strategic-partnerships-office/
[41] Source: Wits, 2018a, p. 59

Most of the academic collaborations included in Figure 3 are with partners in the global North. Furthermore, Wits highlights that it has high-impact institutional collaborations with several "Times Higher Education ranked universities, which yields significant citations: University of Cape Town, University of Oxford, University College London, Harvard University and University of Washington."[42] Again, the majority of these institutions, four out of five, are located in the global North.

Apart from publications and citations, linkages with the North are also important in terms of donor support, which Wits is mobilising, for example, through vehicles such as The University of the Witwatersrand Fund, Inc. in the US and the Wits Foundation UK in the UK (Wits, 2015). In contrast to that, collaborations with the South are seemingly embedded in general institutional discourse on transformation and development, for example, within the regional frameworks of ARUA in Africa and BRICS in the global South.

From all of this, it appears that an international outlook is a key feature in terms of the way Wits presents itself to the world. Internationalisation is an integral part of how the University understands itself and its mission. Before looking into how this is further addressed in a number of key institutional documents, I briefly touch on Wits' internationalisation functions, which support the institution's endeavours in that regard.

5.2.4 Wits' Internationalisation Functions

In this section, I provide an overview of the current internationalisation functions at Wits. It is worth stating upfront that there have been numerous changes in these functions, especially since the replacement of the Wits International Office (WIO) in 2013. As indicated in the University's Annual Report 2013:

> Prior to 2013, Wits' formal provision for its internationalisation functions was vested in the WIO, which most recently reported to the Office of the Registrar. The WIO provided a range of services including support for international students, liaison with regulatory bodies, coordination of international visiting delegations as well as oversight of exchange agreements with international partners. In 2013, it was acknowledged that

[42] For more information: http://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/facts-and-figures/academic-rankings/.

> the more strategic functions of internationalisation required more concerted attention and that these dimensions should be accorded dedicated provision. It was decided that two functional areas, located respectively in the Registrar's Division and in the Advancement Division, will be established effective 1 January 2014: the International Students Office (ISO) and the Internationalisation and Strategic Partnerships Office (ISPO) (Wits, 2014, p. 37).

Since ISO and ISPO were originally established, further changes have been made, particularly regarding the latter. Before outlining their current set-up and mandate, I briefly reflect on the most recent change, which concerns the sub-committee of the University Senate that used to have institutional oversight of internationalisation and partnerships at Wits until its closure in 2017.

5.2.4.1 University Senate Committee

The Internationalisation and Strategic Partnerships Committee (ISPC)[43] of the University Senate used to play "a proactive role in the development of all policies and protocols on various aspects of internationalisation". These included components such as collaborations in research, the mobility of students and staff, the recruitment of international students and staff and partnerships as well as IaH and IoC. The main objective of the ISPC was to provide strategic oversight for all internationalisation activities at the institution and to provide high-level governance oversight over the two administrative units that support internationalisation at the University. The ISPC monitored and reviewed internationalisation at Wits in accordance with agreed policies and protocols to ensure that it was:

- aligned to other strategic objectives of the institution;
- co-ordinated across all academic and administrative units;
- prioritised with regard to academic disciplines/research focus areas as well as countries/regions;
- allowing for differentiated approaches in different institutional contexts;
- backed by the necessary investment in relevant institutional capacities and resources; and

[43] For more information: https://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/governance/governing-bodies/senate-committees/.

- given form in relevant financial decisions of the institution (for example, the fee structure for international students, scholarships etc.).

An explanation for why the Senate ISPC was closed does not seem to be publicly available. However, as the interviews reveal, it appears that the motion to disband it was based on the argument that internationalisation should not be addressed in a separate structure. Rather, it should be incorporated into the main functions of the University by "injecting it into the existing Senate sub-committees" (P6).

As stated in the *Annual Report 2017*, the overall responsibility for internationalisation now rests with the portfolio of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. It is noted that the senior executive team was restructured "in order to release the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to focus on key strategic issues like funding, accommodation, internationalisation, fundraising and stakeholder relations" (Wits, 2018a, p. 14).

In addition to the leading role of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal as well as the relevant sub-committees of the University Senate, institutional support to faculties and schools is provided centrally by two administrative units – the International Students Office, which reports into the Division of the University Registrar, and the Strategic Partnerships Office, which forms part of the Division of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Postgraduate Affairs. The total full-time staff count of these units is ten people, six in ISO and four in SPO.

5.2.4.2 International Students Office[44]

The International Students Office (ISO) is an administrative unit that primarily assists international students in terms of their registration at Wits, ensuring that they are in compliance with university and government requirements. To facilitate this, the office provides information and guidance regarding issues that are relevant in that regard such as studying and living conditions in South Africa, evaluation of international qualifications, specifically matriculation exemptions, study visas as well as South African approved medical aid service providers.

The ISO interfaces with faculties and schools as well as a variety of external stakeholders such as the Matriculation Board, USAf and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA),

[44] For more information: https://www.wits.ac.za/internationalstudents/about-us/.

diplomatic missions, the Department of Home Affairs, medial aid providers and the South African Medical Schemes Council. In cooperation with the Strategic Partnerships Office (SPO), the Office facilitates study abroad programmes and opportunities.

5.2.4.3 Strategic Partnerships Office [45]

The SPO (formerly ISPO) maintains and seeks out new partnerships with, among others, universities, research bodies and government departments on the African continent and beyond. The main aim of these linkages is to facilitate opportunities for Wits staff and students to participate in research collaborations as well as student and staff exchanges. This includes the administration of relevant funding opportunities for student and staff, including programmes such as Erasmus+. The Office is responsible for arranging visits of international academic and government delegates to Wits.

As indicated earlier in this section, the SPO was originally set up as ISPO for more concerted attention to the more strategic functions of internationalisation. Since its incorporation into the University's Research Office, the SPO no longer deals with internationalisation comprehensively but is rather narrowly focussing its efforts on facilitating strategic international research partnerships.

Regarding this broad overview, I note that Wits generally presents itself as an institution that is ambitious about its role – locally, regionally and globally – particularly regarding the production of internationally relevant and impactful research. Internationalisation is understood as a means to further the university's mission, and partnerships with organisations around the world form an integral part of Wits' efforts in that regard.

Partnerships with the global North are well established and are considered particularly important in terms of the University's international standing, most notably expressed in university rankings as well as publications and citation tables. There appears to be a new emphasis on establishing and strengthening relationships with other institutions in the global South, especially with regard to capacity building, which is most clearly focused on the African continent, followed by the BRIC countries.

[45] For more information: https://www.wits.ac.za/research/strategic-partnerships-office/.

At this point, it seems appropriate to make some additional comments on the issue of institutional capacity and investment in internationalisation, as these matters were brought up prominently in the interviews, which are presented in a detailed narrative in Appendix G. There is a strong concern that the University's ambitions in the areas of internationalisation and partnerships do not seem to be matched by sufficient institutional capacity to support such endeavours. This relates both to size and mandate of the relevant internationalisation functions.

To illustrate this, there is a total staff complement of ten people across two administrative support units to assist all five faculties and 33 schools in their endeavours. These staff numbers are rather low, especially if compared to other leading South African universities of similar size and stature. UCT, for example, has about 35 positions in its International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO)[46]. In addition, the mandates of ISO and SPO are rather narrowly focussed on student mobility and services for international students on the one hand and strategic research partnerships on the other. The current set-up, therefore, does not make provision for dedicated institutional support for other internationalisation dimensions such as international staff recruitment, staff mobility, general partnerships work in non-strategic and non-research areas as well as curriculum internationalisation. ISO and SPO report into different executive portfolios, and with the closure of the Senate ISPC there is, apart from the position of the Vice-Chancellor, no executive function that is responsible for holistic oversight and coordination of internationalisation across the University.

In conclusion, Wits, as other institutions in South Africa, operates in an undeniably challenging higher education environment, where internationalisation cannot be considered separately from important national priorities, especially regarding financing of higher education as well as transformation of the sector. Through initiatives such as the establishment of ACSUS, Wits has shown that it is mindful of and responsive to all these priorities, weaving transformation and internationalisation goals together in innovative ways. While the Centre is part of a broader decolonisation project, as mentioned earlier, it is "aligned to the Wits Vision 2022, a strategic framework which aims to solidify the University's position as a leading research intensive University" (Wits, 2018d). As Professor Khadiagala, Director of ACSUS, notes, the Centre is meant to "establish an African-based hub for critical thinking and analysis", while at the same time it aims to "build strategic partnerships with think-tanks, civil society organisations and

[46] For more information: http://www.iapo.uct.ac.za/iapo/about/staff.

universities in Africa and the US and provide a base for visiting scholars researching and teaching in relevant areas" (ibid.).

With the overview presented, I have shown that Wits is a very worthwhile case for the study of North-South partnerships in higher education. In the sections that follow, I unpack the University's overall stance on internationalisation and partnerships through a discussion of selected key institutional documents.

5.3 Wits' Theory of Internationalisation and Partnerships – What Do Selected Documents Reveal?

As discussed in Chapter Two, North-South partnerships are embedded in the context of internationalisation of higher education around the globe. The documents included in this discussion were purposefully selected based on their relevance to the institutional context of internationalisation and partnerships. They include the institution's strategic plan as well as its internationalisation policy for a more general indication of how internationalisation and partnerships fit into the overall identity and mission of the University.

Within this broader context, several other documents specifically address issues relating to the University's focus on partnerships and curriculum internationalisation in Africa as one of the regions in the global South. These are concept notes on the Pan-African University Partnership and, related to that, ARUA, as well as a draft framework on Curriculum Internationalisation Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence (SAGE).

Because there are differences regarding the accessibility of the five documents included here, I would like to note the following upfront: (1) The *Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework* is available as print version and can also be downloaded from the University website; (2) the Wits *Internationalisation Policy* is available in print but is currently no longer available online; (3) the *Pan-African Universities Partnership* is an internal document – it was circulated as a draft discussion document to relevant members of the Wits community, and I received a copy by virtue of my position as manager of international partnerships in the WIO at the time; (4) the *African Research Universities Alliance – The Concept* can be downloaded from the ARUA website and (5) the *Draft Framed Guidance for Curriculum Internationalisation Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence* is available as print version, and I obtained a copy as a member of

the Internationalisation and Partnerships Committee of the Faculty of Humanities, which led the development of this document. While I was a member of the Committee, I played no formal role in the process of developing this document, and the same applies to the other documents discussed here.

5.3.1 *Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework* (2010)

In 2010, Wits developed a 12-year strategic framework through an extensive consultation process with various internal and external stakeholders. The *Wits Vision 2022 Strategic Framework* was developed to serve as a roadmap for the next 12 years to guide the institution in achieving its vision, which was "to be a leading research intensive university firmly embedded in the Top 100 world universities by 2022" (Wits, 2010c, p. 5), when Wits will celebrate its 100th birthday. The vision has since been slightly adapted, and the current version, as published on the University website, indicates that Wits "aspires to be a leading world-class research intensive university firmly embedded among international top league universities by 2022".[47]

While there seems to be no recorded reason for this change, I would speculate that it might have resulted from the realisation that a top 100 position would be too ambitious a goal to reach within the stipulated timeframe, given that the universities in that range will do whatever they can to defend their positions against ever increasing competition. Wits has, however, consistently maintained a place amongst the top 500 universities worldwide across a number of different global university rankings over the last five years. One might say that Wits has secured a place among leading top league universities and will continue to strive for even better positions in the global rankings. Its vision will be achieved "by building on the principles of intellectual excellence, international competitiveness and local relevance" (Wits, 2010c, p. 9).

Underlying the University's vision are seven strategic priority areas, concerning (1) academic excellence and the Wits experience, (2) research and knowledge leadership, (3) innovation and social leadership, (4) extensive networks and partnerships, (5) excellence in governance, management and support services as well as Wits' status as (6) an IT savvy and (7) a wealthy and well-resourced university. Out of these priorities, which all concern, directly or indirectly, various aspects of internationalisation, three are particularly worth noting. Firstly, the pursuit

[47] For more information: https://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/governance/vision-and-mission/.

of academic excellence is linked to Wits' ambition of becoming "a preferred destination for talented students, staff and scholars from around the world" (Wits, 2010c, p. 25).

As far as students are concerned, the University aims to "increase the intake of international students to 30% of total enrolments", especially at the postgraduate level. Furthermore, Wits aims "to attract and retain international top scientists and distinguished scholars" and to celebrate "the cosmopolitan nature of the University by vigorously promoting diversity and internationalisation" (Wits, 2010c, p. 26). Secondly, research and knowledge leadership is an area that is closely linked to internationalisation, as the University aims to produce research that is nationally and internationally relevant, visible and impactful. Wits aims to, for example, "increase the number of high-impact research networks and collaborations" and establish ten prestigious, internationally renowned research institutes, especially in areas of existing strength and global standing such as the evolutionary sciences, health and population sciences, mining and energy as well as the study of cities, to name a few (Wits, 2010c, pp. 28-30).

Finally, Wits aims to "grow a limited number of focused partnerships with local and international collaborators, arising mostly from our research priorities and our contextual opportunities" (Wits, 2010c, p. 31). More specifically, the University's strategic objectives regarding networks and partnerships are indicated as follows:

a) Position Wits as a gateway to research and intellectual achievement in Africa – a university that is deeply committed to local development by means of world-class research, teaching and innovation.
b) Establish long-term and active research networks and partnerships with the world's top 100 universities to provide extended opportunities for international mobility of staff and students.
c) Use bilateral and multi-helix partnerships to support social engagement, knowledge generation and knowledge transfer to leverage resources nationally and internationally (Wits, 2010c, p. 32).

The University's partners "include other universities, the various layers of government, parastatals, industry groupings, the media and civil-society groupings" (ibid.). Furthermore, it is noted that:

> Wits is positioned to participate in economic growth and social development agendas, both here and elsewhere on the continent. It is through extensive networks and

> partnerships (for example, through our Pan-African University Partnerships strategy) that the University seeks to pursue its international excellence in research and teaching, and in student and staff recruitment (ibid.).

All of this indicates that internationalisation is at the core of the *Wits Vision 2022*. It is important to note that the University's international context cannot be separated from its local and regional contexts. Wits emphasises its position as "an internationally-leading research intensive university located in Africa" (Wits, 2010c, p. 4).

In addition to playing a leading role internationally, Wits aspires to be a leader in the local and regional contexts, particularly regarding SADC. This is in alignment with the MDGs and SDGs and the role universities have to play to foster economic and social development nationally and regionally. *Wits Vision 2022* sees the University firmly embedded in the global higher education environment and recognises the university's interconnectedness with global markets, global competition, global challenges and globally significant research. At the same time, Wits emphasises the importance of its location in Africa. For example, it is noted that the University is "positioned to respond to the profound challenges of our times by exploring, much more vigorously, the use of our local and broader African context as a basis for groundbreaking, globally significant research" (Wits, 2010c, p. 5). Statements like this put Africa at the centre of the University's understanding about its mission.

Wits recognises that "Building a strong, internationally competitive higher education sector in Africa will require, among other things, strong collaborative linkages among leading academics within Africa" (Wits, 2010c, p. 16). Furthermore, for Wits "to fully assert itself as an African intellectual powerhouse, the University needs to consciously initiate policies that open up spaces for engagement with Africa and not leave this to individual and isolated efforts of faculty staff" (Wits, 2010c, p. 17). Engagement with Africa is, therefore, not left to chance. It is specifically promoted through, for example, a strategy for Pan-African university partnerships, which I discuss shortly. Before I do so, I note at this point that while Africa is afforded special attention, Wits' internationalisation efforts are truly global. In order to achieve its vision, the University will need to "Pursue an ambitious internationalisation strategy that will project Wits as a world-class centre of intellectual engagement and a preferred destination for top-class international scholars and students" (Wits, 2010c, p. 5). The document that outlines the University's internationalisation plan is now be considered in more detail.

5.3.2 Wits' *Internationalisation Policy* (2010)

According to the University's *Internationalisation Policy*, internationalisation is "central to the University's understanding of itself and its mission" (Wits, 2010a, p. 3). The policy adopts Knight's definition of internationalisation and defines it as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension into the goals, functions (teaching/learning, research, services) and delivery of higher education" (Wits, 2010a, p. 5). Furthermore, it states that for Wits, internationalisation "should be a proactive, self-reflective, internalised and institutionalised process" (ibid.). However, it also raises the question of "whether traditional responses to internationalisation such as collaborative research, joint provision of academic programmes, and students and staff exchanges are sufficient to face new challenges and opportunities on the global stage" (Wits, 2010a, p. 3).

In the context of Wits, it is emphasised that "internationalisation recognises and respects the diversity and richness of the world we live in" (ibid.). This is reflected in the internationalisation process being based on three principles: (1) fostering diversity of thought and opinion; (2) providing international exposure for the University's core functions as well as (3) strengthening teaching and research. The first of these principles is particularly noteworthy in the South African context, as the reason for focusing on the promotion of diverse thoughts and opinions might be found in the country's history of exclusion. Since the end of apartheid "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity", as expressed in the preamble to the country's Constitution (1996, p. 1). As indicated in the University's strategic plan, diversity is also one of the core values of Wits (Wits, 2010c, p. 11). In that sense, an international dimension adds to an already diverse and heterogenous community – be that on campus or in the broader South African society.

For Wits, internationalisation is mostly understood as the pursuit of world-class higher education, whose quality can be improved by drawing on global best practice and benefiting from international benchmarking. Internationalisation is seen not as a goal in itself but as a means to enhance the University's "contribution to the range, depth and quality of high-level human intellectual capital and knowledge" in response to national, regional and global concerns and for the benefit of the communities that the University serves (Wits, 2010a, p. 5). In pursuing its policy on internationalisation, Wits (Wits, 2010a, p. 7) aims to achieve the following:

- Engendering the process of intellectual self-renewal that involves both outbound and inbound processes of academic and scholarly engagement.
- Utilising our African base and its unique opportunities for global competitive advantage.
- Broadening of the perspectives and orientation of our staff and students – intellectual, social and cultural – through teaching and research to engage as competent and versatile citizens in a globalised world.
- Facilitating efficient use of resources and facilities earmarked to internalise the Internationalisation Strategy.
- Capitalising on increased business, industrial and government activity on the subcontinent; and
- Projecting Wits as a world-class, leading centre of intellectual engagement through research and academic provisioning, and a preferred destination for top-level international scholars and students.

To achieve this, specific attention is given to internationalisation as it effects Wits' research, curriculum, staff and students. Apart from attracting and retaining international students and staff, and particularly high-calibre scholars, Wits focuses on producing internationally recognised, acclaimed and highly cited research and scholarly work as well as on participating in or leading of international research teams and networks. In addition to research, academic staff members are encouraged to pursue international linkages for other purposes such as teaching or community engagement. They should also participate in and support mobility activities. As far as university curricula are concerned, they should include a combination of the following dimensions:

- Broaden the traditional or original subject using international cross-cultural or intercultural and interdisciplinary approaches.
- Include an international subject or area or language studies.
- Aim to have compulsory parts that are offered, at or by, universities in other regions within Africa or abroad.
- By design, articulate with that of partners universities leading to joint qualifications or having elements of 'sandwich' programmes; and

- Prepare graduates for defined international professions and/or lead to internationally recognised professional qualifications (Adapted from Wits, 2010a, pp. 9-10).

Through such internationalised curricula, Wits' graduates are expected to "display a mastery of international perspectives intellectually, professionally and in engagement with society", which includes, for example, being aware of multi-cultural perspectives and able to "think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives", particularly regarding their field of study and professional traditions. It also means that Wits graduates should be aware of the "implications of local decisions and actions for international communities" and vice versa (Wits, 2010a, p. 10). More detailed thinking on curriculum internationalisation is discussed later in this section in the context of the concept of 'scholarship for Afro-global excellence'.

As a leading higher education institution, Wits is poised to contribute to South Africa as an emerging economy and a society in transformation. In addition, it plays a vital role in fostering development in the region and on the African continent. Wits' location in Africa is recognised as an opportunity to use "the African context as a basis for innovative research and scholarship" (Wits, 2010a, p. 3), especially in selected fields of study and research where Africa has a unique competitive advantage globally. The institutional thinking behind the University's Africa focus is further illuminated in a document outlining the concept of a Pan-African Universities Partnership.

5.3.3 *Pan-African Universities Partnership* (2010)

Recognising the "need for growing intra-continental networks that would assist in growing and retaining academic capacity in Africa", the *Pan-African Universities Partnership* document was drafted as a conceptual framework for Wits' approach towards engagements to "strengthen the intellectual capital, leadership and management of academic and research institutions in Africa" (Wits, 2010b, p. 2). Advancing academic capacity in Africa is required to address knowledge and development priorities on the continent. It is also considered important to have "robust African intellectual capital that sustains and nourishes itself, and that claims its role in the global knowledge communities" (ibid.). This is particularly significant in a context where institutions address the "legacy where much African, and Africa-focused, academic activity has often by necessity been conducted with academics from the 'north'" (ibid).

The rationale for Pan-African universities partnerships emerges against the backdrop of a number of challenges faced by public higher education institutions in Africa, specifically with regard to unprecedented growth in student numbers and a decline in public funding, which have had a number of consequences, including:

> …a decline in educational quality, a shift towards the less expensive disciplines, a drastic decline in research funding to cover the costs of growing student numbers, and a shrinking proportion of postgraduate students, i.e. those from whom the next generation of academics needs to be drawn (Wits, 2010b, p. 4).

As noted, these challenges are further exacerbated by brain drain. In addition, it is pointed out that programmes to support African higher education have typically been funded by external donors and development aid agencies, which means they have been conceptualised and driven from the North. Other concerns around these programmes include their ad hoc basis and short-term nature (ibid.). Such development efforts are expected to continue, particularly regarding partnerships with top universities around the world. However, there is a growing call "for more systematic and systemic attention to building sustainable research and training capacity within African universities themselves" and raising "the concern of an over-reliance on experts and capacity from outside Africa to resolve local problems, rather than more concerted efforts to work towards self-sustainability of higher education in Africa" (Wits, 2010b, p. 6).

Within the framework for Pan-African universities partnerships, Wits expresses its intent to work with institutions on the continent towards the goal of self-sustainability by proposing programmes "to grow academic capacity through a number of strategic measures which address both the intellectual and structural dimensions needed for sustainable and self-actualising higher education" (Wits, 2010b, p. 5). This intent is firmly embedded in previous thinking on the renewal and development of African higher education as expressed by bodies such as the AAU and the AU as well as initiatives such as NEPAD (ibid.). Furthermore, Wits draws its efforts on a number of existing initiatives and knowledge networks that it is part of such as Africa Array in earth sciences and the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) in public health, to name but a few. To further grow and retain talent and capacity in Africa, several different modes of engagement are being proposed including creating thematic networks, consolidating strategic fields of study, developing management and leadership capacities, hosting advanced seminars and establishing residency programmes. Underlying all of these initiatives are a number of key strategies which include working with

the African diaspora, focussing on existing strengths and building the next generation of academics. Furthermore, intra-African collaboration is a key characteristic of the Pan-African partnerships concept:

> This is essential if we want in the future to position Africa as one of the centres of global knowledge production in its own right, with African scholars at the centre of the debates. The outcome we seek will be an increase in the levels of self confidence among African academics and emerging scholars, as well as respect for academic ideas and scientific inquiry by African governments, business and policy makers. This is necessary for increased levels of democratisation and participatory development (Wits, 2010b, p. 8.

With linkages on the continent and beyond, the concept of Pan-African universities partnerships is linked to the concept of internationalisation:

> Internationalisation is a necessary strategy in order to enhance the human capital and knowledge provided for the benefit of the societies they serve. This relates particularly to processes of better preparing the next generation of leaders and highly skilled citizens by adapting curricula to global imperatives and by encouraging staff and student flow across borders, aimed at developing in the students the capacity for cross-cultural understanding and participation in global knowledge networks (Wits, 2010b, p. 10).

A lot of the thinking behind the framework for Pan-African university partnerships has found concrete expression in the founding of ARUA, especially regarding the call for the development of research-intensive, globally competitive institutions "to conduct cutting edge research and to provide for the countries and regions the higher order knowledge and skills for successful competition in today's global economy" (Wits, 2010b, p. 6).

While ARUA is not a Wits initiative per se, the University did play a special role in the establishment of the Alliance in its capacity as co-founder. Wits also "manages the financial resources of ARUA and accounts for these to the funding agencies" (ARUA, n.d., p. 7). Because of this involvement, it seems reasonable to briefly look at this consortium of leading African universities, which was established to increase research capacity and collaboration on the continent. ARUA was formally launched in Dakar, Senegal, in March 2015 (Wits, 2016, p. 258), during the 1st African Higher Education Summit, which was discussed in Chapter Two.

5.3.3.1 African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) – The Concept (2015)

ARUA brings together 16 universities from different African countries in "response to a strongly felt need in the region for capable and engaged research universities working to solve the development challenges of the region" (ARUA, n.d., p. 1). This is based on the acknowledgement that "partnerships and networking have become essential arrangements for universities throughout the world to leverage their resources for greater impact" (ARUA, n.d., p. 4). More specifically:

> The network is generally about expanding and enhancing significantly the quality of research done in Africa by African researchers. This new network, from inception, was intended to be different from any other regional university networks. The difference was to come largely from the approach to be employed, namely bringing together a number of peer African institutions that were willing to work together by pooling their own limited resources, with a view to generating a critical mass that could more effectively support their limited, but growing numbers of researchers. Underlying this was the conviction that they could thereby leverage this effectively for additional resources from outside (ARUA, n.d., p. 1).

ARUA envisions to "make African researchers and institutions globally competitive while contributing to the generation of knowledge for socio-economic transformation in Africa" (ARUA, n.d., p. 6). It focuses its efforts on four priority areas, which include (1) collaborative research, (2) training and support for PhDs, (3) capacity building for research management as well as (4) research advocacy (ARUA, n.d., p. 7).

In line with calls for greater self-reliance, as issued, for example, during the 1st African Higher Education Summit in 2015, ARUA is committed to mobilising resources through contributions from its member universities, the governments and private sector of the countries in which the members are located as well as regional bodies. In addition, it will engage international bodies and funding agencies. Through its efforts, ARUA is "poised to make a big difference to how research is organised in the region and how its outcomes are disseminated globally" (ARUA, n.d., p. 13), bringing regionalisation and internationalisation together.

5.3.4 *Draft Framed Guidance for Curriculum Internationalisation Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence* (2014)

The Faculty of Humanities' *Draft Framed Guidance for Curriculum Internationalisation Scholarship for Afro-Global Excellence (SAGE)* addresses internationalisation in a specific domain: that of the curriculum. In her foreword, the Faculty Dean clearly situates the document in the South African context, where internationalisation is strongly influenced by developmental and contextual specificities, particularly with regard to a broader transformation agenda. At the centre of this agenda is the "need to reclaim our identities both as individual academics and collectively as institutions on the African continent" (Wits, 2014b[48]). Furthermore, she notes that a focus on Africa and Africanness will help achieve this aim and will also "distinguish us on the global competitive stage" (ibid.).

The *Draft Framed Guidance* document is an attempt to integrate ideas and practices from within the university and the broader global context. While IoC is commonly understood to be concerned with the inclusion of intercultural and international dimensions in the curriculum, often linked to graduate attributes (Brewer & Leask, 2012, p. 249), the definition offered here seems to invert the order of things by focussing on a local dimension first. An internationalised curriculum is defined as a curriculum "which situates the notion of Africanness as a key lever for engaging with the global world in solving its developmental challenges and in seeking to position itself as a competitive entity in the globally competitive HE context" (Wits, 2014b, p. 11).

This definition gives expression to the importance and centrality of the notion of Africanness, which is also reflected in a new understanding of internationalisation, defined as "Processes which seek to embed and elevate an Afro-Global Scholarship as an authentic global episteme equal and competing with other globally recognised epistemes" (Wits, 2014b, p. 8). This definition speaks to the need to challenge the dominance of Western scholarship and the importance of creating a level playing field, with possibility for other regions to come on board. An Afrocentric approach offers a counterpart to dominant Eurocentric approaches. In particular, the term *Afro-Global Scholarship* refers to scholarship that:

- Consciously seeks to integrate African knowledge epistemes into the educative processes;

[48] The two pages of the *Foreword* are not numbered.

- Prioritises and values the multiplicity of knowledge perspectives;
- Responds to and advances fundamental Afro-centred philosophies;
- Recognises the relevance of and prioritises multidisciplinary and collaborative learning and knowledge generation; and
- Values the role of reconciliation, redress, inclusiveness and tolerance in delivering equality (Adapted from Wits, 2014b, p. 8).

It is acknowledged that SAGE is a "loaded concept, one which can be both controversial and divisive" (Wits, 2014b, p. 14). At the same time, it is a

> …generative idea which represents the university's aspirations; is reflective of our latent practices and beliefs; and complements an emerging Afro Global body politic that seeks to engage with a pervasive Afro-pessimism which has done so much damage to both the identity and development of the African continent (ibid.).

While the concept is open to be fleshed out by individual units within the Faculty, the document contains some key dimensions, with a strong focus on Africanness. For example, it is suggested that colleagues should "integrate and even prioritise Afro Political theory as lenses for understanding the African condition and re-establishing the African identity in the global body politic" (Wits, 2014b, p. 15). Another focus is on partnerships and collaboration across disciplines and institutions as well as between HE institutions and partners in industry, commerce and labour.

The *Draft Framed Guidance* provides several broad principles for a number of different curriculum dimensions such as the development of courses and programmes, classroom practice and pedagogy as well as learning assessment and evaluation. In terms of internationalisation at home and abroad, proposed principles for partnerships include having at least one partnership each in South Africa, Africa, BRICS, the Anglo-Saxon world as well as the Chino-Asian region; creating opportunities for collaborative partnerships for cross institutional teaching and research; developing a partnerships database and creating "institutional memory spaces for disseminating and storing the wisdom and knowledge produced through partnerships work" (Wits, 2014b, p. 17). Promoting the concept of SAGE, the *Draft Framed Guidance* illustrates how internationalisation objectives can be combined with transformation objectives in areas such as the curriculum.

Summarising this section on Wits' theory of internationalisation and partnerships, I note that Wits is an institution that wants to matter and is ambitious about its place in South Africa, Africa and the world. Building on Wits' international outlook as described in the first part of this chapter, an analysis of key documents such as the university's strategic plan and internationalisation policy confirms and further details the important role internationalisation plays for the University's mission and core functions.

As an institution that aspires to be globally competitive and locally responsive (Wits, 2016, p. 1), internationalisation in the Wits context is seen as a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is a vehicle that can help the University respond to both the challenges and opportunities created in a globalised world. In that regard, partnerships are a key strategy employed by the University. Within the broader internationalisation and partnerships frameworks as outlined in the University's vision and internationalisation policy, Africa is assigned a special role.

The University's Africa focus is further elaborated in the documents about Pan-African universities partnerships as well as curriculum internationalisation through SAGE. On the one hand, Wits is committed to contribute meaningfully and prominently to the development of the continent on which it is located. On the other hand, its location in Africa offers Wits unique opportunities for global engagement and competitiveness, which is aptly demonstrated by initiatives such as ACSUS and ARUA as well as concepts like SAGE. This suggests that internationalisation at Wits is shaped by its local context and has a distinct (South) African flavour.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, my main aim was to contextualise the case by presenting a detailed description of Wits, based on documentary data gathered for the study. I started by providing a general overview of the University and the environment it operates in, giving specific intuitional evidence for the main characteristics and challenges of higher education, as highlighted in the literature review. I also gave an indication of the institutional context of transformation, which speaks to the notions of coloniality and decoloniality as introduced in the discussion of the study's theoretical framework. Furthermore, I included an outline of Wits' general stance on internationalisation and partnerships.

Following the general overview of Wits, I discussed key institutional documents to identify how they address internationalisation and partnerships issues more specifically. Documents such as the *Wits Vision 2022*, the *Internationalisation Policy* and the *Pan-African Universities Partnership* speak to and complement each other. Their coherence and alignment might have been facilitated by the fact that they were all developed at the same time, dating back to 2010. As indicated earlier, the *Internationalisation Policy*, which was published in the same year, is no longer available for download on the University's website. This might have been necessitated by the fact that it refers to structures such as the WIO and the Senate committee on internationalisation, which do not exist anymore.

As it is, the University has no visible internationalisation policy that is easily available and up to date, galvanising current institutional thinking and priorities and speaking more pronouncedly to the importance of a (South) African agenda in internationalisation. While the *Wits Vision 2022* sees the University as a well-resourced institution, it is noteworthy that the issue of resources, for example in terms of a dedicated budget, is not raised in the *Internationalisation Policy*. Given the realisation that "the challenge of pursuing global competitiveness from an African context is rendered more demanding by the reality of inadequate financial resources" (Wits, 2010c, p. 35), there is a need for concerted efforts to ensure that the University has sufficient capacity to support its internationalisation agenda.

As observed in the *Draft Framed Guidance*, "internationalisation is currently prioritised at the top of the organisation", and "the focus is not so prominent at the lower ranks of university organisation in schools and institutes" (Wits, 2014b, p. 11). Furthermore, it is pointed out that "there is a lack of organisational form at the level of the foot soldiers of the university in terms of internationalisation and partnership development". There is also a "live internationalisation strategy which sits above a larger and more widely dispersed latent internationalisation network of schools and institutes" (ibid.). These are some observations that are further illuminated by the data gathered through interviews, as summarised in Appendix G.

The narrative summary of the interview data, presented in Appendix G, complements this chapter. As noted in Chapter Four, 17 formal, face-to-face, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were conducted between September 2017 and January 2018 with academics and researchers from across the University's faculties, members of the senior executive team, other senior managers as well as staff working in the international, partnerships and research offices.

The main objective of the interviews was to encourage my research participants to share their experiences with and thinking about North-South partnerships at Wits, with the aim of illuminating and giving credence to the human experiences and lived realities of such partnerships. The narrative presented in Appendix G offers an extensive, thick and authentic description, taking up the issues raised in the summary of documentary data in this chapter and dealing with them in a much more detailed and nuanced manner. It reveals the complex nature of phenomena such as internationalisation, transformation and North-South relations through a multitude of diverse practical and theoretical perspectives.

Having indicated what the field revealed by presenting the data gathered from documents and interviews, I address how this information was analysed in the next chapter, in line with the three main phases of working the data, as indicated in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS – THE CASE OF NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS AT WITS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the analysis of the data gathered for the Wits case study on North-South partnerships in higher education, based on the presentation of data in Chapter Five and Appendix G. In Chapter Five, I presented the voice of the institution, capturing the theory of internationalisation at Wits, based on, for the most part, externally facing and publicly available institutional documents. This was complemented by a presentation of the voices of the participants in Appendix G as an indication of theory-practice, based on the interviews conducted for the study. Both presentations function as summaries of the data gathered and were therefore field-driven. They will not be summarised further, but the main issues and themes that emerged from the data are explored throughout this data analysis chapter.

In contrast to the presentation of data, which focussed on giving a summary of the data gathered for the study, this analysis is done with the research questions in mind. Furthermore, it is knowledge-driven, as I aim to move beyond the data towards the contribution of new insights and new knowledge. The process of making sense of the data, which I referred to as 'making the data work' in Chapter Four, included three main phases, which are put forward separately in this chapter. Firstly, I bring the documents and interviews into conversation. This discussion provides the backdrop for the second phase, in which I discuss how the data helps me answer the research questions. Thirdly, I re-theorise the findings by linking what I have found to the literature review and theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, respectively.

Throughout this chapter, the voices of the institution and the participants are foregrounded by using direct quotes from the documents and interviews, with the relevant source indicated in brackets following the cited passage or passages. For example, where Participant 1 mentions that the attitude of international staff "by default is international", this means the source for this quote is indicated as (P1). I have attempted to include relevant quotes in such a way that English sentence structure and grammar remain intact. However, where this was not possible, the direct speech of the participants took precedence in order for the narrative to remain

authentic and engaging. In addition to the voices of the research participants and the institution itself, my voice as qualitative researcher and practitioner-scholar is included in the analysis, as I am making sense of the data. Through the process of sense-making, I share insights from my encounter with a complex case and offer my interpretation of the case study data, drawing on my own experiences and understandings of the phenomena in question. This includes knowledge of and experience at the case study institution as well as in the broader context of higher education sector in South Africa.

6.2 PHASE ONE: Bringing Documents and Interviews into Conversation

By bringing the document and interview data into conversation, I am not aiming to re-summarise the data previously presented. Rather, the main objective of this section is to analyse how the two different data sets, which are part of a complex case, relate to each other. To this end, I discuss pertinent issues, identifying areas in which the documents and interviews overlap as well as those where there are discrepancies and contestations. In doing so, I also reflect on whether there are any related elements or aspects that are present in the documents but not the interviews, or vice versa.

The main focus of this section is on broad issues and features of internationalisation at Wits. As North-South partnerships are embedded in and shaped by the broader context of internationalisation, it is important to understand its institutional framework. This understanding contextualises the findings. In that sense, what is presented here serves as the background setting for a closer examination of how North-South partnerships are managed at the University, which is done through a detailed discussion of the responses to my research questions in the next phase. At this point, I look at convergences and divergences in the way the documents and interviews relate to each other.

6.2.1 Convergences

Overall, the documents and interviews speak to each other, particularly with regard to Wits' mission and strategic focus as a research-intensive university that is locally and globally relevant. The participants have 'bought into' the overall vision and mission of the university, and there is general consensus that 'Wits Matters', as the title of an institutional brochure suggests. Confidence and a strong sense of identity are reflected in a "strong, uh, intellectual

belief in our purpose, in our place as a university in the landscape" (P17). The University's vision of being a "leading world-class research-intensive university in Africa, firmly embedded in the international top league universities" (Wits, 2018b, p. 1) is matched by participants' ambitions to, for example, see one of the University's centres "become Africa's Silicon Valley, if that's a good comparison" (P12). This dream "is very much an international vision. It fits in the world, it doesn't fit in Johannesburg alone" (P12).

Internationalisation and research are two key strategic priorities at Wits that are intertwined. The documents highlight that Wits, as a research-intensive university, aims to achieve and maintain its international standing first and foremost through globally relevant and impactful research. The majority of indicators of international competitiveness are linked to the quality and quantity of research outputs such as publications and citations. In the interviews, this link between research and internationalisation is confirmed. Participants also explicitly highlight the borderless nature of research, noting that "there are certain things that are actually borderless. Uh, research, global research is one of them" (P11). Another thing that is commonly understood to be without borders or to cross borders easily is internationalisation, and so the two mutually reinforce each other.

Generally speaking, in those instances where documents and interviews are in essential agreement about a specific issue, it tends to be the case that the interviews, not surprisingly, deal with that issue in a more detailed and nuanced manner because of the inclusion of diverse voices and of theoretical as well as practical perspectives. In a way, the interviews become an extension of the documents and represent a deeper engagement with the issues in question. I demonstrate this with the help of several examples, focussing on the notion of internationalisation at Wits, the University's focus on Africa and the global South as well as the relationship between internationalisation and transformation.

6.2.1.1 Wits' Notion of Internationalisation as "not just something that's an ambition, I mean, it's something that we need to do"

Following Knight, internationalisation at Wits is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural and/or global dimension" into the University's mission and core functions (Wits, 2010a, p. 5). It is not an end in itself but a mechanism to enhance Wits' "contribution to the range, depth and quality of high-level human intellectual capital and

knowledge for the benefit of the broad community that it serves", and, as such, it is "fundamentally a pursuit of world-class quality higher education" (ibid.).

This notion of internationalisation is mirrored in the interviews, where it is referred to as an essential part of the academic endeavour, as it provides opportunities to engage and "get that other perspective" (P15) and enriches the university environment "by a multitude of understandings, experiences and positionalities" (P2). In many ways, internationalisation is a must for Wits, for example, as a tool that helps the University build its reputation internationally. Apart from this, internationalisation brings about other benefits for Wits such as "knowledge development", and "it inevitably is about recruitment of international students, and then […] it is about resource sharing" (P3). However, it is also made clear that internationalisation, while considered a necessity, is not without its challenges, as "it's not just something that's an ambition, I mean, it's something that we need to do, uh, I mean, against, basically, uh, difficult odds" (P11). Despite the difficulties, internationalisation is generally understood as an enabling force. For example, it "happens to enable research in, in my space, and it will happen to enable postgraduate affairs in somebody else's portfolio" (P6).

Global competitiveness appears to be a major driver of internationalisation at Wits, and it is closely linked to the quality of teaching, learning and research. International recognition of degrees is important in that context. In some cases, it is noted that "our field is very international in the sense that the nature of the business, the standards, the business processes are all international" (P1), which makes internationalisation part of the University's core business.

Regardless of the field, internationalisation activities at Wits come in many forms and are often interlinked. For example, the University is able to attract international staff, which further facilitates international cooperation, as the orientation of these academics "by default is international" (P1), and they often have existing networks. This can play a role, for example, regarding the appointment of international external examiners, which "assures us that the quality of what we're doing is internationally competitive" (P1). The benefits of such practice are reaped in different ways, for example, when students find immediate employment upon graduation and when their work is of "such quality that you can actually publish it with the student" (P1). Furthermore, "one of the ways in which that pays back is that some of our colleagues have been able to publish undergraduate and Masters theses in foreign journals" (P1), which facilitates Wits' international reputation and competitiveness, as "it becomes also

a form of advertising what we're doing here" (P1). Such exposure is important for a university that considers itself a leading institution in Africa with a strong research agenda.

An important goal for Wits is to become an attractive destination for international students and staff. Regarding the latter, international staff recruitment is a good example of how the interviews deepen the understanding of internationalisation issues by illustrating the complexities involved. For example, Wits seeks to have increased the proportion of international staff to 40 per cent of the total staff complement by 2022 (Wits, 2010c, p. 27). In 2017, 26 per cent of the University's full-time permanent academic employees were international (Wits, 2018b, p. 2).

While institutional documents provide information about Wits' recruitment targets and indicate how the University performs in that regard, the interviews reveal a more complex picture. For example, some units in the University are "more international than most schools because the average academic here is foreign" (P1). While this suggests that Wits is doing well in working towards its international staff recruitment targets, it also illustrates the complexities involved in recruiting international staff. There are instances where staff members come with their families and are subject to South African immigration regulations, which are not always favourable. In a reported case, the staff member's spouse "gets an accompanying spouse visa, which means she can't even open a bank account. I mean, it's like 1920s" (P1). In addition, the fact that "then she can't get a job" means that the staff member is looking after his wife and children "with my salary alone, which, by the way, is very low, for a country, for a city as expensive as Johannesburg" (P1). Apart from facing possible financial constraints, there are also instances where international staff are faced with resentment, for example, when they "hear people talking about 'Why are there so many foreign academics in the department?'" (P1). Such resentment is particularly strong when having international staff is not considered an asset, when there is "the idea that foreigners shouldn't have a space in South African higher education" (P2). This is linked to a broader South African discourse of "They're taking jobs is, sort of, how it's typically pitched, right?" (P2) and "They're talking employment equity, when we're talking internationally competitive universities" (P1). The relationship between transformation and internationalisation is further explored towards the end of this section. However, at this point it is important to note that the reported hostility towards foreigners is particularly targeted at international staff members who originate from other countries on the continent. This is significant, given that Wits has a strong focus on building stronger links with people and organisations in Africa.

6.2.1.2 Internationalisation with a Focus on Africa and the Global South

Wits' location in Africa is emphasised in most institutional documents. Its link to internationalisation is clearly highlighted in the *Internationalisation Policy*, which states that Wits aims to utilise its "African base and its unique opportunities for global competitive advantage" (Wits, 2010a, p. 7). The strategic intent is "to respond to the profound challenges of our times" and to do so "by exploring, much more vigorously, the use of our local and broader African context as a basis for groundbreaking, globally significant research" (Wits, 2010c, p. 5). The focus on Africa is further explored and deepened in the context of partnerships and curriculum internationalisation in documents that discuss the concepts of the Pan-African universities partnership as well as of scholarship for Afro-global excellence (SAGE), respectively.

Wits' Africa focus also features prominently in the interviews, where it is noted that the Vice-Chancellor has "made that pretty explicit, you know, that Africanisation will need to be part of internationalisation" (P5). The participants reveal that they support this strategic focus in principle because they have existing or emerging research interests in Africa or they feel that it is 'the right thing to do', as "we are part of Africa and we gotta get part of Africa more and more" (P6). The general buy-in manifests itself in departments having "over the last period attempted, uh, with some degree of success, to focus more on partnerships within the African continent" (P9) and others setting up initiatives like a *Theory from Africa* workshop series to "establish more connections with African universities and we make it clear that only graduates from African universities currently at African universities can apply" (P17).

When sharing their efforts of putting the University's Africa focus into action in terms of their internationalisation activities, the participants also provide an indication of the challenges they face in doing so, which tend to emphasise the scarcity of resources and capacity at partner institutions across the continent.

As far as the link between Africanisation and internationalisation is concerned, the document outlining the concept of SAGE makes recommendations regarding the integration and prioritisation of Africa and Africanness in the context of curriculum internationalisation (Wits, 2014b). In the interviews, the participants share examples of how such an Afrocentric approach is being implemented in areas such as the development of courses and programmes as well as classroom practice. It is highlighted, for example, that a classroom in "South Africa, in the

University of the Witwatersrand, is different from a classroom in India and different from a classroom in New Jersey or Oxford" (P17). It needs to be contextualised through the inclusion of "a whole lot of Zulu intellectuals, Xhosa intellectuals" where relevant, as their "writing and knowledge is closer to that of the experience of a lot of our students" (P17). It is envisaged that "we actually allow these works to percolate into our teaching of history, philosophy, literature and so on" (P17).

The Anthropology programme is noted as an example where the 'order of things' has been changed, and "even a simple thing like reversing the order of education makes a whole lot of difference" (P17). This means that the course exposes students first to African epistemes before discussing "the big theories – canonical theories – so that students may feel that this entire inheritance may either be relevant or can be questioned" (P17). Another example relates to a teaching experience from the Arts, where decolonial teaching is put into practice by bringing "all these different historical registers in conversation with each other" (P8). In doing so, "we recognise that there are certain privileging at certain points but to expose the privileging", which means "to expose how those ideological frameworks are actually shaping the way in which that educational framework is operating" (P8).

It should be noted at this point, that Africanisation is often addressed in the context of decolonisation in the interviews. The term 'decolonisation' itself is not frequently used in institutional documents. For example, it is neither used in *Wits Vision 2022* nor in the *Internationalisation Policy* or *Wits Matters*. Again, this might be because the term gained real prominence in national debates only in the wake of the #RMF and #FMF student protest movements, which was after these documents were published. In more recent institutional documents such as the *2017 Annual Report*, for example, decolonisation is mentioned with reference to publications and events. It is also highlighted in the context of curriculum reform in several schools (Wits, 2018a). However, while the term itself might not be as prominent in the documents as it is in the interviews, its broader meaning is covered even in the documents as they speak to transformation and Africanisation as related concepts. This issue is further explored in the discussion of answers to the research questions, specifically with regard to how North-South partnerships are conceptualised at Wits.

Wits' Africa focus is part of the University's broader discourse on building stronger links and networks across the global South, which is significantly shaped by developments in the framework of BRICS. BRICS does not specifically feature in the University's vision and

internationalisation policy. This is not surprising, given that both documents were published in 2010, and South Africa only joined BRICS at the end of that year. BRICS is, however, mentioned in the *Draft Framed Guidance*, which was developed in 2014, and features in the institutional website. BRICS is also brought up during the interviews, where it is considered an important selection mechanism in institutional efforts to fine-tune partnerships initiatives. In fact, the interviews reveal that the university has a new institutional approach to internationalisation and partnerships, referred to as the 'Inside-out Policy', which gives expression to the institution's efforts to give more attention to collaboration with the global South. The Inside-out Policy is compared to a set of five concentric circles, as shown in Figure 4 below, based on the information provided in the relevant interview:

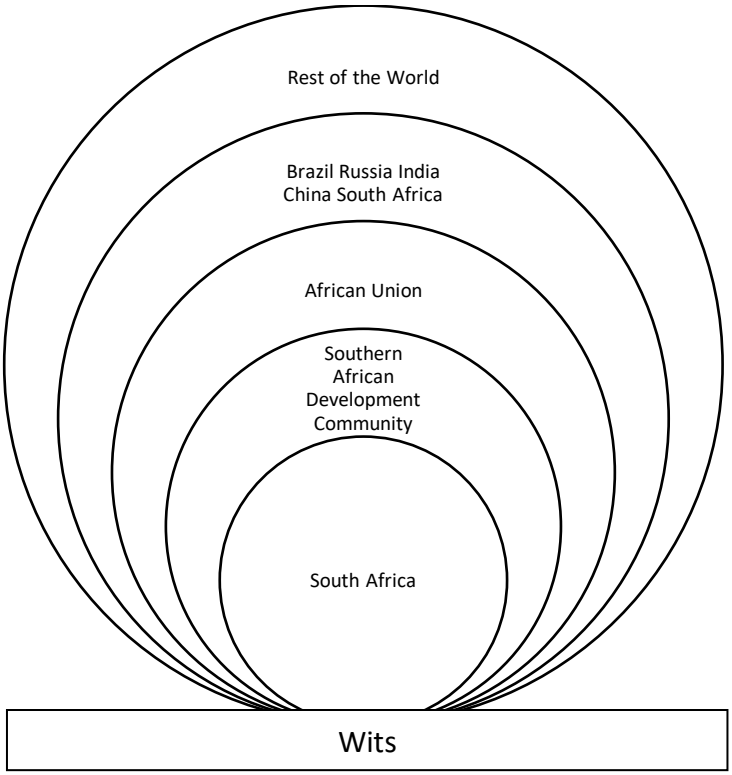


Figure 4: Wits' inside-out partnerships policy.[49]

As explained in the relevant interview, this model essentially divides the world into five regions of engagement for Wits, each represented by one circle, starting with South Africa in the innermost circle and moving outwards from there. The closer a circle is to South Africa, the more weight it has in terms of partnerships preference. In other words, preference is given "to

[49] Figure 4 is based on the information provided in the interview with P7.

the people closest to us, and then we move outwards" (P7). It is worth noting that this model places partnerships with the global North the furthest away from South Africa, which suggests that they are the least sought after, while the strongest focus is on partnerships with the global South, represented collectively by four out of the five circles. In doing so, the model seems to somewhat contradict Wits' emphasis on its relations with the global North, as expressed in university documents regarding international standing, global university rankings and partnerships with the most prestigious institutions around the world.

As noted earlier, the vast majority of high-impact publications and citations were achieved through collaborations with institutions in Europe and North America. The contradiction can perhaps be explained as follows: The Inside-out Policy can be understood as an expression of the University's institutional will and a deliberate decision to put greater emphasis on working with the global South than has been done before. It gives expression to the University's commitment to local and regional priorities, particularly with regard to transformation and development. Thus, it is an expression of the future Wits would like to see, as the beginning of a paradigm shift whose effect will only be visible in years, decades or even centuries to come.

The participants further probe these issues by noting that achieving this vision will take time. Initiatives like ARUA, which are "promoting African research excellence", will "start off slowly, no, no doubt, but it, it will grow" (P6). At the moment, "ARUA is really on the back burner, nothing much is happening with them" (P17). A reason offered for this in the interviews is that working with the South is not (yet) as impactful as working with the North, since it "doesn't necessarily, you know, change the university ranking that might be assessed through those bibliometrics so there's a, there's a conflict there" (P6).

Also, it is pointed out that the engagement with the global South has to be seen in relation to the engagement with the global North, which has been the dominant relationship, and the dominant relationship "has evolved over centuries, so one's not simply, one isn't going to overcome it in a generation or two" (P9). Nevertheless, "one has to create the, uh, the basis for that" (P9), and I think Wits' Inside-out Policy for partnerships is an example of doing just that. As has been noted, the policy is an indication of Wits' commitment to local and regional development, which is reflected in its approach to internationalisation. In the local context of South Africa, such commitment is inextricably linked to the national transformation agenda. It is therefore reasonable to address the relationship between transformation and internationalisation.

6.2.1.3 Internationalisation "without compromising Wits' commitment to local imperatives"

In the Wits context, internationalisation is considered with the local context in mind. For example, regarding academic excellence, the University strategy notes that Wits wants to "attract highly talented students from around the world and provide a unique student-centred and research-driven experience without compromising Wits' commitment to local imperatives" (Wits, 2010c, p. 25). While striving to be an internationally leading and globally competitive university, Wits must play "a critical role in building a nation and continent that is undergoing complex transformation" (Wits, 2015, p. 3). In this context, the global, the regional and the local are intertwined in such a way that internationalisation without transformation is impossible, which is a connection that is also emphasised by the participants.

As the interviews show, transformation in South African higher education is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is about increased representation of underrepresented groups in a system where "you need more black scholars", as students "say 'How come that we have a department that it, it still remains very white?'" (P11). Transformation is also concerned with investment in local capacity, as "the more knowledge we have about ourselves umm, in fact the more funding we have of our own institution, the better" in "the larger debate on transformation" (P13). This is about "building our own indigenous research capacity" (P13).

While internationalisation and transformation are clearly linked, there are different views as to what the nature of the relationship between the two concepts is. One the one hand, transformation and internationalisation can be seen as opposing objectives. This is the case in the context of resentment towards foreigners, as has been mentioned, and is a particularly pertinent issue when it comes to black staff from other countries on the continent. For them, "employment equity rules means that we're not black", which is experienced as "institutional rejection, not so much individual rejection" (P1). In this scenario, "The policies of the state are, constitute, you know, rejection of the value we bring to the table" (P1). Such a conflict needs to be reconciled at a University that wants to contribute to transformation and, at the same time, make Africa an integral part of its internationalisation efforts.

For the most part, however, the participants understand internationalisation as an enabling force for transformation. It "needs to be prioritised on the same level as transformation. In fact, it should be seen as a way of accelerating transformation" (P1). In this regard, international

partnerships that improve the quality of teaching and the competitiveness of programmes are seen "as a catalyst for transformation" because "that's how you produce world-class academics, that's how you produce world-class graduates" (P1). In addition, it is "how you let South Africa, and for that matter the majority of black people that you're trying to help into the global mainstream" (P1).

It is therefore important to approach transformation and internationalisation not "as an either-or situation" but "as a win-win discussion" (P1). Similarly, transformation is linked to excellence. While "a lot of people actually look at it unfortunately one way or the other", "transformation without excellence then won't work. And excellence without transformation will not work either" (P11). Since internationalisation is, in turn, "linked with your global excellence standard", "you cannot internationalise without transformation" (P11). Transformation must address the fact that "at the moment the pool of well qualified PhD level academics in the country is very low", "so to transform you need to educate the next generation", and "to educate the next generation you need to have, you need to draw from all the resources across the world" (P11).

As revealed in the interviews, one Faculty in the University is considering to "link the Internationalisation and Partnership Committee with the Faculty Transformation Committee", with the aim of tackling "the question of curriculum transformation, transform, transforming the student profile, transforming how we engage with other parts of the world" (P3). From a holistic point of view, if Wits wants to internationalise by recruiting "students from another place, you can't recruit without attending to your curriculum transformation, for example" (P3). In the long run, it is argued, transformation and internationalisation will benefit each other through strengthening the University's "capacity to engage with the rest of the world" (P13).

In addition, another connection between the two concepts is the realisation that transformation, while a priority in the country, is not something that is 'owned' by South Africa. On the contrary, "this transformation issue in South Africa being this kind of isolated thing is very, very frustrating actually", as "everyone in the world is addressing radical transformation on the level of curriculum" as well as "on the level of thinking, on the level of epistemology, on the level of bodies" (P8). In this regard, transformation itself becomes a subject of study, research and practice that benefits from multiple perspectives from around the globe. For example, in the wake of recent migrations, "Europe is looking to the South" when it comes to diversity "because we absolutely now have the skill sets to deal with issues of diversity" (P8).

To sum up, with this discussion I have illustrated how the data gathered from documents and interviews relate to each other. I have shown that the voices of the institution and the participants are 'in sync' when it comes to central underlying principles of internationalisation at Wits. At Wits, internationalisation is a strategic priority that is closely linked to the University's commitment to excellence, particularly regarding globally significant research, as well as transformation, all of which is aimed at having a distinctly (South) African flavour. Having discussed where documents and interviews converge, I explore areas where they reveal divergences in the section that follows.

6.2.2 Divergences

The areas where documents and interviews differ considerably include the nature of internationalisation at Wits and, related to that, its prioritisation. Generally, there seems to be a mismatch between the University's ambition to internationalise and its capacity to actually support such endeavours effectively. I explore this further in the sections that follow, which include a discussion of the model of internationalisation and the main institutional internationalisation functions. The section aims to provide answers to the questions of whether internationalisation at Wits is a process that is proactive, self-reflective, internalised and institutionalised as well as whether internationalisation is prioritised at Wits.

6.2.2.1 Is internationalisation at Wits a "proactive, self-reflective, internalised and institutionalised process"?

Regarding the nature of internationalisation, the University's *Internationalisation Policy* states that internationalisation at Wits "should be a proactive, self-reflective, internalised and institutionalised process" (Wits, 2010a, p. 5). However, as the interviews reveal, participants find that the University does not engage proactively with internationalisation. "Wits chases international opportunities as opposed to creates them" (P2), which makes internationalisation at the University "almost an afterthought" (P1), especially for those that are not directly involved in senior leadership or management positions.

At the same time, participants identify opportunities for more proactive engagement with internationalisation, particularly in the context of knowledge production. For example, "we could do something across the university that looked at the complex process of

internationalisation", as we generally do not find "institutions looking at themselves and asking that question 'What is our agency?', then on investigating and discerning and grabbing some of the possibilities of partnerships" (P5). Another area of interest concerns good practice in internationalisation. For example, the study abroad dimension should be looked at from a South African perspective. In that regard, "we have to look out because we're global citizens, we belong in a global setting" (P10). However, "we need to begin to write, and write, produce literature for us, which we can share with others abroad" (P10).

While the policy states that internationalisation should be internalised and institutionalised, the interviews show that this is the case only to a limited extent. In their lived realities, participants experience internationalisation more as an individual effort than an institutional one. For example, "You don't hear a lot of it in the university's discussions unless you're particularly interested in it as a person" (P1). Internationalisation does not seem to be part of a daily agenda and is not addressed with equal levels of interest or urgency in faculties, schools and departments. For example, "as a department we are not, we don't have actually a strategy on internationalisation or partnerships", which is "partly because, uh, that information is not well communicated, uh, from the university in particular" (P13). These observations suggest that internationalisation is not fully institutionalised in the sense that it permeates all layers at the University.

A concern revealed in that regard is that there are too few people who, like the participants, act as internationalisation champions across the institution. This applies to different internationalisation dimensions such as the recruitment of international students as well as partnerships. Regarding the former, there are cases where staff indicate that "50 per cent of the students I have trained are from outside South Africa, so for me this is like natural" (P4). However, such an understanding does not come naturally to everyone, as "all the other people in my school go, look at them like this, you know, they're not as broad-minded as me" (P4). As far as international partnerships are concerned, there seems to be no broad-based commitment in that regard because "although people pay lip service" to them, they are generally "not prepared to put in the hours for the hard work" (P12). This means that efforts in that area rest on the shoulders of a willing few who, for whatever reasons, are inclined towards internationalisation and international partnerships and are committed to go the extra mile.

The capacity of those that do engage in internationalisation activities is stretched if not exhausted. It is questionable how sustainable such a system is for the individuals and,

ultimately, for the institution itself, especially when academics and researchers become so overloaded with administrative tasks that their academic work is put in jeopardy.

It is worth mentioning at this point that, having realised these difficulties and constraints, the institution is beginning to introduce changes. For example, the interviews revealed the intention to make dedicated funding available in the new five-year research plan for internationalisation activities such as exploratory visits, so that if the University is keen to establish a particular relationship, "we now have the resources to say 'Well, we can get you to China'" (P6) to explore partnership potential with institutions of strategic interest. While such efforts are welcome, the overall impression created through the interviews is that while internationalisation is preached at the top, its implementation does not receive the necessary attention, and the university does not provide sufficient institutional resources to facilitate internationalisation endeavours. The question that arises from this is whether internationalisation is prioritised at Wits in terms of institutional investment in it.

6.2.2.2 Is internationalisation prioritised at Wits?

The documents suggest that internationalisation is a strategic priority for Wits. It is considered "central to the University's understanding of itself and its mission" (Wits, 2010a, p. 3) and "remains a critical aspect of Wits' strategic imperatives" (Wits, 2010a, p. 7). However, internationalisation does not seem to be prioritised in terms of institutional investment in resources and capacity to support its implementation. While the *Internationalisation Policy* indicates that the University aims to facilitate the "efficient use of resources and facilities earmarked to internalise the Internationalisation Strategy" (ibid.), such resources and facilities seem rather limited. As the interviews reveal, the support provided is generally considered insufficient.

Firstly, "there's the big issue", which is that institutional "support for partnerships very rarely comes with financial support" (P9). Institutional funds are seldomly earmarked for internationalisation efforts, which means that those who want to pursue them are generally required to identify and pursue funding opportunities, often from external sources. In doing so, they have to invest time and effort in "actually putting the time together to bid and to prepare and to write up an application" (P4). Furthermore, the activities that can then be pursued are often susceptible to the agenda of the funding body, as "it is often really difficult to make sure

you meet all the requirements and are still able to do a valuable contribution to your work" (P4).

Secondly, apart from financial assistance, academics and researchers engaged in internationalisation activities such as partnerships need administrative support to facilitate the overall management of these partnerships at all stages, as "working through the partnerships, it takes quite a lot of work from the people" (P9). "If there are proposals to write and presentations to do, and phone calls to have, and face-to-face meetings to do, and follow-up to do" (P12), all this is generally left to the individuals.

Regarding the University's capacity to support internationalisation at the central level, the document analysis indicated that there are two central units, namely, the International Students Office (ISO) and the Strategic Partnerships Office (SPO), dealing with partnership matters as regards student mobility and research collaboration, respectively. The interviews show that, even though institutional support entities exist, their actual capacity to support internationalisation activities of academics and researchers is called into question. There are doubts about whether Wits has "the capacity at the central level to support all, all of this work that must be done" (P9). The discrepancy between the University's ambition to internationalise and its actual investment in internationalisation is criticised, as "the heart of our DNA should be this outward looking attitude. But we don't put resources behind it, which I think is crazy and hypocritical" (P12). It is suggested that, if Wits "wanted to run this thing properly and increase the international profile", one should, for example, "double the size of your, your legal and international divisions" (P15).

As stated in the documents, the interviews confirm that the University has an "International Office, which is now being incorporated, right, into the Research Office" (P9). However, "one would have imagined that it would've grown independently but has now been incorporated elsewhere" (P9). The integration of the office formerly known as ISPO into the University's Research has effectively led to the mandate of that office being narrowed to focus primarily on research partnerships. Every partnership the office supports has to have a link "with research, has to be linked with some type of collaborative project coming out, journal articles coming out, those type of things" (P7). The office's formal "role is not internationalisation" (P7), which is reflected in the office's name changing from ISPO to SPO. Nevertheless, it uses its "partnerships role to further internationalisation" (P7).

In an environment where each faculty, school and department essentially determines their own agenda for internationalisation, the partnerships office tries to "work closely with all of them to assist them to meet their goals" (P7). However, with a total staff complement of four, such institutional capacity to support internationalisation and partnerships is severely limited.

Currently, there is no single institutional structure with a dedicated mandate on comprehensive internationalisation at the institutional level, especially after the decision was made to close the ISPC of the University Senate. This decision was not taken because "we don't think internationalisation is important, but we're injecting it into the existing Senate sub-committees" (P6). This means that "the URC must do internationalisation, the University Research Committee, the Senate Graduate Studies, the Postgraduate must do internationalisation, the Teaching and Learning must do internationalisation" (P6). Rather than having internationalisation as a separate thrust, the idea is to "have it as part of the, I guess, the three missions of the university" (P6). The closure of the Senate ISPC confirms the decentralised model of internationalisation at Wits.

The internationalisation function at Wits is "highly decentralised", in fact "it's so decentralised at Wits it's down to the individual academic" (P2). When it comes to internationalisation, "there isn't an institutional angle", as "I don't even see faculties taking the space up" and "I don't see it happening at the moment at SET[50], certainly not in Senate" (P2). In light of this observation, the question arises whether internationalisation should be centralised. However, centralisation is an option that is not without ambiguities. On the one hand, it seems impossible to "centralise all of this" because "There're too many different kinds of international collaborations that happen, even within a particular discipline" (P9). Also, "we know from experience that in fact academics don't like that because then you have this sort of central surveillance over what is being done" (P9). On the other hand, "one could do with central support" (P9). In addition, a need for a central function with oversight and decision-making powers is identified to coordinate the University's internationalisation efforts to prevent Wits from "just entering into haphazard engagements with everyone as opposed to everything going through that office", which should determine "in consultation with management whether we should be engaging with these institutions at all" (P16).

[50] The acronym SET stands for Senior Executive Team, which includes the following portfolios: Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Vice-Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrar and Chief Financial Officer as well as Faculty Deans.

All of this highlights that internationalisation is, apart from in institutional rhetoric, not prioritised at Wits. There is a consistent, overall feeling among the participants that "Wits doesn't take it seriously, seriously enough" (P12). Even though institutional functions exist, they are "so under-resourced" (P12). The participants feel very strongly that their efforts are hampered by the lack of institutional support and investment in internationalisation. This lack of internal capacity is particularly noticeable because they operate in an environment that is already strained. For example, "if they want us to do this kind of research and have international partners and do this level of research, they cannot give us 600 undergrad students" (P4). Apart from teaching large numbers of students, it is noted that there are challenges with throughput due to the level of preparedness of the students, as "with all due respect these students are not from Harvard or Cambridge" (P4).

Under current circumstances, the University cannot take full advantage of the opportunities provided by internationalisation. Regarding the ability to bid for international grants, the University has recognised that many academics "just don't have that capacity to do all of that because they're teaching lots and, you know, all the other stuff" (P6). To assist, a decision has been made to "set aside budget to, to provide research management support, grant writing support, to, to realise or to really to compete competitively, uh, for those grants" (P6). It stands to reason that it will take many more such decisions to counter the current discrepancy between the University's strategic focus on internationalisation and its actual capacity to give assistance to internationalisation endeavours across the institution.

Related to this, it is interesting to note that the *Internationalisation Policy* critically raises the question whether traditional approaches to internationalisation "are sufficient to face new challenges and opportunities on the global stage" (Wits, 2010a, p. 3). Such questions open up the possibility for research in relevant areas. For example, in the interviews it emerged that "we could do something across the university that looked at the complex process of internationalisation", specifically engaging with issues such as agency. This would fall in line with the aim of having a self-reflective approach, as envisaged in the policy. In fact, the interviews revealed that all the participants had engaged in self-reflection on topics such as internationalisation, partnerships and North-South. While some seem to have done so on the occasion of the interviews, others had quite clearly done so previously as part of their work engagements and teaching and research interests. However, such thinking currently exists in isolated pockets and is not brought together intentionally and systematically. An exception on this is the Humanities Faculty, where such dialogue is facilitated at the faculty level through

the Internationalisation and Partnerships Committee, which resulted, among other things, in the development of the concept of SAGE, which centres Afro-global excellence in the context of curriculum internationalisation.

In summary, in this section I have addressed divergences between documents and interviews in terms of the nature of internationalisation at Wits as well as its prioritisation in the institutional context. The interviews clearly suggest that there is a mismatch between the University's ambition to internationalise and its capacity to support the implementation of internationalisation at the institution.

Overall, in this first phase of analysing and making sense of the data, I have discussed if and how the two main sets of data generated for this study relate to each other, indicating both convergences and divergences. This discussion had a strong focus on the broader context of internationalisation and partnerships at Wits, in which North-South partnerships are embedded.

Generally speaking, the documents, representing Wits' institutional voice, and the interviews, representing voices of Wits' people, speak to each other. Looking for a suitable metaphor to describe this conversation, I am reminded of attending choir practice when I was a child, and so I will compare it with a choir performing with instrumental accompaniment. In this 'picture', the instruments represent Wits' institutional voice as reflected in the documents, and the singers represent the voices of Wits' people as reflected in the interviews. There are many different individual voices that form part of the choir, each with its own distinct type and characteristics, divided into different types[51]. They all have their role to play, are more prominent at some moments and less prominent at others, and there are harmonies and disharmonies. In the end, they are all part of the same score and perform as an ensemble to create an intricate, nuanced, multifaceted piece of music. Likewise, the data gathered from documents and interviews together create a complex picture of North-South partnerships at Wits, embedded in the broader context of partnerships and internationalisation. However, what is missing from the picture is, using the choir metaphor again, a conductor. While it is perfectly possible for a choir to perform without a conductor, I believe that such a position adds considerable value, as a conductor's work increases the quality of the choir's performance by providing direction and a point of reference, guidance and support. I come back to this in my final reflections.

[51] This refers to voice types, which are generally differentiated by vocal characteristics such as range, tessitura and timbre into the following categories: soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, countertenor, tenor, baritone and bass (for more information: www.choirly.com) as well as instrument types such as wind instruments, string instruments and so on.

In conclusion, this first part of the data analysis focused on a general discussion of internationalisation, bringing the voices of the institution and the participants into dialogue. This discussion is important, as it serves as a backdrop for the second part of the analysis, in which I present answers to my research questions, focussing more specifically on issues relating to North-South partnerships at Wits.

6.3 PHASE TWO: Answering the Research Questions

In line with the second phase of making the data work, I provide answers to the research questions as they emerge from the empirical data of the study. The main question this study set out to answer is the following: **What does a selected case study reveal concerning how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education?** The aim was to focus on a Southern perspective on North-South higher education partnerships by presenting a South African case study, using Wits as the case. There was a particular interest in highlighting the human experiences and lived realities of people who are based at Wits and are involved in partnerships with people and institutions in the global North. Before I address the main research question, I respond to the four sub-questions, which were stated in Chapter One as follows:

- What role(s) do partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of Wits?
- How do institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices at Wits?
- What are the challenges of conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships at Wits?
- How does Wits respond to challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships?

I respond to each (sub-) question individually, drawing on the data from both the documents and the interviews. The voices of the research participants are foregrounded by using quotes from the interviews, bringing the multiple realities of North-South partnerships as experienced by the participants to the fore.

As noted earlier, the answers to the research questions presented here, as well as the research questions themselves, predominantly focus on partnerships, specifically those between Wits and its partners in the global North. They should be read against the backdrop of

internationalisation at Wits, which was discussed in detail during the first phase of data analysis.

6.3.1 What role/s do partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of Wits?

Partnerships play a key role in Wits' internationalisation efforts. As noted in the *Wits Vision 2022*, "partnerships with local and international collaborators, arising mostly from our research priorities and our contextual opportunities" (Wits, 2010c, p. 31) are a clearly identified strategic priority for the University. More specifically, partnerships are seen as a key mechanism to "position Wits as a gateway to research and intellectual achievement in Africa", to "provide extended opportunities for international mobility of staff and students" and to "support social engagement, knowledge generation and knowledge transfer to leverage resources nationally and internationally" (Wits, 2010c, p. 32). The main role of partnerships is to facilitate Wits' pursuit of international excellence, which is relevant to all core functions of the University.

Such understanding of partnerships, as an enabling force, is mirrored in the interviews, where it is pointed out that "learning, teaching, research de facto needs to be collaborative from different places in the world geopolitically, geoculturally", as drawing from different perspectives "just makes for much more robust engagement" (P8). Furthermore, as an internationally leading university, Wits cannot go about its business "without looking outside" (P3). The 'outside' is linked to the global environment in which Wits operates and the place it occupies in that space. In other words, "We can't be excellent at what we do and not understand where we fit in an international perspective" (P12). International partnerships play an important role in that regard because they facilitate collaboration as an integral part of the academic endeavour. International academics and researchers have to "develop actual relationships with people around the world" (P12).

For Wits, these relationships with people and institutions around the world are diverse in terms of the types and numbers of partners involved, ranging from individuals to organisations such as universities and companies as well as governments in bilateral or multilateral, consortia-style arrangements. In terms of approach, top-down partnerships are associated with institutional umbrellas resulting from "institutions signing MoUs or MoAs[52]" (P9). Such top-down partnerships are distinguished from bottom-up partnerships, which are linked to

[52] The acronyms MoU and MoA stand for Memorandum of Understanding and Memorandum of Agreement, respectively.

individuals and their interests and tend to grow organically because "they have to do with people who you meet at a conference, how you find a synergy to a research project", which "in many ways it's from the ground up" (P9).

Wits' institutional partnerships differ considerably in scope, where "Some of these are not university-wide, sometimes they are more faculty-wide or specifically school-wide" (P7). Regardless of their actual approach and set-up, partnerships typically aim to include elements such as "student exchange, staff exchange, research" (P9). Wits is "a research intensive university, so we prioritise the teaching – research axis" (P3), and a key concern around such partnerships is their role in facilitating the production of new knowledge. In other words, in the end, the main objective is "to say let's throw all of those things into the pot and see what new ideas we come up with, what new research" (P9).

International partnerships are an indication of where Wits fits in the world, and currently the institutional context for partnerships is "not only North-South, it's South-South as well" (P12). As an institution representing the global South, Wits has relationships with partners in the global North as well as the global South, which are motivated differently. This is further probed in the next section, which addresses how partnerships are informed by institutional goals. Regardless of who the partner is, partnerships are a complex phenomenon. In the context of North-South partnerships, for example, partnerships are generally understood as carrying the risk of contributing to brain drain from the South to the North. The interviews reveal that, on the one hand, an institution in the South might decide to "not do any collaborations now with the North, especially America, because the academics don't come back" (P8). On the other hand, partnerships can be used as a mechanism to counter the flight of students and staff because "if you're not connected to these global top, leading, leading institutions", the brightest students and staff will leave the institution because "You're stuck in an academic parochialism where your brightest minds don't want to be" (P11). In such a scenario, having partnerships with leading institutions around the globe is seen as a means to retain talent and to increase the attractiveness of local study, work and research opportunities.

In summary, in this section I have illustrated that partnerships have become an important strategy in Wits' internationalisation activities and are closely linked to the University's mission and its core functions. They are an enabling factor for Wits in terms of achieving key organisational goals, particularly regarding research. Furthermore, I have indicated that partnerships are complex and that, while they bring about many benefits for the University,

they also carry risks. For example, for an institution in the South, partnerships with the North can become a careful balancing act between creating international opportunities for staff and students and retaining them. Having noted that partnerships are an integral part of Wits' vision, the question of how institutional objectives permeate partnership policies and practices at the institution deserves closer attention, and I address it in the section that follows.

6.3.2 How do institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices at Wits?

Wits' institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices in numerous ways. As indicated in the University's vision statement, Wits aims to be a leading world-class research-intensive university, and this vision is built on principles of academic excellence, local relevance and international competitiveness. The key concepts included here, such as internationalisation, research, excellence and relevance, which all have local and global dimensions, are also considered in the interviews. The participants highlight their interconnected nature. For example, "We can't be excellent at what we do and not understand where we fit in an international perspective" (P12). Furthermore, "internationalisation is linked with your global excellence standard" (P11). While internationalisation connects the University to the global dimension and globally significant research creates global relevance, local relevance is, first and foremost, achieved through a commitment to transformation and development. It is emphasised in this regard that "transformation without excellence then won't work. And excellence without transformation will not work either" (P11). When transformation is linked to excellence, and excellence is linked to internationalisation, as noted here, it follows that internationalisation is linked to transformation.

Against this backdrop, Wits pursues relationships with partners in the global North and the global South, albeit for different reasons. As indicated in the documents, the institutional discourse regarding partnerships with the North is embedded in a general rhetoric of international competitiveness and reputation building, whereas partnerships with the South are discussed in the broader context of transformation and development, particularly in Africa. The interviews reflect this as well, in a more detailed and nuanced way. They also highlight that partnerships with the North fundamentally revolve around the rhetoric of need. For example, the participants note that partnerships with the North are pursued because "we'll need the North, I mean, they have the cutting edge technology, and they've got the cutting edge resources with them" (P11). In terms of the latter, funding is particularly important, and "We

have to get North-South partnerships" to "tap into, uh, what are essentially dominant Northern resources" (P13). Since "all the big African research grants are all funded by Europe and America. So, I mean, come on, we need to get those" (P4).

Partnerships are particularly sought in areas where research is expensive and are often based on international staff members from the North who "bring with them, uh, a set of contacts", which are "particularly important because the science itself requires a huge amount of, of investment in terms of instrumentation" (P15). It appears that this motivation for partnerships disappears in fields where big grants are not available, for example, "there's not much money also in partnerships in the social sciences", and so "we don't have big institutional arrangements, ah, with other, other institutions" (P13).

Apart from providing access to resources, partnerships with the North facilitate reputation-building, which is vital for Wits' international profile, as "the university has this big research thrust and vision and it sort of forges what I would call diplomatic relationships with different institutions in the North" (P8). Partnerships with the North are "all about strategy, it's all about visibility, it's all about profile", which is necessary "because it positions the university as an institution on a meta-level in a global playing field" (P8).

North-South partnerships are multifaceted and include partnerships where "our curriculum was designed with the help of Americans" (P1) and where assistance is offered regarding "supervision for our staff that might be eligible to do PhDs soon" (P14). There is also "joint research with some of my former colleagues in Sweden" (P1). Furthermore, partnerships with the North facilitate international accreditation of academic and professional degrees, for example, when Wits becomes the "first non-American university whose programme was accredited to write a particular exam in the United States" (P1) or the "first university in the continent to develop a programme that is ACCA[53]-aligned" (P14). Regarding indicators of internationally relevant and impactful research, if asked how "to enhance the university's publication record and publication impact, obviously I would have to say 'Go and collaborate with global North'" (P5).

While partnerships with the North are driven by Wits' ambition to be an internationally leading research university and, therefore, focus on the University's international reputation and competitiveness, partnerships with institutions in the global South are pursued for different

[53] The acronym ACCA stands for Association of Chartered Certified Accountants. For more information: https://www.accaglobal.com/africa/en.html.

reasons. They are usually embedded in discourses around development and transformation of Africa and other regions in the global South. In this regard, Wits has a contribution to make and wants to "assist some of the universities in the global South, especially in the more developing countries, to achieve some of their, you know, objectives" (P7). Thus, working with partners in the South is often considered "more a, a, a capacity building thing" (P7), based on the understanding that Wits lends its expertise to these institutions, particularly on the African continent. There are numerous examples where Wits is considered "the institution that has the know-how and the number one accreditation" and can therefore "help other parts of Africa, uhm, to be able to have the quality that we have" (P14).

In addition to making a significant contribution to development across the global South, which could perhaps be perceived as a moral obligation on behalf of Wits because of its stature and relative wealth, Wits is pursuing partnerships with the South to position itself for the future, based on the understanding that "the world is moving in such a way that the opportunities are going to be with the global South" (P7). In terms of its overall strategy, Wits is committed to increasing its efforts on working with partners in the global South.

As a member of ARUA and the BRICS University Network, the institutional agenda of working with Southern partners is given direction by indicating that such collaboration can be channelled mainly through these two existing vehicles. These broader institutional frameworks provide strategic guidance for everyone at Wits. They also function as a selection mechanism to narrow down choices that could otherwise be considered overwhelming, as "They have allowed us now to actually start fine-tuning and refining our partnerships initiatives" so that the institution does not "end up partnering with everyone" but is "very selective and careful and of, of who you work with in a very productive way" (P11). While working within established frameworks can inform partnership practices at the University, the implementation of a strategic agenda is not always as straightforward as it seems, which will be illustrated with the example of China, a member of BRICS.

There is an institutional interest in China, illustrated, for example, by the fact that "the VC's just returned from China", visiting "the C9, the top nine universities" (P6). After "he opened the door" for cooperation, the challenge is to identify colleagues and "encourage them to get involved" (P6). It is noted in this regard that views on China, as a partner country, differ significantly across the institution. On the one hand, there is a considerable scepticism, reflected in colleagues expressing their concerns regarding the ulterior motives of the Chinese

government and noting that "ultimately the universities in China are controlled by the government, and if you're gonna work with the universities, you're supporting the government" (P7). Furthermore, it is pointed out that "we do need to be careful, though, of the new potential colonisers, China" and that "these Confucius institutes, uhm, are not really focused on sharing, you know, knowledge and, and research. They are there to influence" (P6). On the other hand, it is observed that by 2050 the global system of higher education "is gonna be so swamped by the Chinese that they are gonna influence what happens in higher education all over the world" (P6).

It is argued that Wits needs to be aware of such global higher education trends and "talk to those people in China" or else it is "gonna be left behind" (P7). In light of such diverse views, it is clear that the degree to which an institution can direct internationalisation and partnership activities from the top is limited. "You can have someone from the top tell you 'Well, we need to establish a partnership with China'", but such a relationship flourishes only when "two academics, one in China and one in South Africa, have found a common intellectual project" (P3).

From all of this it appears that institutional goals provide general guidance and direction for partnerships at Wits. There are cases where what happens in departments, schools and centres is, generally speaking, aligned to broader institutional perspectives. For example, "we frame our part, international partnerships of various kinds" in such a way that they are "part of the University's imperative to internationalise" (P9). However, this alignment might be rather accidental in the sense that "whether or not the university, uh, you know, encourage what is called internationalisation", "we desire to create those connections" (P9). It is reported that it was previously found that "collaborations, especially North-South collaborations, even if the university, uhm, set an agenda they would happen in spite of the university, not because of the university" (P8). Even where there is, in principle, agreement that internationalisation and partnerships should be pursued, the specific modalities and focus areas of efforts to further those aims vary widely across faculties. For example, some are actively seeking links with Africa, while "other faculties are not really worrying about Africa but they want to be more involved in Europe, some want to be more involved in Asia" (P7). This illustrates that in a highly decentralised system, multiple partnerships agendas can be at work at the same time, and they do not necessarily coincide. This creates an environment in which Wits' key principles of diversity and academic freedom can thrive. However, it is also an environment where a

concern arises regarding the institution's ability to maintain strategic oversight and its capacity to steer the 'partnerships ship' in one direction and to keep it afloat.

While partnerships policies and practices at Wits are influenced by institutional goals, they are also subject to national priorities and developments. It is noted, for example, that the DHET is "a key player in partnerships" and should assume a leadership role in that regard. However, "they sort of have an ambivalent role to partnerships. They're involved when they're involved, and they're not involved when they're not involved" (P3). Yet, the internationalisation and partnerships ambitions of South African universities "will need resources" (P3).

However, while the national framework on internationalisation, published as a draft national internationalisation policy by the DHET in 2017, encourages institutions in the country to pursue internationalisation and sets the direction as to whose interests these endeavours should serve, it does not make provision for financial support from government. The question of how Wits aligns with national objectives is further explored in the final part of this chapter, as part of the discussion of how the data of this study relates to the literature review. It is worth noting at this point, however, that the DHET policy puts South Africa firmly at the centre of attention and indicates that South Africa's needs and interest should be assigned priority status. This is in line with the overall national agenda of transforming the higher education sector. Wits' commitment to national development and transformation is clearly highlighted in its documents, and it is also reflected in the interviews.

In the context of partnerships, it is noted that local partnerships increasingly gain prominence and importance. Referring to Wits' Inside-out Partnerships policy, it is emphasised that the innermost circle represents the public South African higher education sector, which means that Wits want to "work with all the South African universities to try and strengthen the higher education system in the country" (P7). Furthermore, the university has established strategic partnerships locally and has "signed an agreement with Limpopo and Venda" (P7), which are previously disadvantaged institutions, making them Wits' preferred local partners. To strengthen capacity at the University of Limpopo and the University of Venda, for example, Wits includes them "whenever we now apply for funding from the European Union, from anybody, we always got them as one of the partners" (P7).

Furthermore, the University gives "their staff preference to come and do PhDs at Wits", and the institutions are also "entering into what we call three plus ones and three plus two agreements" (P7). The interviews reveal that there are other reasons why Wits needs "to reach

out internally, in other words, the sector in South Africa", which include that institutions are "competing for the same students, we're competing for the same resources" (P3). To address this, local partnerships "might be partnerships around teaching common courses or teaching, sharing out specialisations" (P3). Local partnerships with institutions in South Africa can gain an international dimension when institutions from other regions get involved. For example, in the capacity building context, triangular relations such as North-South-South partnerships, have become a partnership model favoured by a number of funders such as "the European Union in particular but also the United States" (P9).

To sum up this section, I have shown that the data from documents and interviews confirm that there is a link between Wits' institutional objectives and its partnership policies and practices, highlighting the interwoven nature of internationalisation, research and transformation at the institution. In this context, the University pursues partnerships with institutions in the global North as well as the global South, which are motivated differently, and the University's strategic focus on Africa is particularly noticeable. Apart from institutional goals, partnerships policies and practices at Wits also serve national imperatives to strengthen the higher education sector in the country. Consequently, partnerships with other South African institutions are increasingly receiving attention.

The interviews suggest that Wits' institutional objectives provide some direction regarding how partnerships are conceptualised and managed at the institution. However, as partnerships are embedded within the broader internationalisation context at the University, a concern arises about whether Wits has the necessary systems in place to guide and support the implementation of partnerships related activities. In a highly decentralised system, it is not clear how deliberate the translation of institutional goals into individual partnerships policies and practices is. The Inside-out Partnerships Policy, for example, does not seem to have been formally and systematically shared within the institution, which raises questions around how internalised and sustainable such a model really is.

While Wits has strategic intent on partnerships, there does not seem to be a deliberate and integrated institutional effort when it comes to their implementation. Rather, the University adopts a laissez-faire approach regarding the implementation of partnerships. Thus, there is an impression that partnerships happen despite the University, not because of it. For those involved in partnerships, such an approach constitutes a challenge, which is, together with other

challenges of conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships, explored more deeply in the next section.

6.3.3 What are the challenges of conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships at Wits?

North-South partnerships are embedded in the broader institutional context and, as such, are exposed to challenges at different levels. At the institutional level, for example, North-South partnerships are, as much as other partnerships, affected by a general lack of resources. This has to be seen against a national context that is characterised by challenges regarding financing of higher education, as highlighted in institutional documents.

The interviews confirm that "the South African tertiary education sector is under extreme stress" (P9). In an under resourced higher education sector, funding for internationalisation activities of universities is scarce, and "there are very limited pots of funding for this kind of, for the partnerships that we are talking about" (P9) from national sources, and "our universities don't have pots of money" (P9). Underinvestment at national and institutional levels is a concern because "if we are not careful, we keep on underinvesting" the consequence is that "our universities will be just peripheral to the production of global knowledge and will be insignificant, and no-one will take us seriously" (P11).

Apart from financial constraints, North-South partnerships are embedded in an institutional context in which internationalisation is not internalised and institutionalised. It is, therefore, possible to find instances where "you have individuals who have a lot of linkages, like networks", whereas "as a department we are not, we don't have actually a strategy on internationalisation or partnerships" (P13). There is no broad base of commitment to internationalisation across the institution, which means that "some of these exchanges and partnerships are at risk of remaining at the level of individual champions" (P1). With few people championing internationalisation and partnerships, it is pointed out that "Wits could benefit a whole lot more if many more Wits academics were open to partnerships" (P12). While there are individuals who are invested in international partnerships, they lack institutional support regarding the implementation of these partnerships. Lack of capacity at central level is worsened by under resourced departments. For example, "right now this department has no administrator, and we are going to be hosting four international scholars immediately from Sweden for this new grant" (P8). Without administrative support, "suddenly academic staff are

now booking, our jobs are like we book tickets, and we're worrying about accommodation" (P8), which comes at the cost of them not being able to duly attend to the academic component of the programme.

Against this backdrop of generally challenging circumstances, there are a number of challenges that are explicitly linked to partnerships between the global North and the global South. As highlighted in interviews, challenges in North-South partnerships are characterised by power imbalances between the partners, which feature prominently in the experiences of Southern partners. In fact, when asked about their experiences with North-South partnerships in general, the participants usually responded by pointing out how difficult these partnerships are and by describing the many challenges they have encountered. Challenges, therefore, were at the forefront of the participants' minds when they reflected on their relationships with Northern counterparts.

6.3.3.1 They "have the money, they have the endowment funds, they have everything".

Generally speaking, the main characteristic of North-South partnerships is that "they reflect the global inequalities" (P11), with the world divided into a rich global North and a poor global South. Resource inequalities are closely connected to an imbalance of power, which "never ever goes away. And you have to always be alive to it. We're alive to it every step of the way" (P3). The challenges that the institution is alive to are numerous. They have to do with a variety of different issues such as attitudes and resources as well as the production and dissemination of knowledge. As far as attitudes are concerned, Northern partners can be found to be "hard and unforgiving" (P16), particularly when contract negotiations are being dominated by a power play between the North having a "take-it-or-leave-it approach" and the South wanting "to sort of get a foot in the door" (P16). Northern partners are also perceived to be arrogant, reflecting an "imperialist kind of relationship of the imperial ruler…and the colonial ruled" (P12). Linked to that is an approach of "what can we do for you, not what can you do for us", which leads to "developmental partnerships" (P11), in which the North 'develops' the South.

The interviews reveal that when Northern institutions approach their counterparts in the South for partnerships, "they do not want an intellectual input from our side" (P17). Instead, Southern scholars are contacted by people they often do not even know "to see if I would, would want to collaborate with them because there was some grant and they needed an African partner" (P2). Another reason why Northern institutions look towards the South is to find a location for

their own offerings, which is particularly the case with faculty-led programmes, "where people come for their study abroad programme and we give them good food and show them some jazz and take them around" (P17). In most of these cases, intellectual engagement with the South is not envisaged.

Focussing on resources and resourcing reveals the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in a pronounced way. Simply put, the Northern institutions "have the money, they have the endowment funds, they have everything" (P7). In terms of research infrastructure, the divide is convincingly illustrated when a Wits researcher who works in "the old broom closet" collaborates with a partner at a Belgian university who has "a corridor of state-of-the-art laboratories" (P4).

In the context of student and staff mobility, Southern institutions find it difficult to take up existing opportunities "because most of the time staff have to raise their own funds for such mobility, and funding for students is not easily available" (P3). Regarding student exchanges, "Southern students could not afford to come to the North", even when partner institutions go "as far as offering South African students free housing, just to lower their costs" (P1). In the end, resource inequality often translates into mobility inequality, with the majority of students and staff moving from the North to the South, and not the other way around.

In light of resource scarcity, institutions in the South look to the North for funding. In such an environment, additional challenges are created regarding the question of who provides the necessary funds and under what conditions. Grants from truly philanthropic organisations which are "absolutely superb in terms of granting you the money for a project and not interfering" (P17) are scarce. On the contrary, there are many cases where "governments determine the agenda" (P17), with both governments and agendas being subject to change. Similarly, donor organisations tend to insert their own agendas into the programmes they fund.

In the context of development assistance, there are instances where it can be stated that "there's a billion dollars of aid coming to Africa, and it turns out that 950 million is actually being spent on American companies in America" (P15). Apart from political agendas and smokescreens, funding also often comes with a considerable administrative burden. Arduous bureaucratic requirements characterise different stages of projects, from the proposal writing for EU grants which "take months and months to put together" (P4) to "The other problem is the European Union uhm reporting structure is onerous" (P8).

There are at least two things that are problematic about the high administrative burden attached to certain funding mechanisms: First, it absorbs a lot of time and capacity in an environment that is often under-resourced and over-stretched due to high teaching loads, big classes and little administrative support. Second, it seems to be in direct opposition to the essence of research, which needs space for experimentation and contingencies, "room for the element of surprise, the possibility of expectation, the, the space for the unexpected" (P8). Under these circumstances, Southern scholars are anxious "about the consequences of resources being monopolised by Northern institutions, and the unequal politics that derive from, uh, that, uh, unequal, uh, control over resources" (P9).

While resources are a key enabling factor, universities are, first and foremost, concerned with the intellectual project, which is essentially about the production and dissemination of knowledge. Imbalances are reflected in the "the conventional gaze from the North to the South" (P9) with regard to knowledge production. In other words, there is a "convention of Northern theory and Southern, uh, field studies, right, uhm, where Northern theory is used and we do the field work using Northern theory" (P9). As the interviews show, such convention is particularly prominent in research, where there are examples of the South being relegated to a site of data collection, while the North is where knowledge is produced and published. This is a phenomenon aptly described as "'hit and run' type of science", with "people coming and grabbing some rock samples and taking them away and then publishing on it" (P15). In some cases, the publications are in prestigious journals "like *Nature*, and, you know, like big papers like that, and they didn't even acknowledge that they had done the work at Wits University" (P4).

As far as the dissemination of research is concerned, publications in internationally renowned academic journals are an important measure of success, which is strongly highlighted in both documents and interviews. Publications are highly imbalanced, not only in terms of the number of research outlets but also in terms of their value and reach, which all favour the North. This means that scholars in the South "better be careful where you publish" because "people measure you in terms of where you've put your work", so "you have to be very strategic which outlets you chose" (P1). This means that wherever possible, international journals are the preferred outlets even if good local journals exist, and this is particularly true for anyone who wants to play on the world stage.

As these examples show, knowledge asymmetries and resource inequalities are closely linked to and interwoven with each other, as "global knowledge which translates into wealth and equality because wealth and power are the same and knowledge are linked together in a merit-based economy" (P11). In this setting, the South is generally disadvantaged. A disadvantage in wealth and power and knowledge can easily manifest itself as a partnerships disadvantage for Southern institutions and put them on a back footing in their engagements with the North "because we seem to want it more than they do" (P16). Such disadvantages find expression in the accounts shared by participants, specifically the human experience of dealing with challenges in North-South partnerships.

As the interviews reveal abundantly, being subject to inequalities such as the ones described here is an emotionally difficult experience for the Southern partners. Overall, there is a sentiment that North-South partnerships are fundamentally unjust. Referring to the negotiations of legal agreements as an example, it is noted that "we should have as much right to have our, the agreement be fair to us as it is to them" (P16). Apart from the feeling of being treated unfairly, the emotions expressed by the participants include frustration, anger, anxiety and mistrust. They bemoan attitudes and behaviours that are considered annoying and antagonising. In this context, the question that arises is: why do Southern partners continue to engage in North-South partnerships? The answer to this question was, at least partly, provided in the previous section where the rationale for North-South partnerships was discussed, specifically regarding the University's need to access resources and to build an international reputation.

There is a certain confidence that Wits is able to navigate the challenges, as "there're lots of pitfalls, but, but I think if you're clever, and you're astute, you can have beneficial partnerships" (P5). However, the interviews reveal that there is another motivating factor, which is perhaps best described as a yearning for justice and for greater equality. This becomes a powerful motivator and translates into concrete attempts on behalf of the South to change the paradigm of North-South partnerships towards greater equality between the partners. It is based on the strong belief that Wits is bringing something to the table.

6.3.3.2 "…actually we're bringing something to the table"

When partnerships with Northern institutions are set up, it is important for Wits to not "give the impression that, uhm, we're in a lesser space in South Africa" but "that actually we're bringing something to the table" (P2). Regarding research, some of the most important areas

in which Wits can shape the global agenda because of its unique history and location include, for example, disciplines such as palaeontology, archaeology and geosciences but also deep level mining, health sciences and social sciences.

Wits offers an opportunity to address global challenges, where South Africa deals with "local issues that have got a huge global impact" (P11). For example, "they come here and learn about certain global debates like migration, human displacement, inequality and so on" (P3). In other instances, it is not the actual subject matter as such that sets Wits and South Africa apart, but the sheer size and scale of projects tackled creates special expertise. Hence, the response to a presentation on mass electrification in South Africa was "literally like a collective jaw-drop" and "there was like this …silence, people couldn't even get their heads around it" (P12). This is a clear example where the South has something to offer to the North "in terms of how to extend the reach of your research or the reach of your companies" (P12).

Another example mentioned is a project in the area of sustainable bioeconomies which "explores the prospects for biosciences and how its innovation has the potential to help countries in the North. Ha! Not the other way around!" (P4). Related to this, is the observation that Northern colleagues are generally "very fixed" and "very stubborn" and "so dogmatic" (P4), whereas their Southern counterparts are more open and flexible and "think out the box a lot more" (P4). The latter are important qualities in fostering innovation. Generally speaking, Wits starts from the assumption that "we have a lot more to give" and the Northern partners "have quite a lot to receive" (P12). The University is confident that is has to "have a seat at the table, not because people owe us anything but because we want to be there, and we have to be there" (P11).

6.3.3.3 "…maybe South Africa is part of this global South but is Wits part of the global South?"

Before concluding this discussion on challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships, it is important to note that there is an additional challenge in this regard, one that has to do with the very concepts of the global North and the global South, specifically as they relate to the University itself. At Wits, there have been "debates about what do we mean by the South, is it a geographical term, is it an economical term, is it a political term?" (P7) It is noted that there is also a certain ideological dimension to the North-South concept "because countries like China now are actually not really technically part of the South, uh, even though

ideologically they are" (P13). Geographically, "Australia is as much in the South as South Africa is" (P17). However, "the idea of the South is to think about, uh, a kind of a succession of categories that relates to the colonised parts of the world" (P17). There is no doubt that South Africa is part of the colonised world. At the same time, it is recognised that Wits occupies a peculiar position in the North-South space, prompting questions such as "maybe South Africa is part of this global South but is Wits part of the global South?" (P7).

When the notions of North and South are mainly associated with power and resources or lack thereof, a university like Wits can assume the role of both the Southern and Northern partner. For example, in a partnership with elite US universities such as Duke University or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which were alluded to in the interviews, Wits will be considered the Southern partner. However, regarding partnerships with other African institutions the perspective shifts.

In terms of establishing and strengthening links with other institutions in the South, Wits is compared to Northern institutions hoping to do the same. For example, people in the North reportedly observe that Wits is "actually from the North because you didn't have all these relationships with the South all along", and so Wits is seen as "trying to do what the Northern universities are doing" (P7). Likewise, "colleagues elsewhere on the continent see us in the same way they see Northern institutions" (P9). This can lead to "a little bit of resentment, you know, it's like we South Africans think we know everything, and we come in there, a bit like the Americans" (P4).

In the African context, Wits can be reckoned with as part of the North and is "important because we come with the resources" (P9). Therefore, "there's a danger of replicating the inequality between North and South in relation to creating partnerships between Wits University and universities elsewhere on the continent" (P9). Interestingly, similar dynamics can even come to bear within South Africa regarding Wits' local partnerships with previously disadvantaged institutions which have "got the same attitude", with people asking "Who are you, from Wits University, right? You want to colonise Limpopo Province[54]" (P9).

Furthermore, the complexities around the notions of North and South can also be noticed in triangular relations such as North-South-South partnerships, which have become a partnership model favoured by a number of funders. While such collaboration frameworks have the

[54] The Limpopo Province is one of nine South African provinces. As mentioned earlier, Wits has a strategic partnership with the University of Limpopo.

potential to encourage South-South collaboration, they also carry the danger of mirroring existing North-South dependencies in South-South contexts. Such a triangular relationship, which typically involves "Wits University or UCT and someone else", is attractive for Wits "because one is seen almost as potentially an equal partner with a Northern university" (P9). However, "the third partner, uh, which is somewhere else in the South, typically elsewhere on the African continent" tends to come in "quite frankly, as a secondary partner", which "has been brought on in order to gesture positively the idea of South-South relations" (P9). As has been illustrated, one "cannot for one minute take for granted" that in South-South relations "issues of power and power imbalance and inequality don't come into play" (P3). They do "come into play because even in a South-South relationship there are certain universities that are more, better resourced than others" (P3). What this means is that Wits has to "take care in criticising the North-South connection, right, and then be complicit in reproducing precisely what we're critiquing" (P9) in partnerships with institutions on the African continent. For example, when negotiating agreements with African institutions, the impression can easily be created that Wits feels that they are "in the position of power" and the partner "should be grateful to us for sending our academics and our students" (P16). It is, therefore, "a bit ironic that we get a bit upset when we're treated like that, but we do sort of the same thing, on a lesser scale, but we do" (P16).

When Wits assumes the role of the Northern partner, it is important, "to coin a phrase that the students have used in #FeesMustFall, we've got to watch, we gotta check our own privilege" (P9). The process of checking its privilege entails, for example, recognising that Wits is better resourced than many other institutions in Africa, as "you go elsewhere on the continent and you think 'Phew, you know, what are we complaining about?'" (P9). In the national context, Wits and other universities in South Africa, have a fairly robust educational infrastructure. For example, "they attract students from the rest of Africa, you know, because the libraries are good" (P13).

Furthermore, South African universities operate in a landscape where funding opportunities are available, which is an "interesting thing about South Africa being, wearing a Northern hat is that it actually has more resources", with the National Research Foundation (NRF) as "a critical institution here that most African countries don't have" (P13). This means that South African institutions "can get a pot of money where you can bring in scholars" or where they "can leverage the NRF for partnerships, particularly in Africa, which gives South Africa a lot of actually clout" (P13).

Apart from access to such resources, Wits is a university that does not experience too many "academics from the global North coming here to shape our debates. I notice academics coming from the global North to learn about certain things" (P3), while there are other institutions in the country that still "are heavily dependent on academics who come from the global North, who come and sort of preach here" (P3).

Wits and South are also different from other institutions and countries on the continent "maybe because they haven't been the economic player that we have been, maybe they just don't have the trade relations, that sort of thing" (P16). In addition, "they haven't maybe had these imminent academics come from their ranks" to build an international reputation as well as "a bit of a longer history" (P16), as Wits will soon be celebrating its centenary. Wits' privileged position also means that the University is less exposed to brain drain "in as much as, you know, you lose people to the North, uh, a lot of talented Africans come here, right?" (P11). Negative effects of brain drain are mitigated by brain gain, and the people who come to Wits are not only from other countries on the continent. There are those that return from the African diaspora, where "almost all of us on the corridor here were either educated in Europe, the United States or Asia" and are at Wits because of "the strong desire to come back" (P1). And "some academics who are from the North choose to stay here" and "create a kind of research relevance to stay" (P8).

Regarding "scholars from the global North wanting to come here", this might have "something to do with Wits but also something to do with the country and where we are and the opportunities that people see" as well as because they "can't find jobs in the global North, so there's a slump in the market there" (P3). Wits' cosmopolitan nature puts the institution in an advantageous position because of "a good number of international students, good number of international staff" and "almost everyone, even young people coming in, come with a connection of sorts, wherever that connection is. And those connections are pursued" (P3).

Another distinct advantage is linked to the University's location in the cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg, "a hub for people coming from throughout the world" (P3). Wits' privilege partly stems from the fact that the institution is generally not seen "as an opportunity to exploit" but rather "as an opportunity to collaborate" (P6). This position of advantage is linked to the University's international standing, particularly in areas in which Wits has developed expertise, which is often connected to the country's geography. For example, "it's important to note that, that we have something that is of use in terms of global geosciences. We, we have a particularly

rich heritage in South Africa", which "means that maybe people are more inclined towards an approach umm in, in, you know, looking at partnerships with us" (P15). In the context of North-South partnerships, Northern institutions are also interested in working with Wits, as "some of them are beginning to use us as a conduit into the South" (P7). In this way, Wits uses its existing connections in Africa to leverage partnerships with other regions in the world.

Wits' privileged position does not mean that inequalities in partnerships with other institutions do not occur or matter at the institution. They do, as "You can't take for granted because we're Wits it won't happen to us. It can happen at any time and all of the time" (P3). However, privilege breeds confidence, and "Wits does a certain amount of talking back" (P5). For example, people who have experienced incidents where their data was pillaged have resolved to "never let this happen again" (P4). Such confidence, which has often grown from and with very painful experiences, and assertiveness is important in the context of North-South partnerships, as lack thereof is considered "dangerous because it's just almost inviting somebody to come in and, and, and re-establish a, a new colonial order" (P6).

Summarising this section, I think it can be stated unequivocally that challenges are an integral part of the lived realities of Southern partners in North-South partnerships. While some of these challenges can be attributed to factors in the institutional and national contexts, particularly regarding scarce resources and limited capacity, others are intrinsically linked to North-South partnerships themselves. These challenges are multifaceted and nuanced and cover several different areas including the attitudes and behaviours people bring into these partnerships. Inequality, as a main indicator of the lopsided nature of North-South partnerships, is most notable regarding resources and knowledge production, which are intrinsically linked to power imbalances, with the North generally being the dominant partner in relation to all of these. It is noteworthy that the notions of the global North and global South are very complex and that, from a resource perspective, Wits assumes the position of either one of the two, depending on who the partner institution is. In the role of a Southern partner, Wits is, as noted in the interviews, confident that it not only deserves a seat at the table but actually brings something to it. Such confidence is linked to a sense of self-agency and a willingness to bring about change, which is reflected in the way the institution responds to the challenges it faces in North South partnerships. I discuss these responses more deeply in the following section.

6.3.4 How does Wits respond to challenges in conceptualising and managing North-South partnerships?

As mentioned in the previous section, North-South partnerships at Wits are facing numerous challenges, including limited institutional capacity to support their implementation. It is acknowledged that "there's also an awareness at the higher levels of the problems that, that exist" (P9). This awareness is evidenced by the University's recent introduction of two measures to earmark funds for international activities and for grant-writing support. However, these measures do not sufficiently alleviate the burden currently felt by those involved in partnerships. They feel that "unless there's a crisis, then the issues are not really dealt with" (P9), and so "what tends to happen is that, you know, people complain, and we're writing our reports of the burdens", but ultimately, they "just get on with doing it anyway" (P9).

There are numerous ways through which Wits staff reacted to the challenges that are directly linked to North-South partnerships. In some cases, the only reasonable response was to withdraw from the proposed arrangement, especially when the terms and conditions in legal agreements disadvantage Wits students and staff. Hence, there are "instances where we've had to walk away from partnerships" (P16).

In addition, some opportunities are missed when staff do not apply for funding. As noted, there are colleagues who "would never apply for another EU grant" (P4). Such decisions are often based on previous experience and on the realisation that the 'strings attached' to such funds outweigh the benefits of receiving them in the first place. Similarly, where funding mechanisms provide "no band width for contingency" (P8) and therefore stifle research endeavours, Southern scholars are increasingly prepared to walk away from such opportunities, even if they have a "very prestigious grant. It's an extremely, uhm, it's generous also" (P8).

Apart from such examples of withdrawal or avoidance, for the most part, the Wits staff members that were interviewed are willing to tackle the challenges they experience 'head-on', within the partnerships themselves. The main motivation for this seems to be their confidence that the University is not "in a lesser space" (P2) but has, in fact, "a lot more to give" (P12).

The imperative for change is linked to a sense of agency, as "Perceptions won't change if we keep rolling over" (P16). Assuming agency involves "to stand up in terms of the quality of what we do, the ambition of what we do, the reach of what we do" (P12). Depending on the specific circumstances, there are numerous ways in which challenges can be addressed within the partnerships. For example, when Northern partners display attitudes of arrogance and

superiority, a humble approach of persuasion might be applied because "if people see and understand what we're doing then they understand that there is space for partnership and not for this lopsided relationship" (P12).

There are numerous efforts to ensure that partnerships do not only work to the advantage of Northern partners but benefit all parties involved. One example is to seek co-funding from (South) African sources, as such funding arrangements lead to "less of an unequal relationship" (P9), even in cases where the levels of investment from both sides are different, with the majority of funds being provided by the Northern partner.

In the context of student exchanges, terms are negotiated that address mobility inequality. Agreements where "we offered three to one with 75 per cent scholarship" (P10) are not solely based on the reciprocity of numbers but take funding constraints of Southern students into account. As far as activities such as joint summer or winter schools are concerned, it is important to aim for equality to ensure that the responsibilities related to administration and teaching are shared equally among the partners, so that the "concept of it was a 50/50 thing." (P5).

Similarly, regarding research collaborations, activities leading to a joint book publication can be spread as equally as possible among the partners, with joint editors, "the same number of chapters, we met at Duke, we met here" and the final result being "a joint US-South Africa publication' (P9).

Notwithstanding the importance of such arrangements, achieving greater equality in partnerships is not only about the numbers. In a university environment, it is about contributions to the academic project. An institution like Wits does not aspire to be "treated like vast bed and breakfasts", where no "intellectual input from our side" (P17) is required. On the contrary, Wits has a firm stance on its role as a producer of knowledge. It is considered key to "produce knowledge in the South, uh, on our own terms, about ourselves" (P9). This includes knowledge for the development of the continent and for finding African solutions to African challenges, as "Africa mustn't rely on, on the global North to solve its problems. We must do it ourselves" (P6).

However, knowledge production is not confined to producing knowledge in the South about the South. It also means that the South engages with the North in different ways. For example, the dominance of Northern knowledge is being looked at critically, recognising that one "has to challenge, uh, the deployment of Northern theory as the only way of doing things" (P9).

More than simply challenging Northern dominance, the South sets out to produce knowledge about the North. When Southern scholars "go and do research there" (P9), "it's to return the gaze" (P9). Returning the gaze involves a shifting of perspectives, counteracting "the conventional gaze from the North to the South" (P9). The intention to do research in the North and about the North is also reflected in university initiatives such as the establishment of ACSUS, the Centre that aims to generate new knowledge of the US in Africa, offsetting the dominant trend of Africans receiving knowledge rather than producing it.

Figure 5 below presents a summary of the responses presented in this section, with the challenges stated in the boxes on the left and the responses to these challenges, as shared by the research participants in the interviews, listed in the boxes shaped as arrows. These arrows all point towards the aim of achieving greater equality and balance in North-South partnerships, which appears to be the overall objective of the participants. While it may be accepted that "most of the time a North-South partnership inevitably turns out to be an inequitable partnership" (P7), "the key thing for me is what you do with that relationship to make it become equitable in the end" (P7).

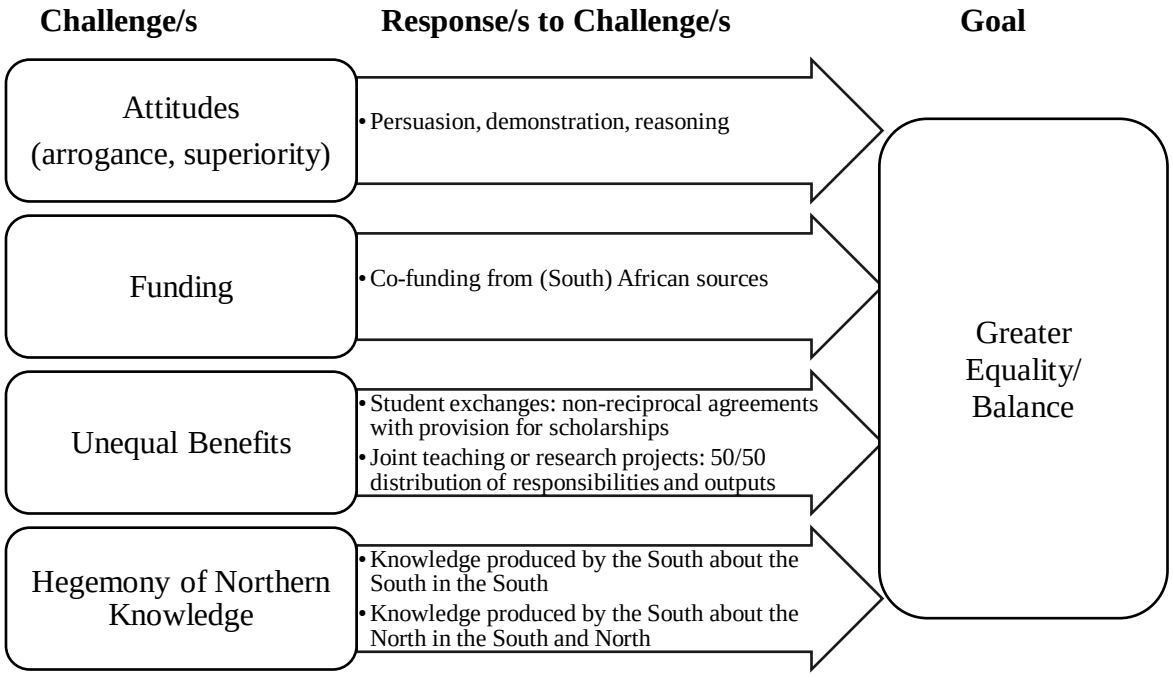


Figure 5: Individual responses to challenges experienced in North-South partnerships.[55]

[55] Figure 5 is based on the information provided in the interviews.

As expressed in the interviews, Southern partners strive toward greater equality in North-South partnerships, which is sometimes also referred to as equity, as the general dominance of the North leads to lopsided relationships, where power and control as well as benefits generally favour the North. It is important to note in this regard that equality is not understood here in the 'an eye for an eye' sense. Rather, equality is associated with what I would refer to as 'mutuality'. In the partnerships context, this means, that both partners contribute to, take responsibility for and benefit from the partnership in question.

It is acknowledged that in North-South partnerships the South generally cannot match the resources and infrastructures of the North. However, "we can actually match the intellectual rigour" (P8) and bring criticality to the academic project. This includes, for example, "the way in which some of our experiences challenge the methodologies" (P8) the North is using. Furthermore, a Wits colleague would remind their Northern counterpart that "We can actually counter certain kinds of epistemic positions that you present because of our social, cultural, socio-historical experiences because of our histories" (P8). Through the responses as illustrated here, Southern partners aim to alleviate Northern dominance and control in North-South partnerships. Which type of response is employed depends on the individual circumstances of the partnership in question as well as on the mindset of the people involved.

Apart from individual responses to challenges inherent in North-South partnerships, there are considerations at the institutional level, which are also relevant in this regard, as they provide in indication of the overall direction the institution would like to take., The interviews reveal that Wits is now selective in its choice of partnership institution in the North. The University has adopted "a sort of matrix to try and help us to decide that, and that matrix would be, first of all, based on university rankings" (P6). To be considered, potential partner institutions from the North "have to be in the top 500 in at least three of the four" (P7) global ranking schemes. The rationale for this is that "we want to advance our research", and the best way to achieve that is "to talk to people who are already above us in the rankings or close to us in the rankings" (P7).

In addition to being selective in deciding who to partner with, the institution is concerned about the nature of the relationship with its Northern partners and the question of whose needs and interests will be served. These issues will be brought up right at the start of discussions, so the "the first question we normally ask nowadays is can you bring funding with that would benefit Wits staff and students" (P7). Another example of changing the relationship between the

partners is to include Northern institutions "but they're not there as the dominant players, they are, they're as a contributor, uhm, to essentially an African-focused research programme" (P6).

As all of these examples of responses to challenges show, changing the paradigm within North-South partnerships is possible. This paradigm shift, which has occurred over the last "ten to fifteen years", is linked to a critique of "the perception that the North is a provider of a roadmap for the South to follow" (P8). Furthermore, there are "some important shifts and moves that happen in academia where then you have people saying 'Hold on, this is not actually working for us'" (P8). There is a belief that the South, as an equal partner, would be a more attractive partner for the North because it would no longer "do in a more impoverished fashion something that's done elsewhere", with impoverishment not meaning "due to intellectual attainment, it's due to circumstances, funding, a whole host of things like that" (P17). Related to this, Northern "institutions have become very receptive to recognising that there is a really important way to be open to facilitating a more equitous relationship", as it allows for "new kinds of knowledge and opportunities" through "a mutual kind of respect and sharing in which the research question then is mutually constructed, not constructed from one end or the other" (P8).

It is important to note that the way Wits responds to challenges experienced in North-South partnerships actually transcends these partnerships in the sense that broader issues of North-South relations are critically examined, particularly in the context of the framework of Southern theory, which is closely linked to decolonisation and Africanisation. In this regard, partnerships are seen in the broader context of a historical connection between the global North and the global South, specifically their shared colonial history, resulting in the fact that the "dominant partnerships are North-South, for a very understandable reason, uh, for colonial reasons if you could put it that way" (P13). They form part of "quite a lot of debate around the notion of decolonisation and a growing interest of the last few years on something called Southern theory" (P9).

Southern theorists are concerned with unmasking the underlying power dynamics that shape North-South relations in general and point out that it is important "to understand the fundamental fact of power which has pervaded the world over the last 400 years" and "makes us believe that it's only knowledge produced in the last 400 years that's fruitful" (P17). The dominance of Northern knowledge is acknowledged, as is the need to address the suppression or marginalisation of Southern knowledges that goes hand in hand with it. For example, while we might "slip into a Western paradigm of knowledge very easily", given our institutional

histories and personal upbringings, we "also recognise the value of other knowledge paradigms, and, and understand that they are of equal value" (P6).

At Wits, there is emphasis on rigour and the "need to invest, encourage and support other knowledge paradigms" (P6). Furthermore, it is important for "the former colonised parts of the world who have suffered from this amnesia and ignorance of their own intellectual tradition" to "move out of that deference from the idea of the North" (P17). The process of moving out of 'colonial amnesia' and 'deference to the North' is complex. It involves, for example, recognising that "the manuscripts of Timbuktu, these precede any forms of, uh, European knowledge" and that "the first fundamental statements of equality is indeed not the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the French Revolution but the Mandinka oath" (P17) dating back to the 11th century. In other words, there is a "historical notion that the North is sort of the centre of knowledge", while "the South becomes the space in which the North implements ideas" (P8).

Within the framework of Southern theory, there is "an attempt to move outside of this paradigm, of this binary of European theory and, uh, African region or Caribbean experience" (P17) and away from a paradigm in which "the North creates or facilitates their knowledge production by observing the South" (P8). While establishing Southern theory as a counterbalance to Southern experience and Northern theory is important, it is also noted as much as the South is criticising the North, the South has to remain critical of itself because "if we don't think about the global South more critically, then all we're doing is replacing one kind of hegemony with another" (P3). Furthermore, it is important "not to draw a sharp distinction between something called Southern theory and something else called Northern theory, as if those two can be clearly demarcated" (P9). What needs to be recognised in this regard is that knowledge is not something that is static but has circulated around the globe, and "it overlaps more in terms of long historical, uh, evolution and circulation of ideas than one imagines now" (P9).

In terms of teaching, Southern theory highlights that Southern classroom should be distinguishable from others and contextualised. A classroom in Africa should, by extension, be distinctly African, which is where Africanisation has a role to play, as "Southern knowledge will have to be premised not only on our traditions and things but on language" (P17). In addition to language, the curriculum should be aligned with the needs of the classroom, including "a whole jettisoning of attitudes, of hierarchies, and of creating an openness to say

that the syllabus should be structured according to the needs of the classroom" (P17). The 'jettisoning of attitudes and hierarchies' involves a critique of the status quo, including a critique of the concept of the university itself, especially that idea that "new liberalism and new liberal economic policies has smashed universities. So what you're producing is not intellectuals, you're producing people who will service the economy" (P17).

Other concepts that are being challenged are those relating to merit and classroom hierarchies "because we've inherited structures of knowledge and pedagogy from the North which we are just implementing here without, unthinkingly" (P17). There are numerous examples at Wits where the jettisoning of attitudes and hierarchies has been turned into practice, where decolonisation and contextualisation have been taken on as a project, resulting in changes in the curriculum and in ways in which pedagogy is approached. They will not be further explored at this point but are included in the narrative that summarises the interview data, which is attached as Appendix G.

In the current South African higher education landscape, the Southern theory framework offers an opportunity to imagine the future differently, as it represents what can be called "an epistemic rupture and an institutional rupture" (P8). For example, it provides opportunities to "really think what is the, what is the function of education in the Humanities" (P8). In the broader sense, such opportunity to rethink and remodel extends to education in general, including the very institutions involved in the production and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, it applies to North-South partnerships as well. It is recognised that there is need to form new networks "on fundamentally different bases, different understanding, different relations that are informed by, uh, challenging dominant narratives, dominant relations, creating new relations, new research projects etcetera" (P9).

In other words, re-thinking the North-South paradigm "has to be premised on a principled, honest, confident engagement with universities in the South", which includes creating "an intellectual agenda that works with our traditions of thinking, our traditions of philosophical reflection, our histories, our particularities", as "a project we have to embark on" (P17). Embarking on such a project will take time and money. Regarding the latter, there is a concern that South-South partnerships will continue to depend on Northern resources, as "we keep running to Ford or Carnegie to fund those kinds of, uh, partnerships", which reinforces the "the North-South component" (P13). Furthermore, it is not about overcoming the dominant

relationship "in a generation or two" but about creating "the basis for that" (P9), laying the foundations for a different future now.

The future of North-South partnerships is, of course, considerably shaped by external factors in the national, regional and global contexts. For example, democratisation of higher education, as championed by decolonisation, is faced with an opposing trend of increased elitism, particularly given the reality that across the world "higher education, unless you're a private entity with a huge endowment, is in a major crisis" (P8). This means that "research will become increasingly more and more privileged, which means that international programmes will become increasing[ly] more and more privileged" (P8). There is an overall concern regarding the impact of dwindling resources on the ability of South Africa to "capacitate these universities for generations to come" (P11), facing the very real possibility of losing the next generation, as "a whole cohort of PhDs that have gone through my hands, young black academics, scholars, practitioners, artists, creative researchers" who will "go elsewhere because we're gonna be competing for resources" (P8).

Despite the challenges affecting higher education, there is a hopeful general outlook towards South Africa's engagement with the rest of the world, where the "ideal is to get more" partnerships with the South while continuing "to engage the North but more on, on, on our own terms" (P13). Regarding the future of partnerships one has to ask "first of all about what does the Southern perspective mean, then who is the Southern, and then what knowledges would count for the future" (P3). Regarding the latter, "if the Southern is only talking about postcolonial without talking to the posthuman, I think we're in big trouble" (P3).

The university, as an institution, is the right place for this kind of re-thinking to happen, as it "has the space, has the wherewithal, has the history and has the lineage" enabling it to "actually think through clearly what a programme of North-South engagement would be which is based on a very principled engagement with the hierarchies that exist" (P17). Such a principled engagement with hierarchies leads to the realisation that while the South is working towards improved relationships with the North and more balanced partnerships, "conceptually, philosophically we need a new paradigm" (P17), one that goes beyond the context of North-South partnerships. This need for a new philosophical paradigm results from a deeper-level analysis of North-South relations and is based on the belief that partnerships cannot be genuinely equal as long as "these conversations happen under the shadow of both the political and intellectual domination of Europe and America, to put it very broadly" (P17). It recognises

that “the landscape within which we’re trying to think the idea of, uh, North-South partnerships” goes beyond the context of the university, as “the university doesn’t exist as an island” (P17). Rather, “It exists within a space, a political domain, where there are structures of power, there are structures of funding, all of which are hierarchical, unequal” (P17).

What is viewed critically is not only the concept of North-South partnerships but the very use of notions such as global North and global South. It is noted that by using the North-South terminology, and particularly verbal tricks such as ‘North of the South’ or ‘South of the North’ we continue to buy into the existing hierarchies regarding Wits assuming the role of the North where “Wits in relation to Venda is more North than South” (P17). A deeper analysis of the North-South reveals that while the South laments the fact that publications are dominated by the North, there is a “lack of self-confidence and the lack of political and intellectual will to actually create our publications as, uh, speaking to a new intellectual paradigm” (P17). Regarding language, it is noted that “if you write in English you already begin to defer to the protocols of academic writing in English” (P17), an area of Northern domination that is approached differently in China where “a simple thing that is happening there which is not happening in Africa or India”, which involves “scholarship being produced in Chinese that people study Chinese, write in Chinese, think in Chinese, are aware of Chinese intellectual traditions” and where “you can study scientific subjects in Chinese, you produce scientific papers in Chinese and so on and so forth” (P17).

In the context of internationalisation, a deeper look reveals that the concept of internationalisation itself orients us towards the North, as “internationalisation, in short, is really looking to the North, that’s what internationalisation is” because it is “seen as making the university compatible with norms and standards set elsewhere” (P17). Overall, then, “the aspiration is to become like universities in the North” (P17). The goal is not to “have an independent intellectual agenda or, or an intellectual agenda that is in dialogue with and sometimes even critical of an existing university agenda” (P17). In other words, the South wants to “participate, we don’t want to innovate, it’s as simple as that” (P17).

Moving towards a new philosophical paradigm is work in progress. At the moment, “It is happening in a very disparate and scattered manner”, with individuals and research centres all over the globe “trying to grapple with this idea of how to produce new knowledge within an intellectual space that is already overdetermined by structures of power” (P17). At Wits, for example, a research institute associated with the Humanities faculty is “completely about

international partnerships in many ways, and completely about understanding or critiquing concepts like the global North and the global South" (P17).

As noted earlier, re-thinking the North-South relationship cannot be separated from thinking about the South-South relationship because "if we only have partnerships with Northern scholars, then you are reinforcing existing dominant networks that are suffused with power relations" (P9). Finally, it is acknowledged that moving towards a new philosophical paradigm is not something the university can achieve on its own. While it can play a critical role in re-imagining the future of partnerships, the issues at stake are much broader than the university itself. For example, partnerships "are linked to the economies of these countries", and "the appropriate political environment, the appropriate social environment that allows scholarship to thrive would be very, very key" (P11). It is "too much of a burden for the university to be bearing by itself in a space where we're thinking about a national consciousness and a political framework" (P17).

To sum up this section, I have shown that Wits responds in various, nuanced ways to specific challenges related to the conceptualisation and management of North-South partnerships. While it is important to note that North-South partnerships are, by their very nature, imbalanced, Southern partners from Wits have no interest in maintaining the status quo. There are deliberate efforts to counter imbalances regarding resources, knowledge and power, as the responses to the challenges posed by North-South partnerships have both practical and theoretical implications and are given effect at individual and institutional levels.

While there is no 'one size fits all' approach, the main reason why the challenges are being tackled is to change the equilibrium in North-South partnerships towards greater equality and mutuality between the partners, towards justice. The imperative for change is based on a strong sense of agency, which is firmly embedded in institutional and individual confidence and assertiveness that is based on the realisation that Wits occupies a peculiar position in the North-South space, one that, from the Southern perspective, is characterised by privilege. In the broader context, the interest in and commitment to bringing about change is not limited to the internal workings of North-South partnerships but also addresses North-South relations in a more abstract, conceptual way. This is facilitated through frameworks such as Southern theory, which highlights the importance of strengthening Southern knowledge and relations to counterbalance the dominance of the North and to imagine a different future.

6.3.5 What does a selected case study reveal concerning how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education?

The case study reveals a very complex picture of North-South partnerships at Wits, indicating that their management is informed by and depends on a variety of individual, institutional, national, regional and global factors that are all at play at the same time. The complexity came out strongly in the interviews, which bring about voices that complement, complete and sometimes contradict each other, illustrating a multitude of diverse perspectives. For example, the role of China within BRICS and beyond is critically examined and, following from that, there are diverse views on whether and how Wits should engage China as a partner country.

Another example that illustrates the complexity of the phenomena that are relevant for this study is the notion of North-South, particularly regarding Wits' relation to it. As shown in this study, Wits can be considered both the Southern and Northern partner in the University's international engagements, depending on the specific circumstances of the partnership in question. In terms of research infrastructure, resources and impact, Wits will often wear a 'Northern hat' in its engagements with other institutions on the continent, including with partners in South Africa.

It is important that the University acknowledges its position of privilege in such partnerships and works toward mitigating its effects, understanding that the partner in this case might experience the same challenges as Wits does when it is the Southern partner in relationships with institutions in the global North.

As a representative of the South, internationalisation at Wits carries the risk of 'double jeopardy'. For example, in the global playing field, Wits is disadvantaged in terms of resources and infrastructure. This means that the Wits researcher who reported that her laboratory facilities are in the school's old broom closet competes with her Belgian counterpart, who has a corridor of state of the art facilities at his disposal, for a place in the same global university rankings.

At another level, due to local income disparities, poor Black students are generally the ones who stand to benefit the most from student mobility opportunities but are the ones who can least afford them. Under these circumstances, internationalisation can further entrench existing inequalities. However, if Wits and South Africa want to be global players in the current dispensation, investment in areas such as internationalisation, research and partnerships is key. In light of dwindling public funds for higher education and many competing demands on the

public purse, raising the necessary funds for this is a conundrum that is difficult to solve, particularly if the institution, country and continent aim to decrease their dependency on Northern resources.

As the study shows, international partnerships are an important tool in Wits' internationalisation efforts, particularly with a focus on achieving the institutional vision of becoming an internationally leading, research intensive university. While institutional objectives permeate partnership policies and practices at Wits, the biggest challenges for international partnerships are the scarcity of institutional resources and capacity to support their implementation, coupled with a lack of systematic and programmatic coordination of activities across the University. North-South partnerships are embedded in this broader institutional context, which is generally a difficult environment.

In addition to challenges resulting from limited institutional support, managing North-South partnerships is portrayed by the participants as a particularly challenging undertaking from a South African perspective. This is because such partnerships are linked to imbalances that put Wits, as a representative of the global South, at the receiving end of resources, power and knowledge. In the lived realities of Southern partners at Wits, the experience of varying degrees of domination by Northern counterparts can manifest itself in negative emotions towards those partners, and relations can be strained by feelings of distrust, anxiety, frustration and anger.

Nevertheless, North-South partnerships continue to be pursued by Wits, motivated mostly by the need to access resources as well as to build and maintain a reputation as an internationally competitive institution. This does not necessarily mean that inequalities within partnerships continue unabated. On the contrary, they are being acknowledged and addressed to ensure that the risks of North-South partnerships do not outweigh their benefits.

There are many ways in which Wits as the Southern partner aims to mitigate the lop-sidedness of its relations with partners in the North, for example, by finding co-funding opportunities, negotiating arrangements that make projects and activities mutually beneficial and, above all, by producing knowledge by the South in the South and about the South as well producing knowledge about the North. Doing all of that, Wits becomes an active agent in developing and managing North-South partnerships, focussing on increasing equality and mutuality for the partners involved.

The case study highlights that Wits' agency results from the confidence of the institution regarding its role in higher education in South Africa, Africa and beyond, which is given

expression by the belief that the South is bringing something to the table, most notably through globally relevant and impactful research. What Wits brings to the table is expertise in a variety of research fields, particularly those that are linked to its unique geographic location and history as a city university in the South of Africa. There are many issues and debates to which Wits researchers can make valuable contributions such as global challenges regarding migration, inequality, urbanisation, health and energy. In addition, Wits brings a criticality in terms of approaches and methodologies that is facilitated and accelerated by the national agenda on transformation and decolonisation of higher education, which is most prominently discussed in the interviews in the context of Southern theory.

All these frameworks allow for re-thinking of existing hierarchies and dependencies, which, in turn, leads to new patterns of engagement within North-South partnerships. As the case study shows, transformation and internationalisation are not competing priorities at Wits. In fact, transformation, internationalisation and partnerships are all tools that can be used to bring about change, and their potential to enable and accelerate each other is recognised.

Moreover, re-thinking the North-South partnerships paradigm goes hand in hand with re-thinking the broader context of North-South relations as well as South-South relations. As the data from the case study brings to the fore, North-South partnerships do not simply coexist with South-South partnerships at Wits. Rather, they are intertwined, as critical engagement with the North necessitates a stronger and more principled engagement with the South through which, ultimately, a stronger and more self-determined South will be taking its seat at the global table confidently and as an equal partner.

Decolonisation and re-Africanisation processes at Wits are, for the most part, not geared towards cutting ties with the North. However, they demonstrate the quest for Wits to engage the North and other regions of the globe differently. Initiatives such as ACSUS and ARUA, guidelines such as the *Draft Framed Guidance* on SAGE as well as the Inside-out Partnerships Policy are all examples of moving South Africa and Africa to the centre of attention, as the starting point for engagement and partnerships with the rest of the world.

The changes in the terms of engagements that have led to a paradigm shift in North-South partnerships over the past ten years are generally welcomed and applauded by those who are involved in relationships with Northern institutions as Southern partners. However, it must be noted that the way in which Wits pursues North-South partnerships and approaches internationalisation in general confirms that it still participates in the current world order, with

all its inequalities and injustices. However, frameworks such as Southern theory offer the possibility of imagining the world anew, and the process of changing the paradigm of North-South partnerships can be seen as a contribution to a bigger, unfinished project which may ultimately change the world for the better.

As a final point in answering the research questions, I think it is appropriate to draw on the conversation I had with Professor Habib in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits, as his comments, while rooted in the Wits context, also speak to the broader national, regional and global contexts of internationalisation. As indicated in Chapter Four, this conversation was a special member check with the person who holds the institutional responsibility for internationalisation. Therefore, Professor Habib's role in this study is different from that of the 17 participants whose interviews formed the basis of the data presented and analysed so far.[56]

Professor Habib, whom I quoted in Chapter One as noting that North-South partnerships tend to be based on Northern desires more than on Southern needs, particularly addressed the need for equitable advancement of internationalisation in South Africa. It is worth noting that he had shared much of what we discussed in this regard more widely, for example, in email correspondence with representatives of a number of organisations including the Mandela Rhodes Foundation as well as the DHET, NRF, USAf and the University of Pretoria[57].

As a starting point, Professor Habib notes that current internationalisation practices disproportionately benefit institutions in the global North. Specifically, student mobility aggravates brain drain in the global South while allowing universities in countries such as the US, the UK and Australia to "pad their balance sheets". Even if individuals in the South benefit from such opportunities, "we will collectively be net losers". In order to change this trajectory, institutions in the South have to adopt and advocate for an internationalisation agenda that is more equitable, and four main strategies could be considered in that regard.

Firstly, South African institutions should engage in scientific diplomacy to diversify partners and funding sources for maximum local benefit. Another strategy is to lobby African countries to act unitedly regarding the internationalisation of higher education and research on the continent for increased collective leverage, for which ARUA serves as an example. Thirdly, as far as scholarships are concerned, split site scholarships should be preferred over funding for

[56] Professor Habib has given his permission to disclose his name in this context.
[57] A. Habib, personal communication, December 3, 2018 (September 3 and June 2, 2018)

full degree studies abroad. This would require a strong advocacy to change the mindset of international and local scholarship granting bodies including governments, global forums, private foundations and corporates. Lastly, local corporates should be strongly discouraged from using internationalisation to off-shore their research endeavours and infrastructures. Using such strategies, Professor Habib argues, will contribute to a more equitable internationalisation agenda, "one directed to realising in the long term a global academy of commons".

Professor Habib's comments, as summarised here, are in accordance with and strengthen the main points made earlier regarding Wits' role in advancing more balanced partnerships and changing the paradigm of internationalisation practices in South Africa to reflect the country's realities and needs. He also offers some practical suggestions regarding how South African universities and other stakeholders can support the process of shifting paradigms and pluralising power in the internationalisation of higher education.

6.4 PHASE THREE: Re-Theorising

In this final phase of making the data work, I focus on re-theorising and addressing how what I have found relates to the existing literature and theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, respectively, with the aim of discerning how this study contributes to the knowledge of North-South partnerships in higher education. Similar to the conversation between documents and interviews at the beginning of this chapter, I bring my findings in conversation with the literature and theory presented earlier, reflecting on converging and diverging views. Before doing that, I briefly address positionality as an overarching concern.

6.4.1 Issues of Positionality

It is important for me to start off the discussion of my findings in relation to the study's reviewed literature and theoretical framework with a reflection on positionality. Apart from its methodology, positionality permeates other parts of the study, particularly with regard to theoretical and methodological considerations.

In Chapter One and Chapter Four, I highlighted the importance of positionality in relation to my role as a qualitative researcher and active research participant. I specifically discussed my

'in-betweenness' regarding my position on the North-South as well as Practitioner-Scholar nexus. The study has highlighted that positionality is not only an important concept when it comes to the way I relate to the study and interpret its findings. It also comes into play regarding other aspects of the study such as the case study institution itself. In as much as my relation to the North-South concept is complex, so is that of Wits. As discussed earlier, it is an institution that can assume either the Northern or the Southern partner position in international partnerships.

Similarly, positionality is a key concern regarding the study's participants. They include, for example, Northern scholars who are based at Southern institutions and speak from a Southern perspective as well as Southern scholars who assume Northern positions after having spent extensive periods of time working and living in the global North. In a global higher education environment, the boundaries between who represents the North and the South can be porous. In the same way, there is no clear-cut boundary between practitioners and scholars in so far as in a partnership a scholar can have both an intellectual, research-focussed role and an administrative, operations-focussed role and speaks to both dimensions, without necessarily separating the two.

Apart from positionality regarding the North-South and Practitioner-Scholar dimensions, the participants' responses to the interview questions are informed by many other factors, including their location and function at the University, their academic and personal background, their worldviews, the duration and type of involvement in North-South partnerships as well as their personal and professional experiences with such partnerships.

An important aspect to note is that the location of participants within the university is not necessarily fixed. As noted in Chapter Four, half of the participants indicated that they have more than one function within the university, illustrating that academic and administrative roles and responsibilities often overlap.

While the positionalities of the research participants are acknowledged in general, they are not addressed individually and in detail, as this would make it difficult to uphold the researcher's commitment to the ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality. As far as the participants' positions within the institution is concerned, senior executives tend to speak to the institutional vision and strategy, whereas people in the lower ranks of the university hierarchy tend to focus their responses on their practical experiences, which are often more concerned with operational matters and individual perspectives.

For example, a senior leader can be convinced that Wits "is never gonna be the place where you come and collect your data and you write about. It's not going to happen" or the place "where you're gonna send your research assistants to work with our professors to do X, Y and Z" (P3). However, from the perspective of middle managers and research professors, it is noted that such Northern practices and behaviours still exist, as there is, for example, a "sort of 'hit and run' type of science that has been done. And there's still quite a bit of that today" (P15). Also, what "hasn't died up, it actually hasn't gone away" is that "if you partner with the North or with Northern institutions they still want to treat you just like a research assistant" (P13). In this case, the senior executive is giving expression to what appears to an ideal worth striving for rather than an indication of what is happening on the ground. This does not mean that one of these views is a more accurate description of the truth of North-South partnerships. Rather, they represent different aspects and diverse interpretations of reality, which is experienced differently by each participant.

As this example shows, the lived realities of North-South partnerships at Wits can differ considerably from one participant to the other, resulting in multiple truths about these partnerships, and these multiple truths and interpretations of lived experiences combine to paint a detailed and nuanced picture of North-South partnerships, expressed in a multitude of voices. All of these are contextual and most notably influenced by the positions of the participants in relation to their personal and professional experiences with such partnerships. For example, after a data pillaging incident, a participant "refused to let [*the colleague from the partner institution*] to come back" because of feeling disappointed as well as "a bit used and abused" (P4). This experience resulted in the participant's resolve to "never let this happen again" (P4), which has been a guiding principle for partnerships since then and will continue to have an impact on how partnerships are addressed in the future.

This example illustrates that experience and practice are interlinked in the accounts of the participants. As noted in the methodology chapter, positionality involves reflexivity, and the participants engage in a process of self-reflection when sharing their practices. This process of reflection often includes a comparison of their own realities with those of others, which can be colleagues at the same institution or further afield. In that sense, the participants also theorise about their practice. It is worth noting in this regard that in this case study all participants engaged in theorising, regardless of whether they are academic or administrative members of staff. This gives credence to the belief that acting is theorising and that practice is an integrated expression of both experience and theory, as expressed in the context of self-study research

(Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). The findings of this study showed that theory, too, is an expression of both experience and practice. Furthermore, through the interviews the participants' role as knowledgeable actors (Chasi, 2018) and collaborators in the knowledge production process, in line with the constructivist paradigm (Janesick, 1994) is confirmed.

Positionality, as an indication of where one is situated, is relevant in relation to this study's theoretical framework, as postcolonial thinking underscores the importance of the situatedness of knowledge (Moya, 2011) as well as of "locally situated ways of seeing, thinking and knowing" in the current discourse on decolonisation of higher education (Frassinelli, 2018).

Furthermore, positionality is an expression of ontological pluralism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). All these different layers of positionality help illustrate the complexity of the case. It is a reminder that an institution such as Wits is a complex entity, not a uniform, homogenous organisation. This is particularly true when one takes into account that the institution is made up of diverse people with a multitude of opinions and histories. Such complexity is easily missed when one tries to generalise and make assumptions on behalf of an entire institution, as this case study does. It is important to recognise that the findings presented in this chapter reflect my interpretation of a situation, based on my process of making sense of the data, influenced by my own background, knowledge and experiences, rather than a single, representative truth. In the section that follows, I discuss how my findings relate to the literature review presented in Chapter Two.

6.4.2 Literature Review and Analysis of Main Concepts

In Chapter Two, I presented a review of literature relevant for this study as an analysis of the conceptual field, focussing on higher education, internationalisation and partnerships. I touch on these three concepts again, indicating how Wits as the case study institution fits into the way they were described.

To start this conversation off with a general observation, Wits is part of a global higher education environment and shares major characteristics of the global space (Maringe & Foskett, 2010). This includes exposure to neo-liberalist tendencies resulting in decreased public funding and increased commodification and commercialisation of higher education (Wits, 2014b; Mbembe, n.d.; Motimele, 2017).

Wits is also subject to challenges affecting universities globally, which include internationalisation and competition (Weber, 2016). In terms of the (South) African higher education environment, Wits is faced with challenges emerging from colonial legacies regarding, for example, academic traditions as well as the hegemony of Northern knowledge and languages (Teferra & Altbach, 2004).

Transformation is, therefore, an important agenda for the institution, in line with national discourse (DHET, 2017a). Wits accepts its role as part of the engine that drives economic growth and human development (Sehoole & Knight, 2013; Jowi et al., 2013) and is aligned to national and continental development goals, as outlined in numerous documents such as the National Development Plan, the declaration emanating from the 1st African Higher Education Summit as well as the AU's *Agenda 2063*.

The case study highlights and confirms that Wits, as a privileged institution, is not as negatively affected by many of the challenges African higher education institutions face such as brain drain and lack of research infrastructure. As such, it is one of the world-class institutions that contribute to South Africa's research output and international standing, which sets it apart from most other universities on the continent (Rensburg, 2016). The case study emphasises that while Wits and South Africa form part of the African higher education system and the global South, they occupy special positions in these contexts and are not representative of the majority of institutions and countries on the continent.

For Wits, as for universities around the globe, internationalisation is a key concern and a process that is characterised by complexity and unclarity (Ford & McMullin, 2016). The case study confirms that internationalisation is linked to globalisation (Maringe, 2010); Maringe & Foskett, 2010), specifically as a force that reinforces global inequalities (Maringe, 2010) and highlights that the world is an uneven playing field (Maringe & De Wit, 2016). As such, internationalisation is perceived and managed differently across the globe in terms of rationales and activities and especially with regard to the benefits and risks it brings about (Knight & Sehoole, 2013; Maringe, 2010; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

In the African context, Wits is not as negatively affected by internationalisation risks as other institutions due to its privileged status as an internationally leading research-intensive university. It does, however, operate in an African internationalisation environment that is characterised by, for example, power imbalances and dependence on foreign funding (Sehoole & Knight, 2013; Jowi et al., 2013). Internationalisation at Wits is linked to broader national

and regional goals, which in the South African context is specifically linked to the objective of re-entering the global stage as well as of transforming the higher education system after the end of apartheid (DHET, 2013).

Internationalisation at Wits and in South Africa has a strong African flavour, with Africa at the heart of internationalisation efforts and activities (Jowi et al., 2013; Hagenmeier et al. 2017; Kwaramba & Mukanjari, 2013). However, overall internationalisation seems a rather marginalised activity with limited strategic planning and support, as with other institutions on the continent (Jowi et al., 2013). It is not comprehensive because it does not shape the ethos and values of the institution and is not embraced by all stakeholders (Hudzik, 2011).

Partnerships are an important aspect of Wits' internationalisation efforts, as is the case for universities around the globe (Foskett, 2010), and are as diverse as those of other universities (Kinser & Green, 2009; Sutton et al., 2012; Koehn & Obamba, 2012). They are not an end to themselves but a means of achieving institutional goals (Knight, 2004). For a research intensive university like Wits, research cooperation and exchange with institutions across the globe are particularly important in fostering the capacity of such institutions to address developmental and global challenges (Rensburg, 2016).

The case study highlights that development and academic agendas overlap (EUA, 2010), especially in the North-South context, with partnerships aiming to build and enhance capacity and institutional development of universities in the South (Foskett, 2010; Hagenmeier et al., 2017). Wits, as other institutions on the continent, maintains partnerships that follow the traditional North-South model (Jowi et al., 2013), which is characterised by power and wealth differentiation between the partners as well as a shared colonial history (Maringe & De Wit, 2016).

The case study gives credence to the description of challenges in North-South partnerships, including continued dependencies as well as the extractive nature of such partnerships (Maringe & De Wit, 2016), which generally favour the North, particularly in areas such as science and research development (Boshoff, 2010). In its efforts to respond to these challenges, Wits exhibits a participatory approach to partnerships, where values, involvement and ownership are shared amongst the partners (Foskett, 2010).

The case study also highlights the importance of the South taking responsibility for itself by determining its own internationalisation and partnerships agenda (Maringe & De Wit, 2016) and invoking rights as an equal partner (Hagenmeier et al., 2017). In doing so, Wits is making

a contribution towards Africa becoming a strong, resilient and influential global player and partner, as envisaged in *Agenda 2063* (AU, 2015). At the University, such agency is framed in the context of postcolonialism, decoloniality and Southern theory.

As this discussion illustrates, the case study corroborates, for the most part, what a review of literature had found regarding the three main concepts that are relevant in the context of this study on North-South higher education partnerships from a South African perspective. As the interviews revealed, Wits' international partnerships efforts are guided by a framework referred to as Inside-out Partnerships Model. It is interesting to note that the Wits model corresponds to the DHET's first *Draft Policy Framework for the Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa*, as discussed in Chapter Two in the context of internationalisation of higher education in South Africa.

While the national policy has yet to be finalised and gazetted, I assume that the direction provided by the Department in terms of the priority focus of internationalisation of South Africa's higher education sector will not change. Based on this assumption, it is worth noting that both models share a common focus on the South.

The draft national internationalisation policy states that South Africa's interests must be given precedence in the country's internationalisation agenda, followed by the interests of SADC, Africa, the global South and emerging economies and, lastly, the world beyond. Using a set of concentric circles, the DHET's draft policy's priority focus can be illustrated diagrammatically as shown in Figure 6 below:

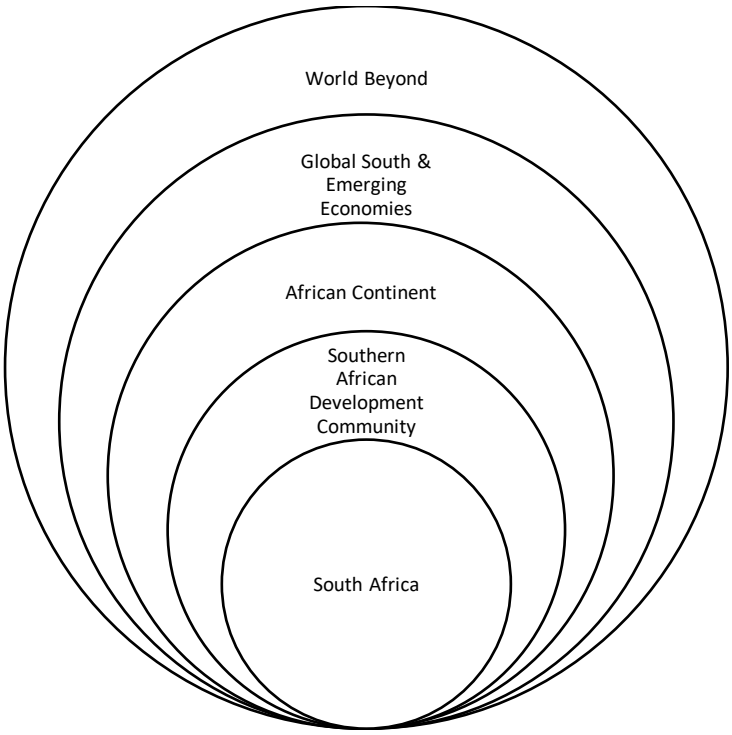


Figure 6: Priority focus areas for internationalisation of South African higher education.[58]

The DHET model places priority on South Africa first and moves outward from there, which is the same in Wits' Inside-out Partnerships model. In fact, the only differences between the two models are, firstly, that the third circle is referred to as the 'African continent' in the DHET model, as compared to the 'AU' in the Wits model. In practical terms, this is essentially a difference in choice of words, as the countries involved are the same. Secondly, the fourth circle in the DHET model is a bit wider in terms of its reach comprising the global South and emerging economies instead of focussing solely on BRICS, as the Wits model does. However, as BRICS is part of the global South and represents five of the world's major emerging economies, this difference is negligible in this context. Apart from these two minor differences, the two models are nearly identical. With such an alignment of institutional and national objectives, it stands to reason that Wits' partnerships goals and practices will support and facilitate the national agenda, and vice versa.

On the whole, the case study findings do not contradict what the literature says. The case study adds considerable layers of depth and complexity to the often rather generalised statements and arguments made in the literature review. For example, South Africa was described as a two

[58] Figure 6 is based on the information provided by the DHET (2017b, p. 21).

nation state in terms of its own economic inequalities, which are also evident in the higher education sector. In this sense, Wits, as a historically advantaged institution, enjoys a privileged status. Despite its privilege in the South African and African contexts, Wits, as an institution in the global South, finds itself on the receiving end of partnerships with institutions in the global North. However, its position of privilege helps the University negotiate what one might call a 'better deal', based on its capacity to act as a more equal partner than the majority of universities in South Africa and the rest of the continent.

Furthermore, the case study has shown that the reality of North-South partnerships at Wits is much more complex than the examples provided in the existing literature in the sense that Wits can be associated with both the North and the South, depending on which institution it is partnering with. The case study illustrates that positionality and contextualisation are key considerations in describing the realities of international partnerships at Wits and elsewhere.

Overall, the case study provides a much more detailed and nuanced understanding of what the literature review has shown regarding the study's main concepts. This is due to the richness of the case study data, predominantly with regard to the interviews that were conducted. For example, while it is generally acknowledged that internationalisation is a phenomenon that manifests differently in different regions of the world, this study finds that this is the case within the same country. In a country like South Africa, with its inherent asymmetries, the benefits and risks of internationalisation are distributed unevenly among the country's higher education institutions. Where inequalities exist, they can be further entrenched at the national, institutional and individual levels. To illustrate this, I go back to student mobility as an example, which was touched on in earlier chapters. As the interviews revealed, Wits has student exchange partnerships with institutions in the North, which are often imbalanced because the opportunities are not taken up by South African students, mostly due to financial constraints. Drawing on my own experience with such partnerships at Wits and on my knowledge of the South African environment, which includes perspectives from internationalisation practitioners in universities around the country, I note that the approach of intersectionality, which was adopted in the #RMF student movement, highlights the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination (Frassinelli, 2018) in higher education in South Africa today. It can be expanded into the context of internationalisation, as the place of students in relation to opportunities provided by higher education and by internationalisation is defined by similar markers.

I further illustrate the complexities related to the three main concepts of the study with the help of two examples of which one relates to higher education and the other to partnerships. Regarding higher education, transformation and decolonisation, which are pertinent issues in the current South African higher education context, are illuminated by the participants in their personal accounts of how they perceive, interpret and address these issues in their every-day lives and practices. For example, there are diverse opinions about when and where decolonisation originated, whether it is a recent phenomenon or as old as colonisation itself. There are also different thoughts on whether it is an agenda that should concern and be driven by black people or by white people, by South Africans only or by other people around the world. Even if there is consensus that decolonisation is an important consideration in the University, there is no agreement on what it actually entails. For some it is about exclusion, for example, by cutting ties with former colonisers and by excluding Northern perspectives and partners. For others, it is essentially an attitude and, in the context of partnerships, an approach to help shift the terms of engagement with the North. For others, yet again, it is mainly about inclusiveness, particularly concerning the inclusion of African knowledges and perspectives in the curriculum, which is also referred to as Africanisation.

Even if re-Africanisation is accepted as a priority, there are different views on how it can be achieved. For example, it tends to be considered a social science phenomenon, rather than a scientific phenomenon. With regard to the sciences, for example, re-Africanisation is perceived to have limits, as "DNA is DNA and one and one is two" (P4). Similarly, "the mathematical or scientific canon can be expanded but not decolonised because it's a global phenomenon" (P11). Also, "there's no South African version of real estate. Real estate is real estate" (P1). As far as the element of critiquing the status quo is concerned, some disciplines might be more receptive to decolonisation than others. Art practice, for example, is said to have always challenged dominant norms. Interestingly, a subject such as anthropology, which in terms of its origins as a discipline is aligned to the idea of the North observing the South, can become part of a solution by, as reported, changing the order of things and teaching African perspectives first before exposing students to other points of view. Furthermore, the case study also reveals that re-Africanisation as contextualisation and inclusiveness cannot only be framed in the context of decolonisation but also in the context of pedagogy and teacher training, where localisation and re-Africanisation are understood as an example of good teaching practice and curriculum design rather than an ideological concern.

As far as partnerships are concerned, the challenges that are generally associated with North-South partnerships come to life in the participants' descriptions of their lived realities, which are diverse and multifaceted. They illustrate these challenges through a variety of examples drawing on their own experiences. In doing so, the participants do not only confirm known facts but provide subtle nuances of thoughts and practices. It is particularly the human element that enriches their reflections. For example, in describing challenges relating to the experience of being dominated in a partnership, the participants speak of attitudes and behaviours including arrogance, humiliation and rejection on behalf of their Northern counterparts and evoke their own feelings and emotions such as distrust, anxiety, frustration and anger.

One wonders how such negativity affects the ability to establish and maintain successful partnerships, more so, when one realises that trust is an important factor in ensuring the success of partnerships, as argued by Heffernan and Poole (2005) and Foskett (2010). Regarding possible responses to the challenges experienced in North-South partnerships, the Wits case study illustrates numerous ways in which individuals and institutions can engage them proactively. This is an approach I understand to be similar to the one described by Habib (2011, 2016) in the context of universities' responses to increased corporatisation of higher education. Rather than bemoaning the state of affairs, universities in the South can initiate changes to facilitate and ensure greater equality and mutuality in their partnerships with institutions in the North, thus changing the power relations and balances between partners. Changing the existing structures and pluralising power within partnerships is the beginning of a process that will enable further reforms down the line, eventually transforming higher education systems and the societies they are part of.

In sum, the findings of my study provide a rich, complex case study from South Africa, which substantiates, deepens and expands the issues presented in the literature review. What is noticeable in this regard is how dense and complex the lived realities of North-South partnerships are. Apart from illustrating the intricate nature of concepts such as internationalisation, partnerships and North-South, the case of Wits adds further layers of complexity by combining Northern and Southern perspectives in one institution. Such a dual position is not typically found in the literature on North-South partnerships and offers unique insights. Furthermore, the case study shows that, from the perspective of Wits, North-South partnerships do not simply coexist with South-South partnerships at the institution but are interlinked in the sense that reimagining the one requires engaging the other. I explore this

further in the section that follows, focussing on how my findings relate to the study's theoretical framework.

6.4.3 Theory

In Chapter Three, the role of theory in this study was identified as serving as a lens to facilitate deeper and broader understandings of the study's findings, particularly regarding the lived realities of North-South higher education partnerships at Wits from the perspectives of the research participants, as shared in the interviews. In other words, it helps me offer a redescription of what the participants, as those involved in North-South partnerships, have already described. I discuss the appropriateness and usefulness of postcolonial theory in the process of analysing and interpreting the case study data. I conclude this section with the presentation of a model developed on the basis of the case study data to illustrate the context of North-South partnerships at Wits.

6.4.3.1 Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is an appropriate lens for this study, as it facilitates moving from data to understanding, particularly regarding the participants' accounts of their everyday experiences and interpretations of North-South partnerships in higher education, which is most notable regarding the underlying power structures of such partnerships (Biesta et al., 2014). It is also a lens through which the partnerships practice at Wits can be understood and critiqued (Lochmiller & Lester, 2016).

In the case study, postcolonialism is framed in different ways, for example with reference to transformation, decolonisation, Africanisation, recolonisation and Southern theory. This supports the argument made in Chapter Three with reference to postcolonial and decolonial thinking, which are not unified schools of thought but rather share some underlying principles that acknowledge the colonial legacy in the nature of North-South relations as they are today, including in the context of internationalisation of higher education.

When the participants share the challenges they experience as a Southern partner in North-South partnerships, the postcolonial perspective helps reveal how the North and South generally relate to each other (Martin & Griffiths, 2012), exposing existing power dynamics as a consequence of colonial matrices of power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Nyamnjoh, 2012) and

continued dependencies (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012), especially regarding the question of whose knowledge matters in a university in the South (Nyamnjoh, 2012; Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014). What is particularly important in this regard is that the Northern hegemony of knowledge production, distribution and consumption is challenged (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014) and that the South becomes a producer of knowledge (Moya, 2011), which in the case of Wits is not only about knowledge produced by the South about the South but also about the North, with the latter reversing the traditional gaze from the North to the South.

The idea of knowledge being situated, which highlights issues of identity (Moya, 2011), is closely linked to the idea of positionality as described earlier in this part of the data analysis. Wits, as part of the global South, is a new point of departure and has an opportunity to rethink the world from a different point of view (Menon, 2018). In addition, its dual identity and in-betweenness, as an institution that represents the South but can also wear a Northern hat, relates to the concern of postcolonial thinkers to find new places to speak from (Bohler-Muller, 2004). Its in-between location illustrates that thinking about the global South is not only rooted in a decolonisation discourse (Menon, 2018). As the case study shows, it can be extended to South-South relations as well, with Wits not sharing a colonial history with its partner institutions in the South but assuming a Northern role in terms of resources as well as the power and control that come along with them.

In describing their lived realities as Southern partners, the participants give credence to concepts of coloniality and decoloniality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Maldonado-Torres, 2016), highlighting that the global South is a lived reality and not simply a theoretic construct (Menon, 2018). They note the importance of links between colonialism, apartheid and globalisation (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) in the South African context of internationalisation of higher education, giving rise to the possibility of considering internationalisation as recolonisation (Saul, 2008).

The findings of this case study confirm that internationalisation, while it is a global phenomenon, essentially serves the interests of the Northern institutions (Martin & Griffiths, 2012; Singh, 2010). It is ‘by default’ oriented towards the North, which finds expression in the way North-South partnerships are typically conceptualised. They are framed in the rhetoric of development and need (Saul, 2008), which associates Northern institutions with the ability to help and provide aid to meet the perceived needs of Southern institutions which are generally seen as lacking (Martin & Griffiths, 2012).

Such a developmental backdrop is problematic in the context of Wits' North-South partnerships. As indicated by the participants, a colonial attitude of arrogance, especially the belief that the North can do something for the South and does not expect to receive anything back is not acceptable. When the participants describe how they counteract such challenges associated with the North-South partnerships paradigm, they engage in retelling the history of humanity and knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). In sharing the stories of Southern scholars and practitioners, the case study offers a critical view from the South, highlighting voices and views that are often marginalised (Moya, 2011) in the broader discourse on internationalisation in higher education. From the position of the South, it is understood that these voices do not represent a new kind of fundamentalism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013) and do not aim to replace one dominant discourse with another. Rather, they facilitate diversity of perspectives and become one of many centres (Wa Thiong'o, 1993).

At Wits, the process of re-centring Africa is firmly embedded in discourses on transformation, decolonisation and re-Africanisation, which ring through institutional documents as well as participants' narratives. Transformation, decolonisation and re-Africanisation are means to administer an antidote to the colonial legacy in higher education (Prah, 2004) and to focus on African values and African style (Biko, 1987) in African universities, challenging the status quo for a different future (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2014). The case study illustrates in numerous ways why and how internationalisation in South Africa is intrinsically linked to transformation. It confirms, for example, that in the context of recent decolonisation debates in the country's higher education sector, internationalisation dimensions such as curriculum internationalisation are not primarily concerned with the inclusion of international perspectives. Rather, they are primarily about enhancing local relevance and focus (Hagenmeier et al., 2014; Wits, 2014b).

In the context of internationalisation and partnerships, the importance of re-centring Africa is reflected in Wits' partnerships model as well as the draft national internationalisation framework. I note with interest that this relates to Wa Thiong'o description of the restructuring of the literature department at the University of Nairobi in the late 1960s, as presented in his book *Decolonising the Mind* (1987).

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the DHET's national internationalisation framework and Wits' partnerships policy can be represented diagrammatically using a set of concentric circles, with the two models essentially overlapping. Furthermore, in Chapter Three, it was

pointed out that the DHET's priority focus for internationalisation of South African higher education shares a similar approach to the centrality of Africa with the new organising principle proposed by Wa Thiong'o regarding the University of Nairobi's literature department. Using the same set of concentric circles as for the Wits and DHET models, a diagrammatic representation of the organising principle described by Wa Thiong'o is shown in Figure 7 below.

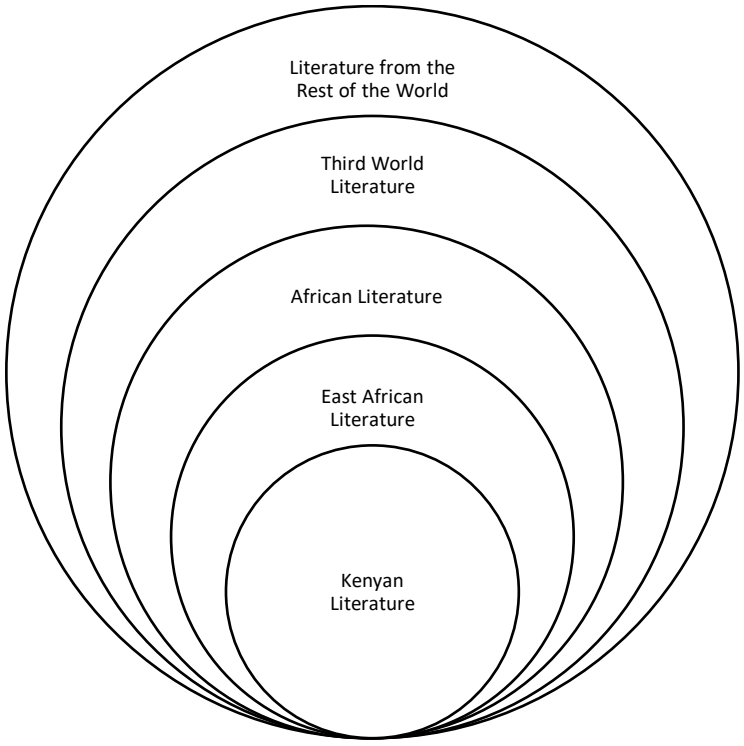


Figure 7: New organising principle of the literature department at the University of Nairobi.[59]

The parallels between the three models are easily noticeable, as all three start with the innermost circle representing ourselves, which is Kenya in the case of Wa Thiongo's model and South Africa in case of the Wits and DHET models. From there, they radiate outwards towards the regions that are closest to the starting point, which is represented in the second circle by East Africa and South Africa, respectively. After that, the spheres of engagement overlap, covering the African continent in the third circle, the global South or third world in the fourth and the rest of the globe in the fifth circle.

[59] Figure 7 is based on the information provided by Wa Thiong'o (1987, p. 94).

The difference regarding the naming of the fourth circle is, again, mostly a matter of terminology. The term 'third world' used to denote developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, especially during the Cold War, a period that covers both the restructuring of the literature department in the late 1960s as well as the publication of Wa Thiongo's book in the late 1980s. Today, these countries are generally referred to by alternative terms such as 'developing nations', 'emerging economies' and the 'global South'. Apart from slightly different terms, what Wa Thiong'o illustrates with the help of the example of the literature department is mirrored by Wits in relation to institutional partnerships and by the DHET in the context of internationalisation of the national sector of higher education.

Regardless of their different areas of focus, all three models are concerned with re-centring Africa, that is, moving Africa to the centre of attention in Africa. In doing so, they present an organising principle that expresses the need of Africans to know themselves first before engaging with others and to serve their interests in pursuing such engagements. This organising principle puts (South) Africa first, not to the detriment of others but to change the terms of engagement with others, particularly with the global North, counteracting what has been referred to as 'colonial amnesia' (P17). It "writes Africa back into the world" (P8) and establishes it as one of many centres in the world, as one flower in a "universal garden of many-coloured flowers" (Wa Thiong'o, 1993, p. 42) In the case study, re-establishing Africa as a centre of focus and knowledge production is a process that is described in documents and interviews in the context for example, curriculum reform, research and teaching methodologies as well as language.

Language is an important component in the process of decolonising the mind (Wa Thiong'o, 1987). That the issue of using local languages in academia is an incredibly pertinent issue in South Africa is evidenced by the fact that doctoral theses written in African languages make news headlines. For example, when the first PhD thesis was completed in isiXhosa, one of South Africa's official languages, at Rhodes University, it was hailed as a milestone "for Xhosa academic writing and a glimmer of hope in the quest for a decolonised and transformed education system in the country" (Mahlakoana, 2017). From this perspective, the fact that an increasing number of South African institutions find ways to teach and assess their students in their home languages is welcome. If the trend continues and intensifies, it will be interesting to see how it will be balanced against the tendency to, for example, establish joint doctoral degrees with international partners, which are often located in the global North, as English is the dominant language for such partnerships.

The case study confirms that the postcolonial project is an unfinished task (Maldonado-Torres, 2011), as decolonisation processes at Wits are work in progress. While the future is unknown, change is inevitable and incremental. It is being effected in the way North-South partnerships at Wits are conceptualised and managed, moving away from one-way transactions and contributions to a partnerships paradigm characterised by greater equality and mutuality, based on the Wits' confidence in its capability of coming to the table as an equal partner. Such agency is linked to thoughts of liberation and justice and of reimagining the future, which are associated with postcolonial thinking. I elaborate on this in the next section, using a model that illustrates Wits' context of North-South partnerships.

6.4.3.2 Towards a Model of North-South Partnerships at Wits

In this section, I am presenting a model of North-South partnerships at Wits, which I have developed based on the data gathered through the interviews conducted for this case study, as shown in Figure 8 below:

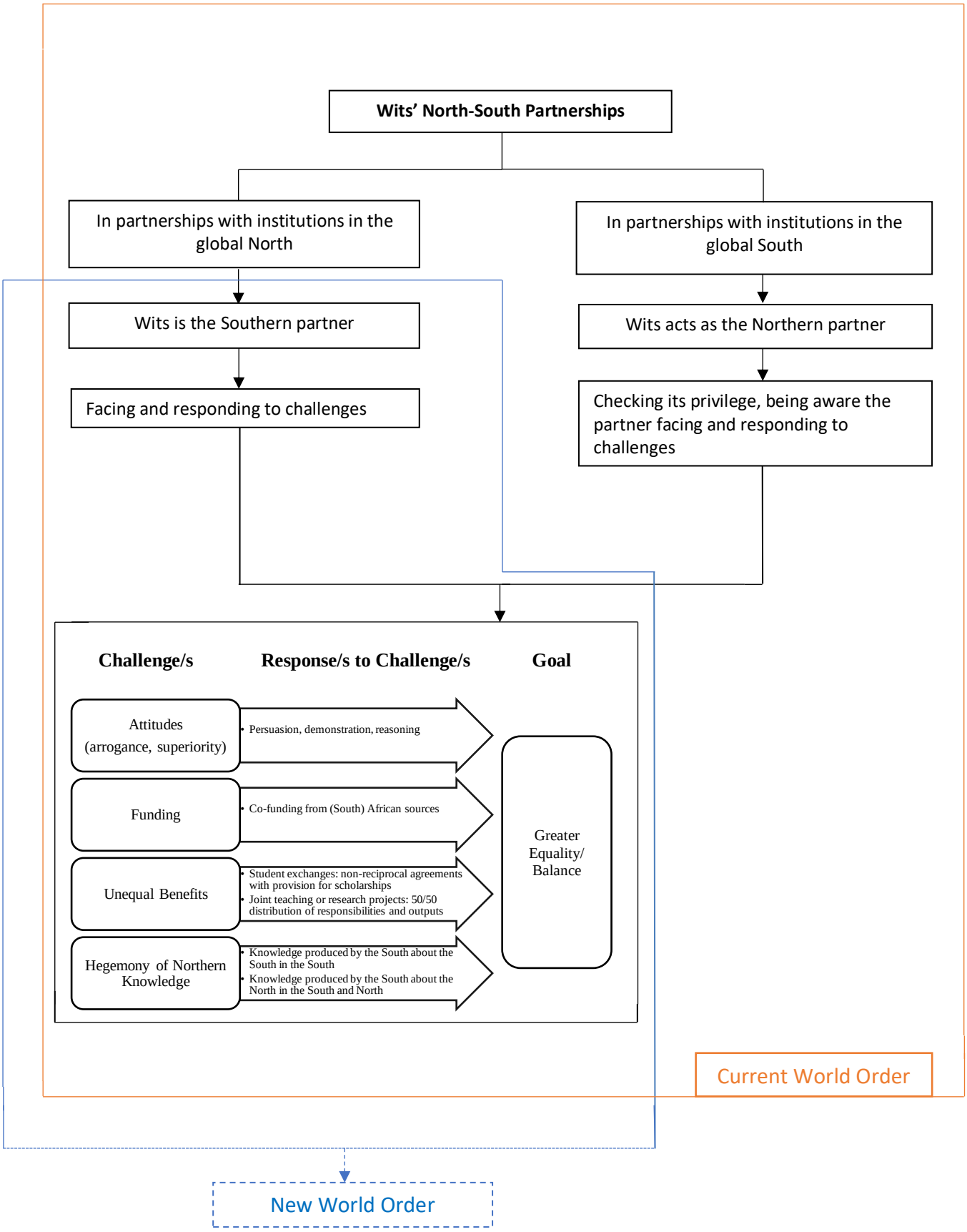


Figure 8: Conceptual model of Wits' North-South partnerships.

The model given in Figure 8 illustrates the context of North-South partnerships at Wits. It starts from the finding that when it comes to North-South partnerships, Wits can assume both a Southern and a Northern role. On the one hand, Wits has partnerships with institutions in the global North, in which it represents the Southern partner. As such, it faces challenges inherent in North-South partnerships and responds to them in the ways described, leading to what has been referred to as a paradigm shift towards greater equality, equity or mutuality in such partnerships.

On the other hand, Wits wears a 'Northern hat' in its engagements with institutions in the global South, particularly regarding partnerships with institutions in South Africa and the rest of the continent. Under these circumstances, Wits needs to check its own privilege and be mindful of the strong possibility that its South African and African partners are facing the same challenges as Wits does when it is the Southern partner in a relationship with the global North.

Regardless of whether Wits acts as the Northern or Southern counterpart in partnerships, the interviews revealed that both scenarios happen within the old paradigm of North-South relations in the broader political and socio-economic context. This represents the paradigm of the 'current world order', which is the world as we know it, with all its inequalities, indicated in Figure 8 by the orange frame and box. In this order, it is possible to consider internationalisation a tool that can be employed by the Northern institutions to recolonise their Southern counterparts, as it maintains and protects Northern dominance and power and further entrenches inequalities. However, from the position of Wits, as a Southern partner, thinking emerges that is embedded in a broader discourse on postcolonialism, decoloniality and Southern theory, which essentially understands the idea of the global South as a possibility to imagine the world differently, which is framed in blue in Figure 8 above.

Since changes can be affected within the North-South partnerships paradigm, as the case of Wits shows, there is reason to believe, or at least hope, that it is possible to change the world as we know it, laying the foundations for a different future, a new world. The 'new world order' is indicated by the blue box in Figure 8, and the arrow indicates that we are moving towards it, not knowing when, or indeed whether, we will achieve it. As it remains unknown what the new world order is, the lines of the blue box are dotted and open. Even though we do not know what the future holds, there is a need to rethink the ways in which we live and think together (Menon, 2018) and to transform our global society into one that is socially and economically more just

(Moya, 2011). In this sense, postcolonialism and decoloniality facilitate liberatory thinking that points to the possibility of another world (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013), planting the seeds of a new tomorrow (Wa Thiong'o, 1993).

To sum up this section, I note that the findings of my case study relate to the theoretical framework in a similar way as they do to the literature review regarding the study's main concepts. They provide a rich and nuanced case study which illustrates that postcolonialism is not only a useful lens but that it is, in fact, indispensable in terms of facilitating understanding of the underlying issues of North-South higher education partnerships, particularly with regard to power dynamics between Northern and Southern partners. It is mostly the accounts shared by participants that bring theoretical perspectives to life and establish experiences from the global South as a lived reality. Overall, the findings and the theoretical framework seem to integrate seamlessly. Using a postcolonial lens deepens and broadens the understanding of the case study findings and, by extension, the broader context of internationalisation and partnerships at Wits and in South Africa.

6.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis of the data generated for my case study on North-South higher education partnerships at Wits in three main phases. First, I brought data gathered from institutional documents in conversation with data generated through interviews with research participants to illustrate how the two data sets relate to each other and, in the process, providing on overview of the institutional context of internationalisation at Wits. This discussion confirmed that internationalisation is a strategic priority that is closely linked to other priorities such as globally impactful research as well as transformation, which are all strongly rooted in Africa. It also showed that there is a mismatch between the University's ambition to internationalise and its capacity to support its implementation across the institution.

In the second phase, I discussed the findings in relation to the study's research questions. This discussion highlighted the important role partnerships play in Wits' internationalisation activities, helping the University achieve its mission and key organisational goals. As such, institutional objectives permeate partnership policies and practices, highlighting the interwoven nature of internationalisation, transformation and development at institutional, national and regional levels. It was emphasised that Wits pursues partnerships with institutions

in the global South as well as the global North, with different aims and objectives but with similar levels of complexities.

As with internationalisation, partnership activities are highly decentralised and not implemented following a deliberate and integrated institutional approach. In a context that is characterised by scarce resources and limited capacity, dealing with resource and knowledge inequalities as well as power imbalances that are inherent in North-South partnerships is particularly challenging. However, the case study of Wits shows that through deliberate efforts the equilibrium in North-South partnerships can be changed towards greater equality and mutuality between the partners. Such change is facilitated by a strong sense of agency, confidence and assertiveness, which is closely linked to Wits' position of privilege. The process of changing the paradigm of North-South partnerships is part of a broader project of changing relations between the global South and the global North towards a re-imagined future of a global society that is socially and economically more just.

Finally, I re-theorised my findings by linking them to the literature that had been reviewed for the study as well as its theoretical framework. In this discussion, I noted that the study's findings, based on rich data, provide a complex South African case study, which substantiates, deepens and expands issues presented in the literature review regarding North-South higher education partnerships. I showed that postcolonialism, as a theoretical lens, proved indispensable in terms of understanding the underlying power dynamics of such partnerships as well as the lived realities of Southern partners. Furthermore, I highlighted the importance of positionality and contextualisation for key aspects of this research including the researcher, the research participants as well as the case study institution. Regarding the latter, Wits' duality as an institution that can assume the role of both a Southern and a Northern partner adds further complexity and insight into North-South higher education partnerships as the phenomenon under study.

From this data analysis, I move to present my closing reflections and interpretations in the next and final chapter. I share my thoughts on what can be learnt from this study, which include reflections on implications for policy and practice as well as implications for further research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINAL REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Introduction

In this closing chapter I offer final reflections and conclusions regarding my study on North-South partnerships in higher education from a South African perspective, which used Wits as a case study. My aim is not to reiterate the research findings, which were described and analysed in detail in the previous chapter. Rather, in these final reflections I share my thoughts on the broader picture, which includes implications for policy and practice emanating from the study. I also discuss limitations of the study and make suggestions regarding the direction future research might take. Finally, I conclude this chapter by reflecting on what I have learnt as a result of this study.

7.2 Research Aims and Objectives

As indicated in Chapter One, this study aimed to reveal how North-South partnerships are managed at Wits, a public university in South Africa. More specifically, the study's objectives were to:

1. explain what role(s) partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of Wits;
2. describe how institutional goals inform partnership policies and practices at Wits;
3. explore the challenges of conceptualising North-South partnerships at Wits and
4. analyse how Wits responds to challenges in conceptualising North-South partnerships.

Against this backdrop, the study demonstrated that North-South partnerships at Wits are embedded in the broader institutional context of internationalisation, which has an emphasis on Africa and the global South. Thus, partnerships play a key role in achieving institutional objectives.

The study further describes and reflects on how institutional goals inform partnerships policies and practices, particularly regarding Wits' goal of being globally competitive and locally relevant. The case study explored the challenges experienced at Wits regarding how North-

South partnerships are conceptualised and managed at the institution. These challenges are in the main linked to asymmetric relationships and imbalances in relation to financial and infrastructure resources, knowledge and power, which generally favour the Northern partners.

Based on the accounts of the research participants, the study painted a picture of the lived realities of such partnerships at Wits, highlighting the human experiences of people in the South. In analysing how the University responds to challenges inherent in North-South partnerships, the study has shown that the paradigm of North-South partnerships at Wits has shifted towards greater equality and balance between the partners.

In revealing how North-South partnerships are managed at a South African university, the case study has illustrated how complex concepts such as the internationalisation of higher education and partnerships are. The participants shared their trials and tribulations with internationalisation and partnerships at Wits, which embody the challenging nature of the relationship between ambitions on the one hand and lived realities on the other. This applies as much to the aspirations associated with higher education as it does to those linked to internationalisation.

This study has shown that an investigation into North-South partnerships provides an opportunity to look beyond partnerships and reflect on broader issues such as the role and function of education in general and of institutions like the university in particular. Postcolonial thinking has been a useful lens in gaining a deeper understanding of North-South partnerships, especially regarding the lived realities of Southern partners. It assists in locating such partnerships in the broader context of North-South relations, with all its inequalities. At the same time, it opens up spaces for imagining the future of North-South partnerships and, ultimately, the world we live in, differently.

In a world that is increasingly more divided along economic, political, religious and cultural lines, this study hopes to make a contribution towards fostering mutual understanding and collaboration between higher education institutions in the global North and the global South. In a world where debates, concepts and research on internationalisation of higher education are still dominated by Northern perspectives and interests, this study chose to tell a different story, focussing on voices from the global South, which tend to be underrepresented or non-dominant in the global discourse. In the sections that follow I reflect on the question of what can be learnt

from all of this by sharing my thoughts on implications for policy and practice that emerge from the study.

7.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

In what follows, I discuss my study's implications for policy and practice, with a focus on Wits as the case study institution. I also briefly touch on implications for other universities in South Africa and beyond. Before doing so, I would like to point out that the observations made here are informed by my interpretation of the case, which does not claim representativity. I acknowledge that the participants accounts are not representative of the entire university community and that Wits is not representative of all institutions in South Africa. Similarly, South Africa does not represent the whole of the global South. However, the participants are part of Wits, which is part of South Africa, which is part of the global South, and the case study presents a very specific context in a specific place at a specific time. Because if this situatedness, the study does not claim to know 'the whole truth' of North-South partnerships. It does, however, offer deep insights into these partnerships by sharing multiple perspectives on how they are conceptualised and managed at one South African case study institution.

Given the richness and complexity of the information gathered for this study, I believe it deepens and broadens understanding and invokes much needed inspiration that will be useful in other partnerships contexts. As noted in the methodology chapter, my research, as a practitioner-scholar, is driven by the desire to better understand the practice of which I am part of and to identify ways in which it can be improved. In this limited sense, I trust that my study's findings will be transferable to and inspire change in other settings, especially regarding other universities in South Africa, Africa and the global South.

7.3.1 Implications for Wits

As the case study shows, Wits has pursued internationalisation and partnerships and will continue to do so as part of its vision and mission. The University has been successful in recruiting international students and staff, establishing high-impact research collaborations and in maintaining its position in international university rankings. However, it appears that these successes have, to a large extent, been achieved through the dedication and hard work of a

limited number of individual champions rather than through broad-based and coordinated institutional efforts.

As indicated in the interviews, Wits is already unable to take full benefit of the opportunities and benefits internationalisation offers, mostly due to limited institutional capacity. I believe that it will be increasingly challenging for the University to maintain its standing in an environment where competition for students and resources continues to grow, locally and globally, and where other institutions of comparable size and ambition, in South Africa and elsewhere, make considerably higher investments in internationalisation.

In the previous chapter, I used the metaphor of a choir to describe internationalisation at Wits. Referring to the same metaphor, I argue that Wits would benefit substantially from a 'conductor' in the form of a well-resourced and agile central unit with strategic oversight over all internationalisation dimensions at the University and strengthening the existing functions and capacities. In the absence of such a role, the impression is created that Wits' internationalisation performance is lacking a strong institutional drive in the sense that political will is not fully translated into action. To change that, I envisage this unit as the extended arm of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, with whom the overall responsibility for internationalisation currently rests. It would be vital that the unit combines a variety of relevant skills and competences and is positioned in such a way that it has sufficiently high managerial ranking to pull institutional processes together. This would allow the University to look at internationalisation comprehensively rather than at individual internationalisation dimensions in silos, paying more attention to areas that are currently neglected in the overall institutional discourse such as IaH and IoC.

In my view, a central unit would not mean moving away from the recent decision to infuse internationalisation more strongly into research, teaching, postgraduate affairs and services. On the contrary, for internationalisation to be internalised, it is important that all academic and administrative units define what it means in their relevant contexts. In this respect, internalising involves that internationalisation is being embraced and valued and translated into different institutional contexts. The meanings and translations of internationalisation will differ from one unit or discipline to another, and the institutional strategy should therefore allow for differentiated approaches in different institutional contexts.

However, a central function of this unit would be to identify interconnections, synergies as well as dependencies among stakeholders. This would make a valuable contribution towards a

proactive engagement with internationalisation and a deliberate alignment of individual interests and institutional objectives, which, in the current context is, highly decentralised. The central unit should, of course, contribute towards strengthening institutional capacity, which has both practical and theoretical implications. Regarding the latter, the interviews have revealed that there is a potential need for and interest in conducting more research and producing knowledge on internationalisation from the perspective of the global South, especially regarding study abroad practices in South Africa as well as around the question of Southern agency in internationalisation processes. In my view, this would tie in easily with existing initiatives such as ACSUS and research interests in the area of Southern theory.

Internationalisation, as a research thrust, could provide the institution with an opportunity to critically engage with the concept and practice of this phenomenon from the perspective of the global South, shaping a distinctively South African character of internationalisation and seeking answers to questions such as the one posed in the *Internationalisation Policy* regarding whether traditional responses to internationalisation are sufficient to deal with the new challenges and opportunities presented on the global stage. Such research stands to make a significant contribution to scholarship on internationalisation from the perspective of South Africa and the global South.

As an important step in its work, the central unit should coordinate the development of an institutional internationalisation strategy, which I would envisage as a consultative process involving internal and external stakeholders. The main aim would be to develop a document that represents the institutional stance on internationalisation and can serve as a guideline as well as an advocacy tool. The consultation process would provide an opportunity to review the now outdated internationalisation policy of 2010 in light of changes in both the institutional and national environments. Important national and global priorities and developments need to be taken into consideration. These include, for example, transformation as well as changes caused by technological disruption such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The Inside-out Partnerships model, which was presented in the interviews, could be shared and discussed more widely to establish if and how its focus applies across the University. The model gives expression to Wits' commitment to work more deliberately with institutions in the global South, starting with South Africa and moving outwards from there to SADC, Africa and BRICS before engaging partners in the rest of the world. The development of an internationalisation strategy would also provide a platform for a renewed university-wide

discussion on what internationalisation should mean for a university like Wits in a country like South Africa. While I believe that internationalisation should be understood comprehensively at the University, this does not mean that the institution has to engage in all dimensions of internationalisation. Rather, the focus areas should be chosen strategically and need to be aligned with other priorities. For example, given the financial constraints of institutions and students, and in line with general international trends, it is commonly understood that student mobility opportunities will always only be taken up by a small minority of students. While I do not doubt the benefits of study abroad, the question is whether the university should invest limited resources in activities that will only benefit a select few.

As the interviews revealed, plans are under way to use study abroad initiatives for the purposes of generating income for the University, which could be used to support local students. However, for this to work sustainably, considerable numbers of students would need to be hosted and a sizeable investment would first need to be made to create the relevant levels of infrastructure as well as provision of academic and support services that fee-paying study abroad students expect. Instead, I argue that the university would be better served by placing greater emphasis on IaH, which is absent from the current institutional discourse on internationalisation.

IaH, understood as campus based internationalisation strategies regarding, for example, teaching and learning, research as well as extracurricular activities (Knight, 2012), generally focuses on ways in which all students reap the benefits offered by internationalisation, not just those who are mobile, which can be achieved, for example, by facilitating interaction and exchanges between local and international students. This would also be useful for staff, as incidents were reported where international staff members, especially those from other African countries, experience resentment and xenophobia at the hands of their South African colleagues. Furthermore, Wits could frame discussions regarding the internationalisation and Africanisation of the curriculum within the IaH context as well as the promotion of research focussed on Africanisation and internationalisation.

In addition, IaH provides a platform for innovative uses of digital technology for internationalisation purposes. This could perhaps be linked to efforts of dealing with large class pedagogy, which is an existing concern for teaching and learning at Wits[60] as well as at other

[60] See, for example, *Large-Class Pedagogy – Interdisciplinary Perspectives for Quality Higher Education* (2013), edited by D.J. Hornsby, R. Osman and J. De Matos-Ala.

South African universities, as technology developed to teach large classes might also be relevant in the context of teaching across borders.

Apart from clarifying how Wits approaches and weighs different internationalisation dimensions and activities, the institutional internationalisation strategy should indicate which existing and new functions carry responsibilities for the strategic direction, implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of internationalisation activities at the University.

Whatever the objectives are that the strategy will set out, they must be backed by the relevant investment in institutional capacities and resources, as the lack thereof has been highlighted as one of the biggest internal challenges. The intention to earmark funds for international scoping visits as well as for grant writing support is a positive sign. However, in the overall institutional context, such changes are but a drop in the ocean, and more needs to be done to ensure that Wits will go from strength to strength and continue working towards achieving its vision. I do not think that this can be accomplished through a central function alone. On the contrary, it will be important that relevant investment in internationalisation and partnerships capacity is made at the level of faculties, schools and departments.

As Wits was the case study institution, the implications of this study for policy and practice at the University have been outlined in detail in this section. Next, I briefly reflect on implications for the broader South African higher education sector and beyond.

7.3.2 Implications for the South African Higher Education Sector and Beyond

At the institutional level, the Wits case study illustrates that challenges experienced in North-South partnerships can be tackled in a variety of ways, and I hope that other universities in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa and the global South will find inspiration in that in terms of shaping their own responses to similar challenges they might experience. These responses will have to be mindful of each specific institutional context. Generally, Southern institutions should be less complicit and less accepting of inequalities and imbalances in their partnerships with Northern counterparts. This relates in particular to a certain amount of confidence and assertiveness during the early stages of a partnership where aims, objectives and expected outcomes are being negotiated before agreements are signed. It means that Southern partners should not uncritically accept the terms and conditions that might be attached to a partnership proposal but rather take charge of their own agenda in the context of North-South partnerships.

In instances where the terms are not acceptable, institutions should 'talk back' to their Northern partners to ensure that their interests and needs are addressed. One recommendation shared in the interviews that is relevant in this regard is that partnerships with Northern institutions should focus on Southern strengths rather than weaknesses. This might be counterintuitive in the sense that partnerships are expected to help build capacity, usually in areas that are perceived as weak or lacking. However, the interviews show that such a scenario facilitates a developmental approach to North-South partnerships, which carries the risk of continued dependency on external expertise rather than supporting self-direction and agency on behalf of the Southern partner.

In relation to South Africa, the study has implications not only for individual institutions but also for the entire higher education sector, particularly as far as thinking critically about what it means to internationalise higher education from a South African perspective is concerned. As the case study illustrates, internationalisation in South Africa must have a distinct (South) African character and focus, and institutions have an opportunity to identify how they can add a South African flavour to their internationalisation activities. The draft national policy framework provides some guidance on this. For example, it indicates that benefits to society and potential contribution to the public good should constitute the fulcrum for internationalisation and that universities must put South Africa and Africa at the centre of internationalisation efforts in terms of the proposed priority focus. However, the national policy does not refer to fundamental issues such as the emphasis on African perspectives in internationalising the curriculum. The policy's Africa focus is not applied consistently, which calls for further engagement and debate around how internationalisation concepts and models are not simply copied into the South African context but given expression in a distinctly South African way.

Apart from guiding and regulating, the DHET should also consider playing a stronger support role for the implementation of internationalisation at South African universities, particularly regarding financial support to institutions. Leaving the financing of internationalisation activities solely in the hands of universities is, in my view, one of the biggest shortcomings of the draft policy. Given the government's underspending on higher education – it currently stands at less than one per cent of GDP – internationalisation is at risk of being a mere add-on rather than an integral part of higher education in the country.

Furthermore, the draft policy aims to specifically support and encourage previously disadvantaged institutions in their internationalisation efforts. However, in the absence of a budget allocation dedicated to this, the same institutions that the government seeks to promote will be the biggest losers in the process and are likely to enjoy the least benefit but carry the highest risk associated with internationalisation.

With the existing strain on their budgets, universities cannot pick up the bill for South Africa's ambition of becoming a regional education hub and preferred destination for international students and scholars. If South Africa is to be a higher education leader in the region and beyond, it needs to not only safeguard its current higher education infrastructure but invest in the future capacity of the sector. The investment required is not only of a financial nature. The DHET, DST and other government departments can be powerful allies for universities in their attempts to increase collective leverage and lobby for more equitable internationalisation.

Public engagement with the first national framework for internationalisation should continue beyond the publication of its final version. Bodies such as the DHET, IEASA and USAf should lead the debate with relevant stakeholders on a national level to guide and support universities in their efforts to give expression to the national framework in their institutional contexts. This should include a discussion on how internationalisation aligns with other important priorities such as transformation as well as developments such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. With specific reference to the DST's White Paper of 2018, there needs to be greater coordination and integration between the DHET, the DST and universities as far as international cooperation in the areas of science, technology and innovation is concerned.

This study demonstrates that internationalisation and transformation do not have to be seen as competing priorities but can, rather, be considered forces that complement and reinforce each other. Given the disparity among South African universities in terms of their internationalisation efforts and successes, it will be useful to create communities of practice on the internationalisation dimensions considered most important in the South African context. If the numerous partnerships workshops I have facilitated at IEASA and other international conferences are an indication, there is a huge demand for such engagement and for strengthening the capacity of internationalisation practitioners and scholars at South African universities in their engagements with international partners.

The focus of this study was on a South African perspective of North-South partnerships, emphasising that the imperative for changing the paradigm of such partnerships is driven by

the South. However, the South cannot achieve a paradigm shift on its own, and I cannot conclude my reflections without acknowledging that the North has a role to play in bringing about change. As previously mentioned, participation requires the active involvement of all partners (Fosekett, 2010; Teferra, 2012). Regarding the notion of a third space, for new meanings and understandings to emerge, both partners, the South and the North, have to step out of their own spaces and enter what Martin & Griffiths (2012) called a "space between", a "third space".

With a new partnerships paradigm in mind, I see three main implications for Northern institutions emerging from the study, which concern the principles of humility, mutuality and flexibility. Firstly, Northern partners need to have humility in their engagements with the South. This includes being aware of any positions of privilege they might enjoy as well as being open to the possibility of learning from their Southern counterparts. As used here, the term *Northern* includes institutions that might not be located in the global North but can be described as wearing a Northern hat, as Wits was in the context of its African partnerships due to its relative privilege in relation to other institutions on the continent. Likewise, the term *Southern* can be extended to institutions that are located in the global North but are not the dominant partner in a relationship with another institution. The same is true at the level of countries. South Africa, for example, needs to be mindful of its position of privilege and carefully navigate its relationships with partners on the continent when engaging in discourse around being a leader on the continent and a gateway to Africa.

Secondly, Northern institutions must be committed to mutuality in their partnerships with institutions in the South. This includes actively seeking conversations with their Southern counterparts about how to ensure that the partnership creates benefit and value for all those involved. To do this, Northern institutions need to have empathy and the willingness to see the world differently, in this case through the eyes of their Southern partners.

Finally, with a deeper understanding of the environments their Southern partners operate in, Northern institutions need to allow for greater flexibility in the conceptualisation and implementation of partnerships. This includes the ability to expect or at least respond to the unexpected, which is not only relevant for the partner institutions themselves but also for organisations facilitating and funding cooperation. Using a quotation from the interviews, what is important for funding frameworks is that partners are provided with 'bandwidth for contingency'. While this was mentioned in the context of research partnerships as a

requirement arising from the unpredictable nature of research, it also applies more broadly to a sector which can be affected by unpredictability and instability, as recently highlighted by the student protest movements in South Africa.

Before concluding this section on implications for policy and practice, I would like to briefly comment on my commitment to conducting research that makes a difference, a commitment that was discussed as a feature of self-study research, which is also in accordance with my understanding of research ethics. As a practitioner in the field of higher education internationalisation and partnerships, I am interested in identifying ways in which my research can be fed back into practice. As far as the case study institution is concerned, I have started engaging Wits using appropriate channels regarding opportunities to share my findings and recommendations with the university community. Regarding the broader context, I have shared insights from this study by making presentations and facilitating workshops at conferences. Most recently, I drew on my research findings in a discussion I facilitated during a seminar titled *Internationalisation Policy Dialogue*, co-hosted by the British Council, IEASA and the DHET[61]. I also shared critical insights from my case study at an inter-university research workshop involving Wits and a partner university in the US. I will continue to look for such opportunities for engagement. In addition, I am looking forward to sharing relevant aspects of this research through scholarly papers.

Having discussed the study's implications for policy and practice at Wits as well as in the broader context of the South Africa higher education sector and beyond, I now reflect on possible directions for future research on North-South partnerships. This is linked to a discussion of the limitations of this study.

7.4 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

In this section, I reflect on the limitations of this study as well as its implications for future research. In this discussion, I include methodological, theoretical and personal considerations. As far as methodology is concerned, my research employed the case study design. It was based

[61] The event was held in Johannesburg on 14 November 2018. The title of my interactive discussion was "Are South-North partnerships REALLY mutually beneficial? – Considerations for strategic partnerships in joint programme development".

on a single case because this allowed me to focus on depth rather than breadth in relation to the gathering and analysis of data.

Building on this study, whose focus was deliberately broad to gain an understanding of the general concept of North-South partnerships, further research could narrow the scope and investigate the inner workings of North-South partnerships at Wits that have been deemed particularly successful. A potential area of focus for such an endeavour is an investigation into the CARTA programme.

Furthermore, extending the design to a single case of another institution or even a multi-case study of several institutions would facilitate comparative approaches. For a single case design, it would perhaps be most interesting to compare this study's findings with those related to an institution that serves as an opposite to Wits in the sense that it is not research intensive, not urban and not ranked in the top 500 institutions internationally.

Another aspect that could be explored further has to do with the self-study methodology adopted in this study. As highlighted throughout the thesis, my study employed elements of self-study, particularly with regard to the use of narrative as well as an understanding of theory-practice-experience continuum. A fully-fledged self-study conducted by a partnerships practitioner or scholar could provide much more detailed insights into how practice, theory and experience interact in partnerships management. As people are at the heart of partnerships, such a study could provide deeper insights on how and why partnerships decisions are made by individuals involved in them.

Apart from methodological considerations, the study has limitations with regard to its theoretical framework, which also point towards opportunities for future research. While this study employed postcolonialism as a theoretical lens, especially to understand the underlying power dynamics of North-South partnerships, such partnerships can also be analysed in the framework of other theories such as distributed cognition, network theory and stakeholder theory, as briefly discussed in Chapter Three. Distributed cognition essentially relates to the sharing of knowledge. As such, it could be particularly relevant to the question of what role partnerships play in the internationalisation efforts of higher education institutions. It could also help frame questions of how partnerships are managed in so far as it deals with how people work together to achieve a certain task. Distributed cognition can be linked to the constructivist paradigm, which assumes that people interpret reality in different but equally valid ways. Network theory could help explain how and why partners are chosen. The concepts of inclusion

and exclusion are particularly relevant with regard to why an individual or an institution would want to become part of a particular network and what some of the consequences of not being part of a particular network are. Finally, stakeholder theory, which is mostly concerned with managerial issues, could help provide deeper insights into how partnerships are managed, especially at the institutional, organisational and individual levels.

Lastly, my study on North-South partnerships in higher education can be considered an exercise in writing and thinking *from* the global South, not yet *about* the global South, as differentiated by Menon (2018), who believes that we have yet to embark on the project of thinking about the global South more in terms of its intellectual traditions and conceptual categories. In light of this observation, further research could extend the study's focus on re-Africanisation and examine North-South partnerships using an African concept or philosophy such as *ubuntu*. This would be an opportunity to describe new ways of partnering, focusing on the idea of community, a common humanity and a bond that connects us all. An approach based on *ubuntu* would be reconciliatory in nature, as are recommendations to address partnerships with humility, mutuality and flexibility. However, apart from emphasising togetherness and harmony, a different scenario is, of course, possible. As divisions and inequalities are further entrenched and fronts are hardened, conflict might become the order of the day, which might see the poor and weak fight back with means other than persuasion and good will in order to level the playing field.

If inequalities in North-South higher education partnerships are looked at from the perspective of asymmetric conflict, an opportunity arises for research on how weak and poor institutions in the global South can "win wars" (Arreguín-Toft, 2005) against powerful and rich institutions in the global North. In my view, I sincerely hope that such scenario will not unfold. This study is aimed at fostering understanding and collaboration, which is a reflection of the kind of person I am, someone who would rather build bridges than destroy them, someone who values diversity and inclusion. With this in mind, I conclude this chapter with more personal reflections and a discussion of what I have learnt as a result of this study.

7.5 Final Conclusions: What I have learnt from this Study

Throughout this thesis, I have noted the importance of reflexivity in the context of my study, particularly regarding my role as a qualitative researcher and my relation to the research topic

and participants. In Chapter One, I shared relevant details from my personal and professional background, focussing on my in-between position in relation to the North-South and the Practitioner-Scholar dimensions of this study.

I also recounted an experience in my professional life that provoked my interest in researching North-South higher education partnerships and therefore played a role in sending me off on this PhD journey. Now that I am approaching the end of it, I think the time is opportune for a final round of self-reflection, and I, following a suggestion from self-study scholars (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009, p. 171), conclude this study with a discussion of what I have learnt as a result of it.

In retrospect, the study was a search for answers to my research questions and new knowledge, but it was also a journey of self-discovery. Discovering the concepts of researcher positionality and practitioner-scholarship was an important milestone in my becoming a researcher, as reflecting on my positionality allowed me to incorporate my practitioner self into the research. Through dealing with these concepts, I have deepened and broadened my sense of self and of purpose. I now understand better why I enjoy doing what I do, working in international education. For example, reflecting on my positionality as an in-betweener has provided me with a deeper understanding of the North-South dimension of my identity and of why I have always 'intuitively' enjoyed and cherished engaging with a diversity of people, ideas, cultures and disciplines. I have gained a new appreciation for my work in international education, as it provides ample opportunities for experiencing, creating and reflecting on such encounters.

Similarly, one of my research highlights was the interaction with participants during the interview phase. As the interviews continued, I grew increasingly excited about the engaging and inspiring conversations I had, which exposed me to a diversity of views and provided me not only with rich data for my case study but also with valuable moments to look at 'my' practice and learn from so many different perspectives.

Regarding the practitioner-scholar dimension, I embarked on the PhD journey as a seasoned practitioner and novice researcher, and I now feel more confident in my new role as an emerging scholar. A defining moment in this regard was the realisation that theory is not such a dreadful thing after all. While I would have liked to do away with the theory chapter if I had had an opportunity to do so at the beginning of the research project, I can now say that I thoroughly enjoyed my grappling with postcolonialism. I have learnt two things in that regard: Firstly, I realised that it was important for the theory I selected as a lens to not only speak to

the data but also to me as a researcher. Secondly, I have come to know that theory, for me, does not exist in isolation but is intrinsically linked to my practice and my experiences.

While a postcolonial lens was important in the context of the study, particularly with regard to the study's conceptual framework and data analysis, it also had a reach beyond the research project itself and sharpened my understanding of the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality and how they affect everyday life. As Professor Mignolo noted in a recent lecture[62], "Coloniality is not over, it is all over". Realising this has given me new ways of understanding my practice in international education. For example, I used to get irritated when, as an international partnerships manager at Wits, my office was approached by yet another institution looking for a partner to implement a project that had already been conceptualised and designed and for which, in many cases, funding had already been secured. I now understand, at a deeper level, how such an approach to partnerships with institutions in the South relates to the rhetoric of need and development. While such attempts generally claimed to address the development needs of the South, they often did not take actual Southern needs into account. Instead, projects were designed by Northerners who assumed they knew what Southern needs were and how they could be met.

Furthermore, during the time I was engaged in this PhD research, I also happened to work for two organisations representing the former colonising powers in South Africa. In these positions, I witnessed numerous examples of coloniality and decoloniality 'in action', which I illustrate by briefly recounting three work-related incidents. Firstly, I set up a representative office, as a first on the continent, for an organisation facilitating education collaboration between South Africa and the Netherlands. The office was officially opened shortly after then President Zuma mentioned in a speech that all of South Africa's problems started with the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 (Corke, 2015), a remark that moved the shared colonial history of the two countries to centre stage, sparking a lot of debates between South Africans and their Dutch counterparts about the past, present and future of their relations.

On another occasion, I attended an event of *Shakespeare Lives in 2016* (British Council, 2015), a major global programme organised to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death by celebrating his works and influence on culture, education and society around the globe. During a panel discussion with actors and directors, the relevance of Shakespeare for young South

[62] Professor Mignolo's lecture entitled "Decoloniality after Decolonization" was hosted by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria on 7 August 2018.

Africans at a time of #RMF and #FMF was called into serious question by the audience, and a renowned black South African actor was criticised for lending his support to such an initiative. At the same event, a cast of young black South Africans performed a play entitled *UShakes*, offering an interpretation of how Shakespeare's texts can be applied in the South African society of today.

It is important for me to not only acknowledge such moments but to engage them actively, and a final example brings professional and personal perspectives together, as it has to do with my love of chocolate. As part of my work in the youth entrepreneurship space, I was excited to meet young Ghanaian and Kenyan chocolatiers who are working on what I would, in the context of this study, call the 'decolonisation of chocolate'. Through their enterprises, they are countering the 'colonial model' of chocolate production, which typically involves the extraction of raw materials such as cocoa from Africa to production sites in Europe and then the import of the finished product back to the country of origin at a significantly higher cost. Apart from economic considerations favouring the North, this practice reinforces commonly held assumptions that good quality chocolate can only be produced in countries like Switzerland and Belgium, relegating countries like Ghana[63] and Kenya to the status of providers of raw materials. I have since become more inclusive in my chocolate consumption habits and, while I still enjoy certain Swiss, German and Belgian brands, I have made a conscious decision to support local initiatives and indigenous chocolate production wherever I can. Such change embodies the possibility of a different future, which is an inherent element of postcolonial thinking.

If I can change my chocolate eating habits, the future can taste differently. If, as an example reported in the interviews, film schools around the world can work together to break the hegemony of Hollywood and to diversify the language of film, the future can be imagined differently. If Southern universities can drive change towards a more equitable paradigm of partnerships with Northern institutions, then, indeed, a different, more socially just world is possible. All of these are, as the African proverb says, stones that can be lifted in preparation for moving the mountain.

In his recent lecture, Professor Mignolo pointed out that decoloniality is a process and that there might never be a point of arrival. Without knowing where we will arrive, we can focus

[63] For more information about the Ghana example: https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/57-chocolate-sweet-homage-ghana-n805536.

on the ongoing process of laying new foundations for a different and more equitable future in North-South higher education partnerships and beyond, which reminds me of a motto my mother had adopted and shared with me when I was younger: “Der Weg ist das Ziel[64].”

[64] The origins of this saying seem unknown. However, it has been attributed to Confucius. English phrases that seem equivalent include, for example, “The journey is the destination”, “The journey is the reward” and “The journey is its own reward”.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

[Date]

Dear Research Participant

My name is Samia Chasi, and I am a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits). My research is entitled "North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education: A Selected South African Case Study" (Protocol Number: 2013ECE097D). It aims to shed new light on current debates around internationalisation from the perspective of the global South, with a particular focus on North-South partnerships. The study will analyse data generated from documents such as relevant University policies as well as through interviews with members of the University community. I intend to conduct interviews mainly in August and September 2017 and to submit my thesis for examination by July 2018.

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Should you decide to participate, you will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You may decline to answer questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study, for which you will not be paid. The end results will be reported as part of my PhD research report. Furthermore, I would like to use them for other purposes such as conference presentations and publications. Your information will be treated confidentially and be kept safe, and your name will not be revealed. All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

I wonder whether you would be interested in my study and would appreciate it greatly if you would agree to be interviewed and audiotaped. The interview will be arranged at a time and place convenient for you and should not require more than an hour of your valuable time.

Should you require any further information or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient and would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely

NAME: Samia Chasi
EMAIL: 13988@students.wits.ac.za
TELEPHONE: 082 382 6539

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL – MAIN STUDY

Introductory Remarks

- Welcome and thanks
    - Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study by being interviewed. Your participation is much appreciated.
- Establishing common ground
    - The main purpose of my research is to contribute a Southern perspective to current debates around internationalisation and partnerships, with a particular focus on a South African case study on North-South partnerships.
    - Research question: What does a selected case study reveal concerning how North-South partnerships are managed in South African higher education?
- The interview will:
    - Hopefully not take more than 60 minutes.
    - Be a conversation, guided by mostly open-ended questions. You can give your responses with one or more partnerships in mind.
    - Be audiotaped. In addition, I will be taking notes.
- Before we begin, please sign the consent form. Please remember that you can choose not to respond to a particular question. You can also withdraw from the project at any time without any prejudice.
- Do you have any questions at this point?

Interview Questions

1. What are your experiences with North-South partnerships in higher education?

1.1. Why have you engaged in these partnership/s?
1.2. What is your overall view of the nature and significance of N-S partnership/s in your field/area of work?

2. Have you experienced challenges with North-South partnerships in higher education?

2.1. Could you identify the main challenges associated with the N-S partnership/s?
2.1.1. Did they change over the duration of the partnership/s (conception phase vs. implementation phase)?
2.1.2. Were they related to, for example, epistemological challenges (related to knowledge and understanding), operational challenges and/or the distribution of benefits (distributive justice)?
2.2. Could you share how the challenges and constraints are/were addressed by the partners? **By you?**
2.3. Would you say that N-S partnerships facilitate brain drain from the South? If yes, how can this be addressed?

3. In your experience, what role do partnerships play in the context of internationalisation of higher education?

3.1. Would you say that partnership/s are linked to your institution's internationalisation efforts? How?
3.2. Would you say that the goals of partnership/s are informed by your institution's goals? How?
3.3. In what way can partnerships contribute to institutional internationalisation efforts? Do you think partnerships differ from other internationalisation dimensions/activities in that regard?

4. What would you say are the factors that have contributed to the success or failure of the North-South partnership/s?

4.1. Based on your N-S partnership experience, would you like to share any lessons learnt?
4.2. What, in your opinion, are the prospects for North-South partnerships in the future?
4.3. From the perspective of the South, how can we make N-S partnerships work?

5. Does it matter how N-S partnerships are conceptualised? What are the key conceptual ideas/values?

6. Is there anything that you would like to mention that has not been addressed so far?

<u>Closing Remarks</u>

- Before we close, may I kindly request you to capture some biographical details in a brief questionnaire?
    - Hand out and collect immediately
- Thank you once again for taking time out of your busy schedule to take part in my research project.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM
[Delete that which is not applicable]

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary PhD research project called "North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education: A Selected South African Case Study" (Protocol Number: 2013ECE097D).

I, _____, give my consent for the following:

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree to be audiotaped during the interview YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this PhD project, conference presentations and/or publications only YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I would like to be interviewed for this study. YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time and do not have to answer all the questions asked. YES/NO

I know that Samia Chasi will keep my information confidential and safe and that my name will not be revealed. YES/NO
I know that I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. YES/NO
I know that I can ask not to be audiotaped. YES/NO
I know that all the data collected during this study will be kept in a secure place and will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project. YES/NO

Signature_____ Date_____

Appendix D: Participant Biographical Questionnaire

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in and return this questionnaire, which forms part of the PhD research project called "North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education: A Selected South African Case Study" (Protocol Number: 2013ECE097D).

Please tick as appropriate:

Are you

□ Male □ Female □ Prefer not to say

South African: □ Yes □ No

If no, please specify:_____

□ African □ Coloured □ Indian □ White □ Other

If other, please specify: _____

Are you a/n

- Academic,
- Manager,
- Researcher,
- Senior executive,
- Staff member in the international/ research and/ or strategic office,
- Student or
- Other? Please specify _____

How many years of partnerships experience do you have? _____ year/s

Is your experience based mainly on

□ one partnership or □ several partnerships?

For each partnership, could you please indicate the following:

Partnership 1

Title: _____

Duration: _____

Main partner/s: _____

Other stakeholder/s: _____

Funder/s: _____

Partnership 2

Title: _____

Duration: _____

Main partners: _____

Other stakeholders: _____

Funder/s: _____

Partnership 3

Title: _____

Duration: _____

Main partners: _____

Other stakeholders: _____

Funder/s: _____

Signature _____Date _____

Appendix E: Ethics Clearance by WSoE

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3064 Fax: +27 11 717-3100 E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za Website: www.wits.ac.za

Student Number:
Protocol Number:
2013ECE097D

Date: 30 October 2013

Dear Samia Chasi

Application for Ethics Clearance: Doctor of Philosophy

Thank you very much for your ethics application. The Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has considered your application for ethics clearance for your proposal entitled:

North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education: A Selected South African Case Study.

The committee recently met and I am pleased to inform you that clearance was granted.

Please use the above protocol number in all correspondence to the relevant research parties (schools, parents, learners etc.) and include it in your research report or project on the title page.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

All the best with your research project.

Yours sincerely

M Mabeta

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

011 717 3416
Cc Supervisor: Prof. F Maringe

Appendix F: Letter of Permission Granted by Deputy Registrar

Deputy Registrar: Academic

Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa • Tel: +27 (0) 11 717-1204 • Fax: +27 (0) 86 553 3695 • E-mail: nita.lawton-misra@wits.ac.za

E-mail nita.lawton-misra@wits.ac.za
Fax 086 553 3695
Tel +27 (0)11 717-1204

18 March 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

"North-South Partnerships in Public Higher Education: A Selected South African Case Study"

It is hereby confirmed that the enclosed research material has been distributed in accordance with the University's approval procedures for such a project. Please be advised that it is your right to withdraw from participating in the process if you find the contents intrusive, too time-consuming, or inappropriate. The necessary ethical clearance has been obtained.

Should the University's internal mailing system be the mechanism whereby this questionnaire has been distributed, this notice serves as proof that permission to use it has been granted.

Students conducting surveys must seek permission in advance from Heads of Schools or individual academics concerned should surveys be conducted during teaching time.

Nita Lawton-Misra
Deputy Registrar: Academic

Appendix G: Narrative Summary of Interview Data

Interview Perspectives – Lived Realities of North-South Partnerships at Wits

On Internationalisation – Meanings, Rationales, Activities

Internationalisation is part of the academic endeavour, as it provides opportunities to engage with other perspectives.

> And look, I mean, it comes back to something that I was told as a, as an undergraduate student in Durban when I told my two professors, who I wanted, who I, whose work I really identified with, that I wanted to study further. They said study at another university. And when I said I wanted to be an academic, they said try and study outside the country, get that other perspective (P15).

In many ways, internationalisation is a must for Wits. Referring to international partnerships of the business school, the following is noted, for example:

> …they have conferences overseas and that sort of stuff, and it's a status thing. And if we don't have agreements to send students to Vanderbilt and Duke and Harvard and those sorts of things it's, uh, it's damaging to our reputation, to other institutions as well. So if we don't have those agreements and we go to a PIM conference and we say, oh, well we only have four agreements with three African universities and one in Europe, then that doesn't really invite much interest from others (P16).

As shown with this example, internationalisation is a tool that helps the University build its reputation internationally. Apart from this, internationalisation brings about other benefits for Wits, which are described as follows:

> So, there're always inevitably about knowledge development, broadening the knowledge scope or knowledge development. It's always about that. But at the secondary level it inevitably is about recruitment of international students, and then, at the third level, it is about resource sharing, about what are some of the benefits we could get through that internationalisation (P3).

However, it is also made clear that internationalisation, while considered a must, is not without its challenges.

> We got to internationalise so that we can plug in into one of the latest trends in global development and that requires resources, and it's not just something that's an ambition, I mean, it's something that we need to do, uh, I mean, against, basically, uh, difficult odds. You know, it's, it's a constant challenge that requires one to always fight against gravity. All the time to defy gravity to achieve what basically is standard, uh, is a challenge… (P 11).

There are fields in which internationalisation has "been crucial" (P1). To illustrate this:

> A month ago, we became the first non-American university whose programme was accredited to write a particular exam in the United States. Uh, and the only reason why we were able to qualify for that was because of the way the curriculum was structured. From the onset, we wanted to have a world-class programme, that even if it addressed South African problems, was globally competitive (P1).

Global competitiveness appears to be a major driver of internationalisation at Wits, and it is closely linked to the quality of teaching, learning and research. International recognition of degrees is important in that context, as "my students want to go around the world. You know, that's the thing that I keep telling this university, we have to be very, very careful that our degrees are recognised overseas" (P4).

For some subject areas, internationalisation is an integral part and considered to be core business:

> Yes, and what is also happening is that that our field is very international in the sense that the nature of the business, the standards, the business processes are all international. And so, you know, you hear a lot of people say, oh, you need to teach us in the South African context. And I tell them, there's no South African version of real estate. Real estate is real estate. There's only one way to calculate whether an investment is worthwhile or not. There's no South African variant of that decision (P1).

Internationalisation activities come in many forms and are often interlinked.

> I think we're more international than most schools because the average academic here is foreign. So our orientation by default is international. One of the things that we

> basically kicked against when we got here was, for example, the appointment of external examiners (P1).

As this example shows, Wits is able to attract international staff, which further facilitates international cooperation, as these academics are usually internationally minded and often have existing networks. As also indicated, the appointment of international external examiners is "one aspect of internationalisation that we've kept because then it also assures us that the quality of what we're doing is internationally competitive" (P1). In that particular school, "We fly people down here who are known international experts in different fields to come and cross check undergraduate and postgraduate teaching" (P1). The benefits of such practice are reaped in different ways. For example:

> Well, first of all, you look at what is happening to your graduates when they go to work. Uh, on the postgraduate side, many of our graduates are employed before they finish. We started out setting a few up them us as interns. After six months they were all offered permanent positions, and they asked us for more (P1).

The employability of graduates is generally considered one of the main indicators of the quality of the educational provision of a university. Another important indicator, specifically for a research-intensive university like Wits, is the capacity to publish, particularly in international journals.

> Uh, so, the big, in terms of success, what I'd say categorically is that we've benefited more from these international interactions than even other universities in South Africa in our field because, as I said, if you look at quality control, for example, they still use local external examiners, usually their friends, and we insist on bringing in whoever is a world-renowned expert. Even for our Masters theses, we send them abroad for external examination. We refuse to just give them to locals. We send it, too. And one of the ways in which that pays back is that some of our colleagues have been able to publish undergraduate and Masters theses in foreign journals. Because by the time the external examination report comes through, the work is of such quality that you can actually publish it with the student (P1).

The circle seems to close when articles are published in international journals. For example, "we got it into an American journal last year, which, suddenly, it becomes also a form of advertising what we're doing here" (P1). Such exposure increases Wits' international

reputation and competitiveness, which is important for a university that considers itself a leading institution in Africa with a strong research agenda. For Wits:

> …it's not, it's not an ambition that is based on luxury, right? I think that if the, if Wits and other leading universities in South, in South Africa and on the continent, I mean, I give an example of, for example, uh, statistics suggests that science, scientific research is by its very nature borderless. Data moves from one country to the other seamlessly because it is global data. So I think there are certain things that are actually borderless. Uh, research, global research is one of them. Ah, it's either we are out, or we are in... (P11).

Research and internationalisation mutually reinforce each other and are fundamentally linked to the idea of borderlessness, as they are both understood to be without borders or to cross them easily. More specifically, one such borderless field is "my field of knowledge, which is information, communication, technology, it is a field that knows no boundaries" (P12). It is "an international field. And I think it's absolutely essential for us to play on a global stage. We can't be excellent at what we do and not understand where we fit in an international perspective" (P12).

Regardless of the specific field of study, it is emphasised that internationalisation is an enabling force. For example, "internationalisation happens to enable research in, in my space, and it will happen to enable postgraduate affairs in somebody else's portfolio" (P6). With regard to working collaboratively across the globe and including different perspectives, it is relevant for all core functions of the university.

> I think any kind of learning, teaching, research de facto needs to be collaborative from different places in the world geopolitically, geoculturally, because it just makes for much more robust engagement and that's what the business of I think research is. Research in its, in its core definition is about curiosity, contingency, experimentation, fearlessness, you know the desire to want to know – not always to necessarily be able to explain everything but at least to be able to ask questions that elicit excitement, right. And these things come when we, when we are sitting from different parts of the world (P8).

One way in which learning, teaching and research can be collaborative is through partnerships, and international partnerships accommodate perspectives 'from different places in the world'.

On Partnerships - Types, Aims, Outcomes, Characteristics, Successes Factors

Partnerships accommodate and enable collaborative working. They are essentially "about place, people and ideas…And if you got place, people and ideas, it can be anywhere, even between two departments, it's a partnership" (P3). Therefore partnerships can be established within the institution but also with other universities in the country:

> …but we're also gonna have to reach out internally, in other words, the sector in South Africa. We're competing for the same students, we're competing for the same resources. So I think that time has come to look at partnerships in different ways, and this might be partnerships around teaching common courses or teaching, sharing out specialisations who, we have to pay much more attention to that now because we're competing so heavily for the same small pool of students (P3).

While an internal focus is considered increasingly important, it is also highlighted that such work "can never, that can never be done without looking outside and the outside has to be redefined, what is outside, is outside when it's overseas, over the mountain, or what is outside" (P3). In some instances, the 'outside' is quite clearly demarcated. For example:

> …we have to understand what's happening in India and China in the digital space. And to have a strong handle on what's going on in the North. So, I think it's, as an international researcher, an international academic, I, I've always believed that you have to, to develop actual relationships with people around the world (P12).

In the context of such relationships, there is a general concern regarding Wits' place in the world, as "where we fit is important to…to have more than conversations, to have relationships with people around the world. And it's not only North-South, it's South-South as well" (P12).

As such, partnerships are an important dimension of the international outlook of the University and are established with people and institutions in different regions across the globe. They can include "university to university, and university to companies" relations (P12). Apart from different types of partners, partnerships differ considerably, for example, in terms of their scope:

> Some of these are not university-wide, sometimes they are more faculty-wide or specifically school-wide. Sometimes it's just the School of Law, so the School of Law

> has got some fantastic relationships with American universities, and the Wits Business School on the other hand has some very good relationships. (P7)

They are also different regarding what kind of academic activities they include and "they've always all attempted to have three of four components, uh, to them, uh, and typically, uh, student exchange, staff exchange, research" (P9).

As mentioned earlier, Wits is "a research intensive university, so we prioritise the teaching – research axis." (P3). This focus is reflected in partnerships, where "the research and teaching always go together. I don't know of any partnership where someone is just teaching somewhere." (P3) A key concern around partnerships is their role in facilitating the production of new knowledge, "and ultimately the aim has been to say let's throw all of those things into the pot and see what new ideas we come up with, what new research" (P9).

To achieve this aim, partnerships can be set up in many different ways.

> …one either has partnerships as, as we've had with the [name of research unit] through individuals and their institutes, and that's also, one, I suppose one could say those are organic partnerships. Uhm, then, at, at the other end of the spectrum, there're partnerships that evolve from institutions signing MoUs or MoAs, so they create the institution umbrella that facilitate creating, uh, you know, uh, local partnerships, right, but that's often quite complicated (P9).

In some instances, broader institutional frameworks or focus areas provide strategic guidance and function as mechanisms to narrow down choices that could otherwise be considered overwhelming.

> So BRICS has and ARUA have been instrumental. They have allowed us now to actually start fine-tuning and refining our partnerships initiatives because that, in a way, starts cleaning up the system that you don't end up partnering with everyone, but you become very selective and careful and of, of who you work with in a very productive way (P11).

In this instance, the institutional agenda of working with Southern partners is given direction by indicating that such collaboration can be channelled mainly through two existing vehicles – the African Research University Alliance (ARUA) regarding work on the continent and BRICS regarding engagements elsewhere in the global South, specifically with partners in Brazil,

Russia, India and China. As far as China is concerned, it can be noted that working within established frameworks is not always as straightforward as it seems. For example, views on China as a partner country differ, and there is a considerable degree of scepticism, reflected in debates with colleagues saying:

> ”You shouldn’t be going to China.” because, you know, he feels that the Chinese government has an ulterior motive and all of that and, you know, “Why do we want to partner with the Chinese universities because ultimately the universities in China are controlled by the government, and if you’re gonna work with the universities, you’re supporting the government” (P7).

Furthermore, partnerships with Chinese institutions are viewed under a potential risk of recolonisation and “we do need to be careful, though, of the new potential colonisers, China. Uhm, these Confucius institutes, uhm, are not really focused on sharing, you know, knowledge and, and research. They are there to influence” (P6).

In the broader BRICS context, there are “people who are completely against all these activities with the Chinese and the Russians and others, especially the whole BRICS idea. So, India, Russia and China they’re saying are trying to colonise Africa, all three of them” (P7). Others disagree, pointing out that

> …what you don’t understand is that by the year 2050 the world’s higher education system is gonna be so swamped by the Chinese that they are gonna influence what happens in higher education all over the world. And if you don’t talk to those people in China, and you don’t talk to the people in India, you know, you’re gonna be left behind (P7).

In light of such debates, it is particularly clear that the degree to which an institution can direct internationalisation and partnership activities form the top is limited.

> …you can have an internationalisation and partnership office and all of that, but my own experience has been, it’s what the people at the bottom are doing what’s matters. You can have someone from the top tell you “Well, we need to establish a partnership with China”, but that partnership is, grows the best when two academics, one in China and one in South Africa, have found a common intellectual project. Makes for the basis of a good internationalisation and partnership project (P3).

Of such common intellectual projects there are many. For example, a shared research interest or approach can provide the basis for a comparative research project:

> …two groups who have very similar approaches to history, so social history, history from below, uh, and, uh, and we focused a lot of the research on the respective struggles for freedom by black people in those countries, so the Civil Rights Movement and the Anti-Apartheid Movement (P9).

The example mentioned here was "a very focussed research, a very focussed partnership, uhm, on a particular theme, with a particular outcome in mind" (P9), which was a joint publication.

At Wits, there is space for such partnerships as well as all kinds of others.

> You can't only have a top-down driven approach to partnership. You're gonna have top down, bottom up and then, but it's up to people like myself who are in, who are, who report to the top but also report to the bottom to find the opportunities and the synergies. And that's how I see my role on the issue of partnerships (P3).

There is a view that bottom-up partnerships tend to be more successful than the ones that are set up following a top-down approach.

> And I have, I think the successful North-South collaborations, and especially the partners we've found, are those… And it takes time, you know, I just wanna also say building these networks and collaborations take time. And that's why they have to do with people who you meet at a conference, how you find a synergy to a research project. It, in many ways it's from the ground up. And then the other model I'm saying to you is the top down approach, right. The EU funding is a top down approach. But those ones from the North-South that are people driven, that are personality driven, those ones become, umm, the more successful ones (P8).

As indicated, there are a number of factors that contribute to the success of partnerships, including time, synergy and joint objectives as well as people that drive the process. Regarding the latter, "You need some strong individuals to champion these things and consolidate them" (P1). Communication is another important factor, as "I think often people want to be associated with each other but no one really talks about it sometimes" (P14). As far as the life cycle of partnerships is concerned, the early stages of a partnership are particularly important, and "the

first year is crucial in the life of a partnership. It's when you're putting all the building blocks in place, and that is when you're building trust" (P3).

Mutual trust is important. Another element is that people who get involved in or support partnerships generally come from a spirit of giving rather than taking, "as I explained earlier about the resourcing and money, I come from a space of support and giving. And when I come from that space I actually find that I get more out of it" (P14).

In addition, partnerships that are considered successful have top management support.

> Most of the time a partnership that works very well has got people from both sides supporting that partnership. And when I say people from both sides I mean people in high places, you know, people that are most probably DVC[65]s or maybe VCs or maybe deans (P7).

In some instances, top-down and bottom-up approaches come together in a single partnership, "So when, when the top came to say 'Listen guys we want to talk to [name pf partner university], the bottom was ready. That's, that's what makes a good partnership" (P7). Generally, for partnerships to work "You need the support from the top, but more than that support from the top you need the active engagement of the people from the bottom." (P7) Even with top management's support, partnerships require commitment and often considerable additional efforts from 'people from the bottom'.

> …what tends to happen is this sort of encouragement for internationalisation and working through the partnerships, it takes quite a lot of work from the people, the, let's just call them directors. There are different kinds, but let's just say directors, because partnerships require nurturing, they require facilitating, they require, uh, you know, you know, one-on-one meetings, you know, finding chemistry between people, all of those things, right. And the, there's the kind of drafting of proposals, drafting of reports, checking on people. Uhm, and, uh, a lot of that work, uh, rests on the shoulders of the directors of institutes (P9).

Managing and coordinating internationalisation and partnerships activities is time-consuming. Those that are dedicated to the process are generally willing to put in the hours. Wherever possible, arrangements for external support are used. For example,

[65] The acronym DVC stands for Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

> Well, I insisted on having a technician and an administrator. Otherwise I said I'm out, by the way, so you know that, okay. So I just, I got wise. I just said, okay, you know what, that's going to be the condition (P4).

However, institutional support is still required, and this is where the challenge lies for many. For example:

> Then there's the big issue, and that is, uhm, institutional encouragement, support for partnerships very rarely comes with financial support. Uhm, and that makes it difficult because then one comes back to where does the funding come from (P9).

On Institutional Challenges – Resources, Capacity, Bureaucracy, Coordination, Attitudes, Transformation

Institutional funds are rarely earmarked for internationalisation efforts, which means that those who want to pursue them are generally required to identify and pursue funding opportunities, often from external sources. This is not only a time-consuming process but also means that the activities that can then be pursued are susceptible to the agenda of the funding body.

> I mean, one of the other things that one, I think, can find in terms of a shared experience, is particularly when it comes to funding, is to say it comes with too many strings attached. And apart from actually putting the time together to bid and to prepare and to write up an application, once you get the money it is often really difficult to make sure you meet all the requirements and are still able to do a valuable contribution to your work (P4).

There are signs that the University is making changes with regard to financial support for partnership activities. In the new proposed five-year research plan, funding has been earmarked to support internationalisation:

> …so when we encourage – practical example, the VC's just returned from China, visit the C9, the top nine universities and, and, so now we, he opened the door, so now the challenge is for [*name of colleague*] and I to find the individuals involved and encourage them to get involved, and, and we now have the resources to say "Well, we can get you to China. We can get you to spend a few days there, this is the person I want you to go and speak to. See what you can do" (P6).

Apart from financial support, academics and researchers need administrative support to facilitate the overall management of partnerships at all stages. In this context, it is important to be aware of whatever institutional support is available and understand how to use it as effectively as possible.

> So I think where I've been successful is I've worked with the [name of office], I've worked with the DFO, and with the Vice-Chancellors of Wits, but I've done most of the work and they've come in where it needs a person in London to go and to have a meeting and get something or do something or to have something on the Vice-Chancellor's agenda when he's visiting. But I have to set the groundwork and do the work. It's that I have to do the work. If there are proposals to write and presentations to do, and phone calls to have, and face-to-face meetings to do, and follow-up to do, there's a lot that I have to do to make these things work, and I have to use the institutional entities to help me, but I can't aggregate responsibility and say they must do it (P12).

However, even though institutional support entities exist, their actual capacity to support internationalisation activities of academics and researchers is called into question.

> …so even though there is an inter, International Office, which is now being incorporated, right, into the Research Office and therefore is, you know, one would have imagined that it would've grown independently but has now been incorporated elsewhere, uh, so, yes, it is part of research but is there the capacity at the central level to support all, all of this work that must be done. Or is the model that you, that you encourage international support but you leave the work to other people to do. Okay? (P9).

The integration of the partnerships office into the University's research office suggests that the mandate of that office has been narrowed to research partnerships. Every partnership the office supports "has to be linked with research, has to be linked with some type of collaborative project coming out, journal articles coming out, those type of things" (P7). While the office's "role is not internationalisation" (P7), it uses its "partnerships role to further internationalisation" (P7). There is currently no single institutional structure with a dedicated mandate on comprehensive institutional internationalisation, especially once the process of closing the Internationalisation and Strategic Partnerships Committee of the University's Senate has been concluded.

> …just yesterday the ISPC, remember that Senate sub-committee on internationalisation was closed, ok? Uh, not that we don't think internationalisation is important, but we're injecting it into the existing Senate sub-committees, so the URC must do internationalisation, the University Research Committee. The Senate Graduate Studies, the Postgraduate must do internationalisation, the Teaching and Learning must do internationalisation. So, rather than having it in a sense separate and, and a thrust to internationalise what, uh, the university, no, we wanna internationalise research, research benefits from internationalisation, postgrad student experience benefits from internationalisation, so to, not to have it separate, to have it as part of the I guess the three missions of the university" (P6).

Internationalisation is currently prioritised and managed differently across the institution, with "Some faculties are trying to actively get into Africa, other faculties are not really worrying about Africa but they want to be more involved in Europe, some want to be more involved in Asia" (P7).

In this context, the partnerships office tries to "work closely with all of them to assist them to meet their goals" (P7). However, with a total staff complement of four, such institutional capacity to support internationalisation and partnerships is limited. There are departments, where the work on internationalisation and partnerships rests solely on the shoulders of individual members of staff.

> So we hear a lot about internationalisation, uh, but as a department we are not, we don't have actually a strategy on internationalisation or partnerships (laughs). Ah, it's partly because, uh, that information is not well communicated, uh, from the university in particular. Umm, but there's not much money also in partnerships in the social sciences to, to make them or we don't have big institutional arrangements, ah, with other, other institutions. Uh, so you have individuals who have a lot of linkages, like networks, ja, but not as a department (P13).

The internationalisation function at the University is

> …highly decentralised. And I would say it's even, it's so decentralised at Wits it's down to the individual academic. I don't even see faculties taking the space up. Right? And so individuals will approach the international office, and the international office will be

> a huge help. But it isn't, there isn't an institutional angle. So, I don't see it happening at the moment at SET, certainly not in Senate (P2).

While centralisation of this function might be considered an option, it would not necessarily be a solution to the existing problem, as "I don't think that you can centralise all of this. I don't think it's possible. There're too many different kinds of international collaborations that happen, even within a particular discipline" (P9).

Another argument against centralisation is that "we know from experience that in fact academics don't like that because then you have this sort of central surveillance over what is being done" (P9). And so a dilemma remains because, at the same time, "one could do with central support" (P9). While the potential for oversight and control that centralisation would enable is rejected by some, others see the need for a central function with oversight and decision-making powers to coordinate the University's internationalisation efforts.

> …with the internationalisation and strategic partnerships office changing their mandates slightly which is that they will only deal with exchanges which are cross-faculty. If it's an exchange that one particular school or one particular faculty wants to enter into with no one else, then they decline to deal with those partnerships from a strategic point of view. But the problem I have with that is that, that still results in the university just entering into haphazard engagements with everyone as opposed to everything going through that office as it should and that office making the determination in consultation with management whether we should be engaging with these institutions at all (P16).

For now, a consistent overall feeling regarding internationalisation at the University is that "Wits doesn't take it seriously, seriously enough. Because, yes, we've got an International Office, yes, we've got a DFO, but they're so under-resourced" (P12). Lack of internal capacity is seen as an obstacle to the ability to implement internationalisation and partnerships at optimum levels.

> And part of it could well, very well be the capacity that we have, you know, whereas if you wanted to run this thing properly and increase the international profile you should have another, you should double the size of your, your legal and international divisions (P15).

Under current circumstances, the University cannot take full advantage of the opportunities that exist because of lack of capacity. For example, with regard to the ability to bid for international grants, the University has recognised that many academics " just don't have that capacity to do all of that because they're teaching lots and, you know, all the other stuff" (P6). From the perspective of a researcher,

> …if they want us to do this kind of research and have international partners and do this level of research, they cannot give us 600 undergrad students. Now [*name of the Vice-Chancellor*] s saying we have to take 50 Masters by coursework. But they're not going to reduce our undergrad numbers. And with all due respect these students are not from Harvard or Cambridge (P4).

To assist in that regard, a decision has been made to "set aside budget to, to provide research management support, grant writing support, to, to realise or to really to compete competitively, uh, for those grants" (P6). Under resourcing of capacity at central level is further compounded when departments struggle with lack of resources. For example:

> Like right now this department has no administrator, and we are going to be hosting four international scholars immediately from Sweden for this new grant, uh, plus two researchers, and we're gonna host an international film maker to run a series of master classes. All, all this without an administrator, which means suddenly academic staff are now booking, our jobs are like we book tickets, and we're worrying about accommodation, right, instead of what I should be finalising is actually the programme (P8).

Across the University, there seems to be a mismatch between the ambition to internationalise and have partnerships and the capacity to actually support such endeavours effectively, "So therefore the heart of our DNA should be this outward looking attitude. But we don't put resources behind it, which I think is crazy and hypocritical of the university" (P12).

Without resources and support, bureaucratic burdens become even more palpable.

> So what one has, uh, is a, a strong desire and, I would say, political support for internationalisation, uh, but the wheels of the bureaucracy tend to turn slower and they, and they can often hinder the implementation, uh, of, of those things (P9).

To illustrate this further, a point of contention at Wits is the legal aspect of partnerships. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that a sound legal agreement is a sensible prerequisite for a partnership.

> I think the MoU and MoA, as much as they're a legalistic approach to partnerships, they provide a frame of reference for both partners, within which to operate. 'Coz otherwise this relationship can get quite fraught and all of that. So I think, as much as it is a legalistic thing, it sets the framework (P3).

On the other hand, the turnaround time of negotiating the relevant agreements can be rather slow.

> And the way in which on the one hand the university signing all these things was to enable but it doesn't enable with the swiftness in which people need to make decisions. So if a, if a contract gets stuck in the legal office, that's three months. It's, it's too long. The turnaround is too long for how money works also (P8).

In extreme cases, the process is so delayed that the partnership that is being developed is de facto put on hold because "it's taken two years, yah, for the two institutions and the legal offices to come to an agreement, right, even though the agreement is a generic standard agreement, there is no details, right? And that's quite frustrating" (P9).

Academic and support staff do not always seem to sit in the same boat when it comes to the negotiation of agreements. From a legal perspective, for example:

> …if I were to go back to an academic and say look I'm not happy with this agreement because of one, two, three, more often than not they'll come back to me and say ja, ja, ja whatever, we need the partnership. So it's actually it's more of a sense amongst the people that are actually going to engage on a day to day basis with these institutions, but they don't really mind what the terms are just get it done, we want the partnership. Or it doesn't matter, we've got students going on Monday just sign it, we'll deal with it. It's that sort of thing where the legality shouldn't be getting in the way, in the way of the academic project, whatever those legalities might be. So I would say I don't believe we should just be signing with all and sundry. I don't believe we should be compromising on important things. Umm, but the sense I get from academics is that it doesn't matter, just sign it, we want the partnership (P16).

Apart from the integrity of the academic project, legal arrangements regarding liability as well as the protection of intellectual property are considered non-negotiable. As far as the latter is concerned:

> I think we need to make sure that there is equal protection of intellectual property because we've seen over so many years that the intellectual property of people that come from African regions is just exploited and used and commercialised without due acknowledgment and benefit of the people that own it really, in reality. So IP protection is, is huge (P16).

There is need for both sides to be more understanding and accommodating of each other.

> And so, and so I don't think the two aspects, the recruiters, which are the academics, and, and, and, and the bureaucracy are working as well as they, they should. Uhmm, you know the, the academics will profess naivety and, and the legal office will, will, will be able, will illustrate, systems can be both enabling and hindering at the same time. This is not only the test every word that's there (P15).

Internationalisation requires collaboration of different departments and units within the University, which is seen as something that can be improved.

> I guess I would just say, I mean, one thing is just that sort of, I do feel like that you and other persons working in the bureaucracies, uhm, uhm, it's kind of a hard, I, I don't feel like the universities have kind of recognised the professionalism or the experience that's there, and it's too easily often for the academics or the managers to just kind of dismiss that. Uhm, so, you know, it's not always the easiest thing to understand how but I think it's an important part of the dynamic which we haven't touched on here, you know, the kind of, it's not just a bureaucracy, you know, where are the reporting lines, how much resources, it's a, you know, it's an intra university collaboration process where, you know, the, especially in a thing like an institutional international partnership, the administrators get to understand what's happening (P5).

Even if the main focus of internationalisation efforts is on sound intellectual projects, it is noted that "academics don't only own the academic project. The academic project is not a project only of academics. But, you know, not everyone agrees with me" (P5).

While the challenges are described here with reference to Wits, they might be relevant to universities in general.

> So, so when I talk about institutional inertia, I'm not, it's not, I'm not simply focussing on Wits University, I'm saying institutions themselves, the bureaucracies work, you know, at, uh, at different paces, and, and that, it's not always slow but it has tended to be slower than, uh, the organic, uhm, development of partnerships (P9).

Partnerships are likely to fail "when the two institutions, the two legal offices are overly bureaucratic and allow the legalistic and the bureaucracy to drive the intellectual" (P3) Delays in negotiating agreements are, of course, not the only reason why partnerships might fail. Failure also "happens when the ideas at the intellectual level are weak, they're tentative, there's not a lot of buy-in, then there's no one championing it" (P3). However, the administrative burden of being involved in internationalisation and partnerships activities cannot be underestimated, especially in an environment where resources are already scarce.

So, the question of how activities by academics and researchers are supported at the institutional level is important, and "The University has recognised that and two decisions have been made" regarding earmarked funding for international visits and grant writing.

Another aspect worth looking at is the overall alignment of individual activities and objectives at the departmental and institutional levels. In that regard, it appears that what is happening in departments, schools and centres is, generally speaking, aligned to broader institutional perspectives. For example, "we frame our part, international partnerships of various kinds, uh, in those two terms, what would be in terms of what is called broadly African Studies but also frame it as part of the University's imperative to internationalise (P9). However, it appears as if this alignment is rather accidental.

> …from an institutional point of view, whether or not the university, uh, you know, encourage what is called internationalisation, uh, we would've, uh, we had those connections already, and we desire to create those connections. And then of course the University's emphasis, increasing emphasis on internationalisation, uh, has meant that it has, uh, that those two processes have been mutually reinforcing (P9).

It is alluded here that the partnerships focussed on a particular discipline, African Studies in this case, would exist even if the University would not support internationalisation. This point seems to support a finding made years earlier by an external consultant who studied the

University's partnerships and "did all that research, he came and he interviewed all of us and then he presented to the senior executive committee" (P8).

> I mean the thing I found interesting about his research is he said, uh, collaborations, especially North-South collaborations, even if the university, uhm, set an agenda they would happen in spite of the university, not because of the university. And I thought that was a really interesting finding (P8).

These observations create an impression that "Wits chases international opportunities as opposed to creates them. And I think that's, that is a problem" (P2) and that "internationalisation is almost an afterthought" (P1) and not prioritised in the same way across the institution, as "You don't hear a lot of it in the university's discussions unless you're particularly interested in it as a person. But it doesn't seem to be part of the university's agenda" (P1).

At the same time, there is a realisation that

> …there isn't a, there isn't a, we could do something across the university that looked at the complex process of internationalisation. You know, we've gotten an office and whatever, but, uhm, I suppose, you know, a study like what you're doing right now – you're doing it for a PhD which is a little bit different – but I don't see institutions looking at themselves and asking that question "What is our agency?", then on investigating and discerning and grabbing some of the possibilities of partnerships, you know, international relations (P5).

While there are individuals who are interested in such questions and are very invested in internationalisation and partnerships, not everyone shares their enthusiasm or has a general interest in that regard.

> I feel that Wits could benefit a whole lot more if many more Wits academics were open to partnerships. And although people pay lip service to "Oh, we work in partnerships, we would love to work with XYZ." But it needs a lot of work, it's hard work, and people are not prepared to put in the hours for the hard work (P12).

If there is no buy-in across the institution, "some of these exchanges and partnerships are at risk of remaining at the level of individual champions" (P1). This might indicate that internationalisation is not full embedded institutionally. It rests with individuals, who:

> …you know, and so again for me, you know, 50% of the students I have trained are from outside South Africa, so for me this is like natural. You know, all the other people in my school go, look at them like this, you know, they're not as broad-minded as me, but anyway (P4).

When driving efforts to recruit international students, Wits needs to be aware of the environment these students will find themselves in. One also has to bear in mind that activities such as the recruitment of international staff are more complex than simply employing such people. As one international staff member realised, Wits "on the one hand claims they want to internationalise but they haven't done anything to make it easier for you to live here" (P1). To illustrate this further:

> Look, I heard Wits talk about, you know, having a certain proportion of the academics being international. But, then you look at how people are treated once they get here. Ahh, first of all, your spouse gets an accompanying spouse visa, which means she can't even open a bank account. I mean, it's like 1920s. Ahh, then she can't get a job. So suddenly you find that, oh, I'm going to look after all these people with my salary alone, which, by the way, is very low, for a country, for a city as expensive as Johannesburg. So for me, when I got here I realised, well, I face a steeper cost curve than the average South African at my level (P1).

There is disappointment about the lack of understanding and support regarding the potential challenges faced by international staff, which is exacerbated when they are then also faced with outright suspicion, and "Well, you realise that there's even the suspicious, the suspicion of too many foreign academics. They don't see the value added in this kind of interaction with the rest of the world" (P1).

Interestingly, the suspicion experienced by particularly black academics from other countries on the continent is compared to a similar reception in the North:

> …our interactions with black South Africans is not very different from our interaction with white people in Europe, in the sense that you still have to twice as good, you're still regarded with suspicion, you have to struggle to be included in things you're clearly qualified to participate in. And so I was telling my friends, maybe it'd be better if we go back and live in Europe because if we're gonna be dealing with the same obstacles, then let it happen in a system that at least works. You know, it's like ok, well, if myself

> and my children are gonna be second-class citizens, they'll be better be second-class citizens in Germany or in France or in Spain. When we're gonna be second-class citizens in South Africa with all this dysfunctionality, then it's really not a good proposition as far as I'm concerned (P1).

The resentment that is felt raises the question of how internationalisation relates to national priorities such as transformation. Wits is not an island. It is part of a national system of higher education and, as such, affected by key developments in that context. A key priority affecting higher education and internationalisation of the sector in South Africa is transformation.

> South Africa internally has got its own issues as well. I mean, you know, we, we cannot do everything because we still have historical legacies to contain with. If we o…, if we internationalise openly in toward, toward the rest of the African continent, we might find ourselves getting into trouble in the future because the Black South Africans are getting left behind, right? (P11).

Transformation is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is, for example, concerned with increased representation of underrepresented groups.

> But the, the, the, the transformation especially here is important because you need, you need more, you need more scholars here. Uh, you need more black scholars and so on. That's important. Yeah, that's important. And I can see why students will be raising it. I mean they are raising it in places like politics. They say, "How come that we have a department that it, it still remains very white?" and yet we need more. Ja, so it's a very different, uh, notion around equalising. We are not going really to just, just standing there and teaching these students it gives them I mean a new role model. So that is transformation I think at its best, and get more women and so on (P11).

From the perspective on an international member of staff, a university should accommodate a diversity of people, including those from outside South Africa.

> No, I mean, I think in universities you're gonna have, you have to have diversity, you have to have space for different angles. Uhm, so, you know, I've, one of the things I've really struggled with in this moment is sort of, you know, the idea that foreigners shouldn't have a space in South African higher education. They're taking jobs is, sort of, how it's typically pitched, right? And it, that sort of just fundamentally misses the point of a university environment, which is, you know, enriched by a multitude of

> understandings, experiences and positionalities. And, uh, and, you know, sort of claiming that, you know, a South African institution will only de decolonised, or will only be, uhm, truly, sort of, helpful to the South African population if it is 100% representative of South African society. It's, I'm not sure if that needs to be the aspiration (P2).

While internationalisation and transformation are clearly linked, there are different views as to what the nature of the relationship between the two concepts is. The following observation is made:

> And, also, some of what you also see is that there's a kind of, you know, national resentment. Because some of the accreditation visits that we got, you hear people talking about why are there so many foreign academics in the department? "You don't think that is an asset?" No actually, they don't. They're talking employment equity, when we're talking internationally competitive universities (P1).

So, on the one hand, transformation and internationalisation can be seen as opposing objectives, particularly when it comes to the representation of black South Africans in the staff body of the institution. From the perspective of black staff from other countries on the continent:

> Ahh, employment equity rules means that we're not black. And, you know, I'm like, [laughs] what do you mean I'm not black. You know. So, when, so you're suddenly experience rejection, institutional rejection, not so much individual rejection, institutional rejection. The policies of the state are, constitute, you know, rejection of the value we bring to the table (P1).

In addition, there are other complexities around transformation.

> …affirmative action programmes have always generated resentment. Now, one of the important ways to deal with that resentment is to make sure that the beneficiaries of affirmative action programmes have skills that the general market does not have. Because then they're standing there because of their skills, not because of the colour of their skin. And so people quickly forget what they look like, because they're totally fascinated by what they can do. So, their appearance, their skin colour, their demographic background ceases to be a consideration. So there's a sense in which we're using our programme to transform the industry in a very business friendly way (P1).

As hinted here, in the context of transformation internationalisation can, on the other hand, also be understood as an enabling force:

> …internationalisation needs to be prioritised on the same level as transformation. In fact, it should be seen as a way of accelerating transformation. You know, they completely underestimate the potential of these partnerships as a catalyst for transformation. Coz that's how you produce world-class academics, that's how you produce world-class graduates. That's how you let South Africa, and for that matter the majority of black people that you're trying to help into the global mainstream. So, you know, there's a sense in which resources, networks that would accelerate transformation is actually not being taken advantage of. Yah, it's been made, it's like transformation is seen as an either-or situation. It's not been approached as a win-win discussion (P1).

Internationalisation and transformation alike are linked to the notion of excellence.

> We have to, transformation without excellence then won't work. And excellence without transformation will not work either. So there is no mutual exclusivity there. So it's the path that you can meander between balancing the two to choose. A lot of people actually look at it unfortunately one way or the other. You either do this or that. So the key here is to ensure that you are able to achieve both in, it's a much tougher challenge than internationalisation, 'coz internationalisation is linked with your global excellence standard. But you cannot internationalise without transformation, coz' at the, at the moment the pool of well qualified PhD level academics in the country is very low. Eh, so to transform you need to educate the next generation. And it's, to educate the next generation you need to have, you need to draw from all the resources across the world, right? (P11.

In the long run, it is argued, transformation and internationalisation will benefit each other "because in the long run you're actually going to uh to, to strengthen your capacity to engage with the rest of the world" (P13). This increased capacity to 'engage with the rest of the world' is based on a multi-layered understanding of transformation:

> But I see in the long run that the more knowledge we have about ourselves umm… In fact the more funding we have of our own institution, the better because I think that's the larger debate on transformation. It's about how much money are we putting in our

> institution - not just from the fees front but are we building our libraries, are we building our, are we building our own indigenous research capacity? (P13).

There are those that focus on the transformative nature of internationalisation.

> But even as we have an internationalisation and partnerships committee, we're starting to think about, a lot of this work is transformative, so why not link the Internationalisation and Partnership Committee with the Faculty Transformation Committee, so that you can tackle the question of curriculum transformation, transform, transforming the student profile, transforming how we engage with other parts of the world. You see what I'm saying? Look at it holistically. (P3)

From a holistic point of view, the interwovenness of internationalisation and transformation becomes apparent:

> …and internationalisation is seen as something about geography. It's about places, and transformation is here about local and about curriculum, when in fact, if you want to do some of those imperatives for internationalisation like, say, recruit students from another place, you can't recruit without attending to your curriculum transformation, for example. So the institution can have the view about building knowledge, but how do you build knowledge without transforming the curriculum. You can have about recruiting students but how do you do it without the transformation. So the point I'm making is even the three or four institutional priorities for partnerships link directly with transformation, and so I'm looking to merge those two committees (P3).

There is also a realisation that transformation, while a priority in the country, is not something that South Africa owns. On the contrary:

> It's not about… So for me this is a huge, huge question and I, I really am becoming more and more like you wanna hear black rage, it'll come now. I feel very antagonistic towards the institution around transformation and seeing transformation as separate from internationalisation as though what is happening in the North, like we're so special. Well actually everyone in the world is addressing radical transformation on the level of curriculum, that's where I wanna, on the level of thinking, on the level of epistemology, on the level of bodies – of bodies who teach and bodies who learn. So it's not like Europe doesn't recognise that the bodies that are teaching have to change

> because if they don't change the bodies in the classroom, it doesn't attract the bodies who will come to that institution (P8).

From this point of view, "…this transformation issue in South Africa being this kind of isolated thing is very, very frustrating actually." (P8) Isolationist thinking is understood as part of the broader national context.

> Well, look, for me, the big thing for me is that South Africa has to start seeing itself as part of the global system. I have picked up what I call South African exceptionalism. My impression is that they think, they think their problems are so unique, they have no parallels elsewhere. And they seem to think, the only people who can truly solve their own problems, is themselves (P1).

Such exceptionalism, based on the "view that South Africa is just its own thing, and that means it doesn't have to be globalised, and that I think is not, or it, that's, that's unfortunate." (P5) Perhaps such a view can be explained in the context of South Africa's history of apartheid, which meant that the country and its higher education sector was isolated from the rest of the world, as "South Africa was isolated because of apartheid, and we felt even more isolated, you know, during the '70s and '80s, some people couldn't even go to conferences overseas" (P4). Having said that, it is also pointed out that

> …sure, South Africa's got its own particular dynamics but we're, but there's many ways in which you can analyse African societies, from corruption to, uhm, you know, cultural politics to, uh, place within a, uhm, empires, you know, colonialism, white domination, you know, etcetera (P5).

Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that some of Wits' international linkages are older than the end of apartheid in 1994:

> …the connections between universities such as Wits, UCT and the Oxbridge universities also have a long tradition. Uh, so, uh, and, and those go back, uh, to, you know, throughout the 20th century. Uh, and so, the Rhodes Mandela scholarships is, you know, part of that etcetera, etcetera (P9).

In the context of South Africa's relatively recent (re-) connection with the rest of the world, the question arises of whether the country is ready to be a global player.

> I have very mixed feelings about it in the sense that we were hoping to be able to use South Africa as a launch pad to bring a number of these networks and resources onto the continent. But my disappointment is that South Africa has refused to be a player in that respect in the sense that they're too preoccupied with their local employment equity considerations at the expense of some of these, like, for example, if some of these partnerships gain ground, South African programmes become competitive alternatives to similar programmes in Europe and North America. Ahh, and it's a real, they don't seem to recognise or want to play well [?] enough (P1).

In terms of making the most of what internationalisation offers, being opportunity ready is a useful characteristic at the national, institutional and individual levels. As far as students are concerned, universities have an important role to play in fostering such preparedness.

> What university is there for is to, not every, you know, I just want to say it's interesting also always when we put out the call to students who apply for our international exchanges, one of the things we've had to actually put on, you know, when they submit their motivation is "Do you have a South African passport?" So just even getting young people to recognise that, you know, there are two things in the world that you really need as an obligatory, it's no, you have to at this point in your life know how to drive and you have to have a passport. This is like a no, non negotiable (P8).

South African universities fulfil their role of broadening young people's minds under difficult circumstances, as "the South African tertiary education sector is under extreme stress" (P9). In an under resourced higher education sector, funding for internationalisation activities of universities is scarce.

> Uh, there are very limited pots of funding for this kind of, for the partnerships that we are talking about, uh, although it's not, I mean, I mean there are places where one can get funding, but it takes work. Uhm, and, uh, and, and the issue is that our universities don't have pots of money (P9).

Some local sources of funding that are mentioned as good examples include the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS). For example:

> …and I'm going to say this, I know people complain about the NRF. The NRF have been very good to me so I've never had a complaint about them. I do anything I can to

> help. They actually are quite flexible. They are! I mean, halfway through a grant I'll discover something, and I'll think, you know what, I'm just going to do that. They don't care, as long as you do good research and you get students and you get publications, they're not wigged out about it (P4).

As far as the NIHSS is concerned:

> …what was really fabulous about them and I guess it's because they're right here and there's an immediacy in their, in their, in their ability to report versus let's say a European Union grant which is far away, it's culturally very distant, uh it's very, you know, an EU grant is exceptionally hierarchical before you get to even tell the person "Excuse me, we have to change x, y and z." And it might be even three months before you hear about three line items that you have to change. Umm, so the, the NIHSS grant was extraordinary because we could really be responsive to feedback as the data was coming through and we recognise in immediate ?, as it were, that we had to change things to be responsive to the people's needs, to the questions that were emerging. Umm… that kind of responsiveness and that latitude to make those changes is really, really important (P8).

In both examples, flexibility and responsiveness to researchers' needs are seen as key elements in the funder's capacity to meaningfully facilitate research, which is what will later be referred to as 'band width for contingency'. Investment in research and in the higher education sector as a whole is crucial if South Africa wants to be a global player.

> …right, and I think if we are not careful we keep on underinvesting with, I mean, to put it bluntly, our universities will be just peripheral to the production of global knowledge and will be insignificant, and no-one will take us seriously. Uh, as has been the case with many universities on the African continent (P11).

It is noted that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has a role to play in that regard:

> …this kind of leadership has also be shown by the Department of Higher Education. They're a key player in partnerships, but they sort of have an ambivalent role to partnerships. They're involved when they're involved, and they're not involved when they're not involved. And yet some of what I'm talking about in terms of partnership will need resources etcetera (P3).

Despite all the institutional and national challenges mentioned here, partnerships happen.

> You know, I, my, my sense is that, uh, they, unless there's a crisis, then the issues are not really dealt with, right, uhm, and what, what tends to happen is that, you know, people complain, and we're writing our reports of the burdens blablabla, but then you just get on with doing it anyway. Uh, and, Uh, and, and so, and there's also an awareness at the higher levels of the problems that, that exist, uhm, and I'm not sure that there is an easy solution (P9).

In the absence of easy solutions to the challenges they face, people at Wits 'get on with it'. While the University is located in Johannesburg, South Africa, Wits sees its relevance extend beyond its immediate location to the region and the world at large. An example that ambitions are high in that regard is expressed in the belief that "…what we're doing here could become Africa's Silicon Valley, if that's a good comparison." (P12), as expressed with reference to one of the University's centres. Furthermore:

> So I think if we're going to become a cluster of innovation and entrepreneurship that's important in Africa, it has to be important in the world. We can't be…and the problems we solve that are problems of our reality have spinoffs or possibilities in the global reality. So I think that this vision, this dream for [name of entity] is very much an international vision. It fits in the world, it doesn't fit in Johannesburg alone. So, the partnerships with companies, universities, entrepreneurs, South-South, North-South, are essential for this to happen (P12).

Partnerships are acknowledged as playing a key role in achieving ambitious goals such as this one and in ensuring that the university is globally competitive:

> And partnerships, eh, will help in maintaining that level of global competitiveness, to access global funds and retain top scholars and so on and so forth. It's very important. I mean the thing is about having, you know, leading edge, uh, academics (P11).

There is a general understanding that partnerships are necessary with institutions in the global North as well as the global South, albeit for different reasons.

On Partnerships: North and South

In terms of the South:

> …there are two reasons why we're doing that: One is that we feel that the world is moving in such a way that the opportunities are going to be with the global South, and then the second is that we feels that Wits needs to change its role in the broader academic environment in a sense that we want to assist, not, we don't, we're not coming with a condescending view, but we want to assist some of the universities in the global South, especially in the more developing countries to achieve some of their, you know, objectives. So, it's more a, a, a capacity building thing. (P7)

Linkages and partnerships with other institutions in the South are often based on the understanding that Wits lends its expertise to these institutions and helps build capacity, particularly on the African continent. For example, a partnership with an organisation in Zimbabe is considered "one example of where we felt coming from the institution that has the know-how and the number one accreditation we can help other parts of Africa, uhm, to be able to have the quality that we have" (P14).

Partnerships with the North are based on a different premise.

> …because we'll need the North, I mean, they have the cutting edge technology, and they've got the cutting edge resources with them. I mean, without them then we'll be stuck in the, eh, you know…. And, of course, we need to partner with global South, but I think to me the priority actually for us, to be honest with you, is MIT, eh, all these big partners are very important, but it comes with an expense. But also you cannot trade off the two (P11).

Partnerships with the global North can be beneficial to the global South because they facilitate access to technology and resources. However, there are different expectations for different partner countries or regions.

> So there is a, sort of a unwritten thing that we at the moment doing is we prefer European Union universities over American universities because American universities don't have the funding available, and the Canadians also don't have the funding but the Europeans, you know, because of the Erasmus+ and all of those other things we would really like to talk to them (P7).

Apart from funding, partnerships with the North facilitate reputation-building.

> So the way I see it the university has this big research thrust and vision and it sort of forges what I would call diplomatic relationships with different institutions in the North because it's the nice, it's the right thing, it's the nice thing, it's the necessary thing to have. Those are probably the words I would use off the top of my head (P8).

Furthermore, these partnerships are diplomatic in the sense that they are "all about strategy, it's all about visibility, it's all about profile", which is necessary "because it positions the university as an institution on a meta-level in a global playing field" (P8). Wits' partnerships with the North are very diverse in terms of types of partner institutions and countries as well as partnership activities. For example:

> The partnerships that I've had in the last 5 years have been on the level of academics, where our curriculum was designed with the help of Americans, groups of Americans. The quality control that we've done have been with these same people and some other Americans who joined. I still do joint research with some of my former colleagues in Sweden (P1).

In addition to other universities, Wits also partners with international companies.

> And then in terms of companies, I've developed a lot of relationships, and I'm thinking North-South, not within South Africa. But North-South with companies that are represented locally but I'm developing relationships across their, with their sort of international parts. So a very long-standing, a very important relationship with Microsoft, recently with IBM, Cisco, a lot of recent work in developing an international link with them (P12).

In a school that focusses on professional degrees, partnerships are established, for example, to facilitate international accreditation.

> We've just developed a partnership with ACCA[66], (spells it) A-C-C-A, which is basically the certified chartered accountants where the head office is based in the UK. So it's an international qualification that operates in over 150 countries" (P14).

[66] ACCA stands for the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, https://www.accaglobal.com/africa/en.html

This partnership does not only make Wits the "first university in the continent to develop a programme that is ACCA-aligned" (P14). What is more, the "bigger purpose for me to do this is that we have a lot of transformation students who are struggling with the throughputs", and these are assisted by being able to sit "more piecemeal board exams" (P14). In addition, it addresses another challenge experienced by students from the continent regarding their ability to get registered as chartered accountants:

> African students who are not getting contracts here. So they study for four years and they can't do their articles here which means they never qualify as a CA. I've had students who have had to go back home. So this way with ACCA you can do your articles anywhere in the world. So that was really the motivation (P14).

In areas where doctoral programmes need to be strengthened, partnerships can be set up to assist in that regard "because we don't have a very good PhD programme I'm hoping that they could help us with supervision for our staff that might be eligible to do PhDs soon" (P14).

On Challenges in North-South Partnerships – Attitudes, Expectations, Funding, Power, Knowledge, Benefits

Wits pursues numerous partnerships with Northern institutions, often with considerable success. However, this should not distract from the fact that such partnerships are riddled with challenges, as they "are generally characterised by, you know, power asymmetry, that's, or inequalities, global inequalities, they reflect the global inequalities" (P11). When asked to share their experiences with North-South partnerships, Wits staff have many stories to tell, particularly regarding the many challenges these partnerships entail. For example, the North is perceived as being arrogant:

> I think the biggest challenge, and one that continues to frustrate me, is the kind of…the international arrogance of some of the institutions. So…for example, in IT, there is this kind of headspace that…where they come with the attitude, 'we are the top in the world and anyone who works with us is receiving from us, and not…and they aren't giving us anything'. So it's always this kind of…and I think of it as an imperialist kind of relationship of the imperial ruler…and the colonial ruled. And I think that kind of cuts across companies and universities… (P12).

The attitude of the 'imperial ruler' can be particularly felt, for example, in negotiations regarding legal agreements to be concluded between the partner universities.

> So, for example, I've always found that American institutions are much more, uhm, hard and unforgiving in terms of their documents and what they require of us and things they are not willing to let go of and give up. And they always want to exclude all liability, they always want to make sure that they are protected, they always want to make sure that we abide by their laws even though we might not know what they are. And so it's always this power play between American universities which have a take-it-or-leave-it approach and us who wants to sort of get a foot in the door and we want to grow and be recognised internationally in these partnerships. And so I've always felt that the university is at a little bit of a disadvantage because we seem to want it more than they do. Uhm, I haven't found that attitude as much with European and British universities, they're a bit more easy-going in terms of the terms of the agreement. I've very rarely had severe bite back, umm, on agreements that we've dealt with. Intellectual property they're more easy-going on, they're not overly strict. Whereas Americans very much are, regardless of the nature of the engagement American universities tend to want to own all the IP whereas European universities very much are of the mind that you can own your IP, we can own ours, and that's fine. So we've often had very difficult exchanges and it's not always, you know, some American universities are easy-going, they don't mind, but on the whole there's a sort of an arrogance that comes from the Western North, if that makes sense (P16).

Such display of arrogance and power by the Northern partner can result in Wits putting its own needs second.

> And when it comes to the, the American institutions, and sometimes British and European, when they really do not want to let go of a clause more often than not we'll capitulate because we really want the partnership. And as much as we might be unhappy with it, we tend to manage things operationally. So we alert the contract administrators to these issues and they just have to deal with it, um, which is unfortunate because we should have as much right to have our, have the agreement be fair to us as it is to them (P16).

The question of whose interests and needs are more important is linked to the general understanding that in the North-South relationship, the North is often associated with the 'haves', whereas the South represents the 'have-nots'. For example:

> …we visited places like Oxford and Cambridge and University College and the University of Dublin. And there was this kind of…and every one of the conversations kind of started with them almost kind of saying, what can we sell you? (P12).

This also finds expression in the way partnerships with the South are approached, in the sense that it is assumed that the North will provide the ideas and concepts, and the South will be an implementation partner.

> …when I first arrived I was contacted regularly by people I had no idea who they were to see if I would, would want to collaborate with them because there was some grant and they needed an African partner, right, quote on quote (P2).

Such expectations might be linked to the assumption that the North is ahead of the South, which is, upon closer inspection, not necessarily found to be true. For example,

> And when I saw what they were doing in comparison to what we're doing, it was blatantly clear that we were streets ahead of them in some aspects. I think they were ahead of us in terms of having huge pots of European money to slosh around. And to be very sort of generous to their entrepreneurs. But in terms of the processes they were adopting, the spaces they were developing, the programmes they were running, I thought we had a whole lot more than they had, and much more impressive (P12).

Despite examples like this:

> There is a sense of what can we do for you, not what can you do for us, right, eh, coming from the North, uh, and the fact that they see, there is a sense of, of seeing in some of the respects as a bit of devel, developmental partnership (P11).

The developmental backdrop of engagements is problematic, as "the kind of domination and imbalance in power happens when groups of people are brought in to so-called develop other groups of people"(P3). In this context, "disrespect or failing to appreciate the context of the global South from the North" (P5) can become "a big part of the rhetoric" (P5) and ultimately impede a partnership. Colleagues in the South bemoan the fact that they are generally seen as 'the receiving end' of the partnership and are not expected to give anything back.

> And I find it very frustrating because in many instances that I've been involved in, we have a lot more to give and they have quite a lot to receive. And the forms, the relationship is usually closed to that possibility (P12)

If the Northern partners are not open to the possibility of the South contributing to the partnership, their Southern counterparts can be left frustrated. This frustration is compounded by their confidence that they can actually bring something to the table, which is aptly expressed in the following anecdote:

> And I was…and like my approach was to say, well, very little that you can sell us, but we could sell you stuff in terms of how to extend the reach of your research or the reach of your companies to understand mass electrification. And we're the experts, we are far more expert than you in doing that; we being South Africa, my collaborators here. So…and I can clearly remember a conference where I was asked to do a keynote on electrification in South Africa and it was literally like a collective jaw-drop when I said to this international audience that we're successfully connecting three hundred and thirty thousand people a year to our national grid. And, you know, there was like this …silence, people couldn't even get their heads around it. And then people were very interested. Then people were saying, but how are you doing this, and how are you doing that, and how do you manage this? So…but to…but up to the point of delivering that keynote it was almost a struggle even to get onto the programme (P12).

Mass electrification is not the only field where Wits staff and their South African partners have expertise. Others include, for example, "Certainly, I would say in the paleo-sciences, South Africa is the leading expert in the paleo-sciences with the Evolution Institute[67]. We set the agenda in that sense, right" (P8). Giving an overview of some of the most important areas in which Wits can shape the global agenda because of its unique history and location, it is noted that health sciences are another field of expertise, as "the burden of disease that we're contained with is something that can only be theorised in the North" (P11). Furthermore:

> Well, we have, you know, uh, the, in the social sciences, of, course, we bring history… that, you know, is unique. And in the, in regards, in natural sciences, you know, the geographical advantage that archaeology gives us. We've got some of those geographical advantages, ah, like the Johannesburg city region is a global

[67] The Evolutionary Studies Institute (ESI) is based at Wits.

> metropolitism, a highly complex global metro, metropolis of the South with specificities that actually give it unique inputs…into the, into the global academy. Ah, I mentioned the origins, ah, human origins, ah, geological sciences, deep level mining where we've developed expertise that is second to none, right? (P11).

World-class expertise is not limited to such research-intensive disciplines. It is also found in areas of professional qualifications. For example:

> …in accounting and auditing we're actually one of the best in the world. We can actually show the States and them a thing or two. So we're not coming from the space of, um, we don't know, we're not capable, you need to help us, what can you give us. It's more like we'd like to be associated with you, but we think we can contribute equally. It's not a one-way contribution (P14).

In setting up partnerships, it is important to not "give the impression that, uhm, we're in a lesser space in South Africa, that actually we're bringing something to the table" (P2). Apart from expertise in certain disciplines, an institution like Wits also offers an opportunity to address global challenges, where "South Africa specific problems where we dis, deal with local issues that have got a huge global impact" (P11). In the broader context, "global perspective means that such perspectives need to be inclusive of voices in the global South" (P3). There are examples where the South sets the pace:

> So the global demand for food feed…the global demand for food and feed and bio based renewable energy is changing conditions for agriculture. And the agriculture system in Europe is actually very fixed. They do things this way, and that's the way they do them. I told you they're very stubborn. Okay, Creating Sustainable Bioeconomies explores the prospects for biosciences and how its innovation has the potential to help countries in the North. Ha! Not the other way around! (P4)

Similarly, there are other areas where countries like South Africa can set the tone of global debates, where "global debates are being shaped here, and they come here and learn about certain global debates like migration, human displacement, inequality and so on (P3).

Regarding the latter, South Africa is "a laboratory to study inequality, you know, where better?" (P6). And inequality is an issue that not only affects South African society. It is also a characteristic of many North-South partnerships. When reflecting on North-South partnerships, partners in the South are concerned with issues relating to dominance and power, which are

residing with the North more than with the South. The power imbalance "never ever goes away. And you have to always be alive to it. We're alive to it every step of the way" (P3). For example, there is a sense that intellectual contributions in engagements between the North and the South are often rather one-sided:

> …you know the ways in which institutions, universities and [inaudible] are treated like vast bed and breakfasts, you know, where people come for their study abroad programme and we give them good food and show them some jazz and take them around, but they do not want an intellectual input from our side, which actually challenges the very structure of what is being taught. (P17)

The hegemony of Northern knowledge extends beyond the classroom into everyday life, as illustrated with the example of film.

> And one of the things that's very central to umm, to our North-South collaborations is that for a long time the way in which film is taught is in a very conventional way, and that conventional way of teaching it has been predicated on the fact that film has to look a certain way. And, of course, the reason why it's easy to sit on the couch on a Saturday night and watch a Hollywood film is because that film language has become so conventionalised that you understand how to read it (P8).

Apart from the lack of genuine intellectual engagement and the dominance of Northern knowledge, "the question of funding is always an issue" (P9) in North-South partnerships. As far as study or research abroad is concerned, such initiatives pose a challenge to the South regarding the reciprocity of mobility programmes at both student and staff levels.

> We have difficulty around staff and student mobility because most of the time staff have to raise their own funds for such mobility, and funding for students is not easily available. Whereas students coming from other parts of the world find it easier to come to us. So there is this question around mobility (P3).

Lack of funding negatively impacts the ability of students to take up mobility opportunities. Even in cases where partial scholarships are made available, the overall cost of student exchange programmes is prohibitive:

> …it was easier for the Northern students to come to the South, we found that the Southern students could not afford to come to the North. I remember in one instance,

> we even went as far as offering South African students free housing, just to lower their costs. We still couldn't get students who could afford to come. Even though at the time tuition was free, housing was free, additional living expenses were still a barrier. So you have this imbalance between the North and the South (P1).

This leads to "inequality mobility. We receive far more students than we can send out per year" (P10), which means that such "North-South agreements – it's hardly beneficial to the university, in my opinion" (P10). Apart from student exchanges, other imbalances are noticeable in the area of research, where knowledge is produced in the North, and the South is relegated to the function of a research site.

> Umm the thing that has irked me for a long time, and I particularly saw this in the early 90s, was, certainly as the country opened up, umm was sort of 'hit and run' type of science that has been done. And there's still quite a bit of that today. Uh, you know, people coming and grabbing some rock samples and taking them away and then publishing on it (P15).

To further illustrate this point:

> Okay, so when I was head of school, we had [name of an ivy league American university] approached us about looking at microorganisms. Now this is a fabulous story anyway 'coz microbes are the best things on the planet. So [laughs], so they wanted to look at microbes in extreme environments, and the gold mines in South Africa are the deepest in the world. So they set up lab down in the basement of OLS[68], and one of our ex microbiology professors, [name of professor], worked with them for a bit, and we signed a kind of memorandum…and they also worked a little bit with some people in geosciences, and whatever. And, and they were there for years, the group…his name was [name of partner], I've even forgotten his name, I've even got a file on this somewhere, anyway, they, and they collected some very interesting microbes, and they published in like *Nature*, and, you know, like big papers like that, and they didn't even acknowledge that they had done the work at Wits University in the microbiology department. I was incensed (P4).

[68] OLS stands for Oppenheimer Life Sciences Building, which is located at Wits University.

The imbalance regarding resources is particularly noticeable when it comes to institutional infrastructure, as the following comparison of research facilities in Belgium and South Africa illustrates:

> Well, they have more money and infrastructure than we do. And I'm in a laboratory based research, ok, so don't get me started on that because I could go on for hours, but I'll give you a perspective. [name of partner]'s just gone back to Belgium, they've refurbished his plant growth facilities. He took me down and showed me a corridor of state-of-the-art laboratories. And I just feel envious. And then complains that they're setting up a gastronomic school…you know, Belgians are famous for their food, but they're setting up…and they only gave him an extra 200,000 Euros to fix something, which is 3 million Rand… you know, and my tissue culture room is the old broom closet, which we call the broom closet, because it used to store the cleaning chemicals in the school, you know (P4).

In light of resource scarcity, institutions in the South look to the North for funding. In such an environment, it is possible that internationalisation efforts are driven by a resource agenda.

> I feel like the current leadership does sort of think it should value that and does value that but it thinks about it as kind of another grant, basically. So, you know, if there was, kind of, if that money was being offered by, you know, a local donor agency or something but not the, it would be just as good (P5).

However, "all the big African research grants are all funded by Europe and America. So, I mean, come on, we need to get those" (P4). Specifically:

> …we cannot rely on the University and the NRF for money anymore. We have to get North-South partnerships. We have to get EU money, Horizon 2020, which is now the next phase. We have to get these Leap-AGRIs[69] and these AU grants, and NIH[70] (P4).

Under these circumstances, academics speak about

[69] LEAP-AGRI is an EU-Africa research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security as well as sustainable agriculture (https://www.era-learn.eu/network-information/networks/leap-agri).
[70] The acronym NIH stands for National Institutes of Health, a medical research centre and an agency of the US Department of Health and Human Service (https://www.nih.gov/).

> …anxieties that we have as Southern scholars about the consequences of resources being monopolised by Northern institutions, and the unequal politics that derive from, uh, that, uh, unequal, uh, control over resources (P9).

It appears that there are varying levels of control that are being exerted by different funders. There are instances where collaborative work is "enabled through funding that comes from outside, it comes from the Mellon Foundation", an organisation that "is absolutely superb in terms of granting you the money for a project and not interfering" (P17). However, this kind of generosity and freedom does not seem to be the norm. On the contrary, funding often comes with 'strings attached'. For example:

> My, my observation of challenges has to do with when institutions and uh who, who are driving let's say a research question, impose a certain framework on the collaborators or the researchers, and I'm gonna give you an example of this. So there's a lot of money from the European Union Commission, right? You know about all these grants that are left, right and centre, and we have a collaboration now that is located or anchored in the Czech Republic. But because it's a funding framework designed by the EU, the… it's producing a lot of antagonisms between the researchers because the framework is not something that they have all mutually agreed to. It is a framework that they are conceding to the design expectations of the Euro, European Union research framework (P8).

Under such conditions, researchers find it difficult to flourish, as arduous administrative tasks and requirements leave little "room for the element of surprise, the possibility of expectation, the, the space for the unexpected" (P8).

> The other problem is the European Union uhm reporting structure is onerous So it doesn't… Best research in my opinion - and this is across any discipline, any researcher will tell you this, worth their salt - is the joy of research is the band width for contingency. That's why it's called research. You need space for experimentation, right. If there's no space for experimentation and you've already earmarked and benchmarked what all the outcomes is then why even do it, right? (P8).

Apart from accepting that "the EU is a very bureaucratic organisation" (P13), there is even a suspicion that arduous requirements are introduced because of mistrust.

> And it's just a question of the, the mistrust. I think the North, Northern institutions don't have much respect for (laughs) I mean not, not respect but trust uh, for, for some of our systems, our institutions, so they impose very onerous conditions (P13).

Apart from administrative burdens, funding rarely comes without a political agenda. In the context of development assistance, for example, there are smokescreens.

> …but like all these aid programmes, you know, when they say there's a billion dollars of aid coming to Africa, and it turns out that 950 million is actually being spent on American companies in America, uh, you know, it's, it's a little bit of smoke and mirrors (P15).

Political agendas are subject to change, which affects particularly funding provided by a government body:

> And I think what happens in these larger collaborations which are not, uh, funded through philanthropic foundations like the Mellon, is that, uh, governments determine the agenda, and very often it is politicians within the government, and politicians means transient political programmes. And so you get, these goal posts keep changing, you know, every three years, every five years or what have you. So what that results in is very many slapdash kind of attempts at intellectual engagement that don't go anywhere. There's a lot of opportunist funding on both sides (P17).

As all these examples illustrate, Southern partners have considerable concerns around resources in terms of how they are mobilised and who controls them. However, the question of who holds power and control is not only relevant in the context of resources but also in the context of knowledge production and dissemination. Asymmetries in knowledge production are described as follows:

> …we recognise that often in these partnerships what tends to happen is that Northern scholars come to South Africa, they do research here. They, uh, research and interpret South Africa from their vantage points. And because the resources are largely located in the North, uh, even when one works with very good, conscious, critical people, the resource inequalities mean that the, uh, resources available for research tend to support that, the conventional gaze from the North to the South (P9).

This conventional gaze affects not only the production of knowledge but also its dissemination:

> …convention of Northern theory and Southern, uh, field studies, right, uhm, where Northern theory is used and we do the field work using Northern theory. And Northern scholars come here with their packaged theories, and they do research and reflect and they go and publish elsewhere (P9).

Publications are an important measurement for research-intensive institutions. At Wits:

> I can tell you that our joint publications, publications with universities, the, the majority are with the global North and, of course, the other thing, the citations, the majority of citations are with the global North. So, you know, if you asked me, what would you promote to enhance the university's publication record and publication impact, obviously I would have to say "Go and collaborate with global North" (P5).

In terms of publications and citations, there is an imbalance towards the North. Furthermore, as far as the dissemination of research through academic journals is concerned, publications are highly imbalanced, not only in terms of the number of research outlets but also in terms of the value that is attached to them. From the perspective of a researcher who came to South Africa from a post at a European university and is considering leaving again, the following is noted in that regard:

> Some local journals have high quality. I've seen a number of them. They're very good quality journals. But, depending on the field you're in, if you really wanna, and also because of the circumstance we face you're aware that one day you might have to pack your bags and go. So you better be careful where you publish. So even if there are good local journals, you never want to put your stuff out there because if you get back on the world stage, you wanna be… You know, people measure you in terms of where you've put your work. So you have to be very strategic which outlets you chose, especially if you entertain the possibility that you might want to go back out (P1).

Regarding publications, the number of outlets as well as the value that is attached to them favour the North. In addition, costs of publishing in international journals can become a prohibitive factor. For example, noting that the National Research Foundation has reduced grants for rated researchers from R80,000 to R30,000, the following is observed.

> Now the US they've, they've decided that they're no longer going to, they're just instituting a blanket charge per publication, so not if you put colour in, uhm, and that

> charge is essentially about R17,000 for a single paper. Now that's, that's now half of my budget (P15)

It is also observed that local publishers do not have the same reach as international ones.

> Ja, and it was with Sun Media, and they were fabulous as publishers, but they actually don't have any relationships with other publishers elsewhere. So the book wasn't, the only way you could get the book was to get it shipped and it cost the same amount to get it shipped than it was to buy it (P2).

Limited reach and increased costs are good reasons for authors in the South to rather work with "the more established international slash Northern" (P2) publishing houses.

Knowledge asymmetries are linked to resource inequalities, as knowledge and wealth and power are interrelated.

> Uh, that has been the challenge, and Africans have paid a big price in that regard that has exacerbated global knowledge which translates into wealth and equality because wealth and power are the same and knowledge are linked together in a merit-based economy (P11).

As all the examples mentioned here illustrate, Wits staff involved in North-South partnerships share many challenges, particularly regarding issues of power and control. They are alive to the inherent risks of reproducing dependency patterns, noting that "it is a challenge, uh, in terms of what one is able to do. Uhm, and, and thus it contributes to reproducing the fundamental problem of inequality in resources" (P9). In the North-South context, partnerships work is not 'business as usual'. In fact, "there're lots of pitfalls, but, but I think if you're clever, and you're astute, you can have beneficial partnerships" (P5).

On Responses to Challenges – Equity, Equality, Balance

There are many ways in which challenges inherent in North-South partnerships are being addressed. For example, some partnerships do not get established in the first place if the terms and conditions attached to them are considered completely unacceptable. Referring to the example of the university yielding to the demands of very forceful Northern partners, as indicated earlier, it is pointed out that such capitulation does not happen at all costs.

> There are other instances where we've had to walk away from partnerships because they simply would have the most unreasonable terms and we couldn't agree. So that's not to say that we capitulate to the disadvantage of our staff and students (P16).

In other cases, people decide to withdraw from partnerships when the frameworks in which they operate become too burdensome, especially with regard to financial and administrative management. If the partnership leaves no 'band width for contingency', "we probably will get out of it. hm, and yet it's a very prestigious grant. It's an extremely, uhm, it's generous also" (P8). Similarly, based on negative experience, people decide to no longer pursue funding mechanisms considered too burdensome.

> …you know, these big international consortiums are not easy to work with. [*Name of a colleague*] said he would never apply for another EU grant, and in fact I have been avoiding EU FP7 grants and 8s…[Why?] because they take months and months to put together and (P4).

Regarding partnerships that are seen as facilitating brain drain from the South to the North, in an attempt to avoid losing talent an institution might decide to withdraw from these partnerships altogether. As noted, "a colleague of ours in Addis said they try and not do any collaborations now with the North, especially America, because the academics don't come back" (P8). On the other hand, partnerships can be used as a mechanism to counter the flight of students and staff.

> If you're not, if you're not connected to these global top, leading, leading institutions, then the brightest students will leave the country. And the brightest staff will leave the country also. You're stuck in an academic parochialism where your brightest minds don't want to be (P11).

In this instance, the prospect of being able to engage with leading institutions around the globe is seen as a means to increase the attractiveness of local study and work opportunities and to retain talent. However, the risk of brain drain is inherent in partnerships, as the example of a recent PhD graduate and young researcher who has just won a number of local and international awards, illustrates:

> Now he's, you know, very bright, mathematically inclined, so we are setting up partnerships, umm with him, through him, with, uh, for instance, uh, Sweden, Finland. Uh he's, he's looking at links with Australia, with Perth, with the big geophysical

> institutes there, trying to create a tripod, probably sort of a post-Africa array type, umm, approach. And again, you know, he's, because of the nature of his work he's had to travel, he's had to meet people. They've liked what they've seen and, and dare I say it, you know, he's had job offers as well (P15).

The brain drain risk can be addressed within a partnership itself, which can be structured in such a way that it provides students with an opportunity "to do a degree elsewhere and secondly to ensure that they didn't get lost in the Northern universities", "so leveraging a long-standing partnership and trying to reconfigure it in order to address a key concern that we had about what happens to South African students when they get into Northern universities" (P9).

It is generally acknowledged that the South will continue to engage in partnerships with the North, mostly because such partnerships provide access to resources.

> And I think that's the, that's the reality that, uh, North-South partnerships are, are the result of the, the persisting in equality globally, uh, and therefore the need for the Southern, the Southern institutions really to tap into, uh, what are essentially dominant Northern resources (P13).

Inequalities are expected to continue to exist for the foreseeable future. However, the more important question is what is done about them.

> …the thing about talk about North-South is that most of the time a North-South partnership inevitably turns out to be an inequitable partnership because, you know, when you talk about the universities in the North generally they are the ones that make up like 90% of the top 500 of the world. They have the money, they have the endowment funds, they have everything, and everybody in the South generally don't have the money, they're not ranked, they're not, you know, all of that. They don't have, you know, even the same number of staff with PhDs and all those other things. So the relationship inevitable starts out inequitably, but I think the key thing for me is what you do with that relationship to make it become equitable in the end (P7).

This means that the status quo of Northern dominance does not remain unchallenged. The dynamics that can be at play in North-South relations is illustrated with an example regarding international benchmarking, where the South finds a way to beat the North at their own game:

> So we kind of have to understand how the world works, and how the world works is that the North has the hegemony of, and does kind of set the standards, like it or not. So what has in fact happened in India – the miracle of the Indian IT industry – has been that they have taken international benchmarks, like CMM and ISO standards, that are international standards, but are sort of aligned to Northern organisations, but they've used it for their benefit. So what the Indians did, and what the Chinese are now doing is saying, "Okay, North America, we see that you respect the CMM measure, that measures on a scale of 1-5, well, we're going to make sure that there are more companies in India, and now in China, at CMM level five than you've got in North America. And that's why work is going from, in the software space, is going from North America to India; because the Indians have taken the benchmark that the North invented and made it their own. And they can now land all sorts of contracts because they're known to be the best in the world, because the North says they're the best in the world (P12).

Within North-South partnerships, there are many ways in which inherent challenges are being addressed by the Southern partners. An important element of that is that they call into question existing attitudes and relationships. For example:

> …my approach is usually quite a humble approach. I don't sort of go out and try and…blow my chest out and inflate what we're doing. But I think by showing people what we do, I think that is more…if people see and understand what we're doing then they understand that there is space for partnership and not for this lopsided relationship (P12).

Dealing with the underlying attitudes of Northern arrogance remains challenging, even if work done is being validated:

> …we were visited recently by a delegation from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. […] And the…the head of the group […] at the end of the meeting, this [*name of head*] said, he has to say, and he'll kind of say it publicly, he's seen many such initiatives in every part of the world, and he's never seen anything more impressive than what we're doing here. So that was coming from him, who is in the grant-giving world and visits such initiatives on a daily basis. So, you know, he admitted that this was really impressive. So I think that we do stand on a par as equals but it's always very hard to engage with that North-South arrogance (P12).

Apart from challenging people's attitudes of superiority by appealing to their reason and by making them understand, Northern domination is being contested in other areas as well.

> I think that one needs to recognise that Northern theory predominates and therefore one has to challenge, uh, the deployment of Northern theory as the only way of doing things. Uh, and, uhm, and therefore the work, in my mind, needs to be done, where we are located and not simply, uh, you know, defer to existing theories that have been developed in Northern institutions (P9).

There is a clear focus that the South has to be a site of knowledge production. It is important to "…produce knowledge in the South, uh, on our own terms, about ourselves." (P9) Linked to this is the imperative to find African solutions to African challenges.

> You know, think of the response to the Ebola, uhm, you know. It, in a sense it was a shame that it was, was the UK and the USA when here, right here at Wits we have so much knowledge that we could have brought to bear. Uh, so we, you know, we've gotta, Africa mustn't rely on, on the global North to solve its problems. We must do it ourselves (P6).

Such knowledge includes, for example, knowledge about the internalisation practices in South Africa:

> …good practices, you know, good practices, internationalisation, that whole, you know, the study abroad agenda we should give it a South African context. We need to, I mean, we, and we will forever look out, which is okay, I mean, we have to look out because we're global citizens, we belong in a global setting, but we need to begin to write, and write, produce literature for us, which we can share with others abroad (P10)'

Not producing knowledge carries risks. For example:

> …Another one actually that we can unfortunately find ourselves in, recolonised is if we don't produce knowledge. You can only decolonise knowledge if you produce it and interrogate global knowledge in an appropriate way. If we actually just now lose our research capacity then we'll end up not able to tender at our own knowledge, print books and find ourselves again, you know, with a begging bowl, begging for information that will now be determined to us by an agenda that we don't control (P11).

Once knowledge is produced, it is important to find relevant dissemination mechanisms, which is linked to the imbalance in terms of publication outlets mentioned earlier. There are ways in which that can be addressed. For example:

> *Nature* are going to be setting up a *Nature Africa*, so, sort of a, like a subgroup of, of, uh, of the journal focussed on African research. Uh, and, and it's those sort of things that you need to do and encourage and support in order to make our inter-Africa collaborations as impactful as and powerful as those global North ones. So, you know, if you ask the question why are those global North ones, why do they realise more citations, it's just a Western dominance of its, of the knowledge, you know. That's where, that's what deemed as important. Uhm , so, so you know, you can rebel against that and say, you know, 'That's not fair.', and it's not but in an essence, in doing that you marginalise yourself. So I think it's better, I, I like that, it's, let, let Nature run a, a journal on African research and, and bring it to the forefront. It, it doesn't mean it needs to be, translate African research into a Western knowledge format, but it, but it needs that, that stamp of quality that a Nature brand does bring to it (P6).

In addition to producing knowledge about the South in the South, there are attempts to change the relationship with the North, for example, by being more selective in terms of choosing Northern partners.

> …we certainly have put in a sort of matrix to try and help us to decide that, and that matrix would be, first of all, based on university rankings. So, if we're getting somebody from global North, then they have to be a very highly ranked university (P6).

The rationale behind that is as follows:

> You have to be in the top 500 in at least three of the four, and if you're not, then we prefer not to talk to you because we're saying, you know what? There are so many universities in the developed world, there is no need for us to talk to everybody. There, we know why we want to talk to the universities in the developed world because we want to advance our research, and the only way we can do that is to talk to people who are already above us in the rankings or close to us in the rankings so maybe, you know, below us also (P7).

Another example of changing the relationship is to address the question of who benefits and how right from the start.

> So, a lot of times when we now get approached by people from the North, we want to know, you know, is this going to be an equitable partnership, or is it going to be one-sided where they gonna benefit most of the time, and we're not benefitting. So that's the first question we normally ask nowadays is can you bring funding with that would benefit Wits staff and students (P7).

The terms of engagement in North-South partnerships can also be changed by including Northern institutions in programmes that essentially focus on building Southern capacity. One example mentioned in that regard is the CARTA[71] programme, which includes Northern institutions, "but they're not there as the dominant players, they are, they're as a contributor, uhm, to essentially an African-focused research programme" (P6). It is a programme that focuses on health sciences, which "you can reproduce that in a number of places" (P6). A third example of changing in the way in which the South engages the North can also be affected is by counteracting the conventional gaze from the North to the South, "And the way that we framed this partnership was very deliberately to uh, uhm, to, to cast the intellectual gaze from South Africa to Switzerland. So we said it's to return the gaze" (P9).

Returning the gaze involves a shifting of perspectives, taking the South to the North. This can help elucidate North-South relations. For example, regarding the expectation that the North is generally ahead of the South, a returned gaze uncovers the following:

> …we, basically we said, we, we were a bit cocky and we said, uh, Switzerland claims to be a, you know, a haven of democracy, but in fact they only extended the franchise to women in the early 1970s. So this idea that they have kind of centuries of democracy is a complete nonsense, okay? So, in fact, that they're only twenty years ahead of South Africa in terms of extending the franchise, uh, to the majority of people. It's not much of a difference, okay, uh, in historical terms (P9).

Shifting the perspective from the South to the North also means that "we would go and do research there. We'd use our experiences in South Africa to try and understand what is happening there" (P9). If the gaze is directed from both the North to the South and from the South to the North in the same project, it can achieve greater levels of mutuality and equality.

[71] The acronym CARTA stands for Consortium for Advance Research Training in Africa (http://www.cartafrica.org/).

There are numerous other ways in which partnerships can be made more equitable. In the context of student exchanges, for example, where Wits has discovered that "we always are the losers in those type of agreements" (P7), the University is "trying not to put into contracts anymore, you know, these fee-waiver type of agreements" (P7). Student exchange agreements can be negotiated on different terms, not solely based on the reciprocity of numbers. For example:

> …we need to look at the terms and reference in our partnerships, you know. I think the university's academic standing allows us to negotiate at length, or we can push here and there. And I know that's what we did at UCT, you know, we, where others ask two to one, you know, we offered three to one with 75% scholarship, you know. Like it's a compromise. Ja, we will receive three of your students, we'll send one but you will pay 75% of the living cost and the flight tickets, and the student will gather the 25% (P10).

Realising that raising even 25 per cent of the cost will be a challenge for most students, ideas are being discussed "in order to generate an income, or push mobility agenda" (P10). Such income, which would be used to support Wits students wishing to participate in exchanges, could, for example, be generated from internationalisation activities such as dedicated study abroad programmes and summer schools.

In research collaborations, for example, it is important to ensure that activities and output, a joint book publication in this case, are shared as equally as possible among the partners:

> Uh, but because of the, of the way that we worked and because of the people we worked with, uhm, there was always equality, right. So, uhm, I'm the joint editor, there's the same number of chapters, we met at Duke, we met here, so it wasn't as if everything happened in the US and everything was done in the US. Uh, the publication will probably be a joint US-South Africa publication. So it is, you know, more or less equal, uhm, uh, and that's not always, that's not always the case (P9).

When both sides as well as the funders agree, it is possible to equally share the responsibilities for internationalisation activities, including administration and teaching responsibilities, as noted for a winter law school conducted jointly by Wits and a US institution. In this partnership, " [name of partner] and I from the beginning said the whole i.., concept of it was a 50/50 thing" (P5). Greater equality can also be achieved by, for example, focussing partnerships on areas of strength.

> So, I think universities have to choose their partnerships by playing to their strengths. Even weak universities have some solid strengths, so I would say I'd rather have partnerships in my area of strength and by that way you help to alleviate some of the power imbalance (P3).

Such a focus is important, as institutions with limited resources have to "be able to pick your battles carefully. Choose niche areas, where South Africans are very, very, are needed in the collaborations" (P11). As mentioned earlier, for Wits such niche areas are to be found in a number of disciplines such as health sciences, biosciences, geosciecnes, engineering, humanities, to name but a few. Another way in which power disparities can be addressed is to work within joint funding mechanisms. For example, "from the Swiss South African Joint Research Project" (P9).

It is generally understood that, while equality might never be achieved in some aspects of North-South partnerships, it can be attained in others:

> And the equal meaning, we're aware that we cannot match the funding sources, we recognise we cannot match the infrastructural, uh, there aren't infrastructural equivalencies, let me put it that way, but we can actually match the intellectual rigour. We can actually match, uh, the way in which some of our experiences challenge the methodologies that you're using. We can actually counter certain kinds of epistemic positions that you present because of our social, cultural, socio-historical experiences because of our histories (P8).

And this brings the focus of attention back to what the South brings to the table, which includes a particular way of thinking, which is characterised by more flexibility and, linked to that, the potential to innovate.

> I think that we think out the box a lot more, which, okay, I think that we're not as stubborn and as whatever. I certainly, I have some crazy ideas and I go and give them at conferences and they come after me and they go, uhh, and I say to them, you are so dogmatic. I say to them, you are so dogmatic, you've been told that this is this, and you will do research on that for the rest of your life (P4).

This is also reflected in a more critical approach:

> I mean what's the great thing about being in the global South is we bring so much to discussions around, let's say socio-cultural diversity. We bring so much in terms of how do we rethink, uh, historical, uh, epistemologies, right? How do we write certain kinds of histories recognising that it isn't Eurocentric, right? (P8).

To build equitable relationships, North and South have to work together.

> So you can have an equitous relationship if the parties who come together, who construct and engineer – I wanna use that word – with the engineers and architects of the research and how the equity between the institutions will work. If they are driven by personalities who share a common vision and have a mutual respect for the strengths, let me put it this way, the strengths that each institution can offer, in other words, the North recognises we have the funding or the infrastructure, the South says "Ok sure, we don't have the same, we can't match your funding but we can match let's say with, umm, uh, research space, with uh, with a certain kind of paradigm shift, with a certain challenging of how knowledge is produced." Or what I find increasingly more interesting in our area, umm, the idea of methodology (P8).

In a globalised higher education environment, universities "need to do the substantive work associated with the global perspective" (P3). Furthermore, "such perspectives need to be inclusive of voices in the global South, they need to be inclusive of, uh, differences in the global South" (P3). In other words, "the global South musn't be positioned as having a uniform voice on something, 'coz otherwise we're then just an uncritical space located somewhere in the South of the world, you know?" (P3).

As this indicates, it is important to recognise that the notion of the global South is complex, as it that of the global North.

On North-South Complexities

To begin with, "we should never take geography as the way in which, uh, a perspective is validated" (P3). For example, "while China is nominally in the global South, it is a super power" (P17). Furthermore:

> So when we say Southern theory, I would like to, obviously these are heuristic categories, right, so Australia is as much in the south as South Africa is. So what we

> are trying to do with the idea of the South is to think about, uh, a kind of a succession of categories that relates to the colonised parts of the world, right? (P17).

Therefore, "global North and South are political constructs" (P6), emphasising a historical connection in the North-South relationship and a shared colonial history. This history helps explain why North-South partnerships are the dominant partnership pattern at Wits or, more generally, for institutions in the South.

> So yeah, so the, I think the dominant partnerships are North-South, for a very understandable reason, uh, for colonial reasons if you could put it that way. (laughs) Ja, we still are linked to our older, uh, colonial, colonial institutions (P13).

Having said that, the concepts of the global North and the global South are complex. At Wits, there have been "debates about what do we mean by the South, is it a geographical term, is it an economical term, is it a political term, and all those type of things" (P7). It is noted, for example, that there is also a certain ideological dimension to the North-South concept, "but even BRICS has also a North-South component to it (laughs) because countries like China now are actually not really technically part of the South, uh, even though ideologically they are" (P13).

In any case, neither the South nor the North are uniform spaces. For example:

> …one of the things that has not come up for discussion is the fact that in Brazil, in Russia and in China the paradigm is very different from India and South Africa. Brazil produces knowledge in Spanish, Russia in Russian, China in Chinese, whereas India and a lot of the anglophone African countries are trapped within the paradigm of an Anglo-American scholarship largely because that's the linguistic domain that they work with (P9).

And differences occur across the global North as well. For example, it was noted earlier that student exchange programmes between partners in the North and the South are problematic, as the participation of Southern students is hampered by the lack of funding available to them, which leads to lack of reciprocity. However, such imbalances can also occur when both partners are located in the global North, illustrated here with an example of student exchanges between Sweden and the United States:

> We had exchange programmes with universities in Ireland, universities around the rest of Europe but two countries we struggled with was countries in the Southern Hemisphere and in the United States. Yes, because in the US, they were tuition paying universities, in Sweden they were non-tuition paying, which meant that unless universities agreed to waive the fees on the other side, the Swedes could not afford those 30,000 dollars a year, 40,000 dollars a year. So it was easier for the American students to come here, because it was tuition free in Sweden, than Swedish students going to the United States (P1).

In a partnership with a university in the Czech Republic, the Czech institution can be seen as 'South of the North' due to its history. The Wits partner expected a certain level of understanding and perhaps solidarity with South Africa due to the country's history of oppression. However, that was not to be:

> It's, it's, it's a Czech institution that's instituting it. So one would almost imagine, given their historical past, there would be an affinity to understanding the pressure of a Northern but instead what they're doing is reproducing a kind of Northern imperialism (P8).

When the notions of North and South are mainly associated with power and resources, a university like Wits can be both South and North at the same time. For example, in a partnership with elite US universities such as Duke University or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which have been named here, Wits will be the Southern partner. However, regarding engagements with other African institutions, the perspective shifts, as follows:

> …maybe South Africa is part of this global South but is Wits part of the global South? Are we not maybe a university that would be more at home in the North? So, we're having those type of debates, right? (P7).

In terms of strengthening links with other institutions in the South, Wits is compared to Northern institutions hoping to do the same.

> …people say 'You know what, so Wits, you talk about you being from the South, you're actually from the North because you didn't have all these relationships with the South all along. You're also only what Europe and what North America and Canada and Australia and things like that, so you're also trying to do what the Northern universities are doing (P7).

In terms of partnerships with other African institutions, the following is observed:

> I've now, you know, been traveling to different parts of the continent to develop partnerships, and there is enormous enthusiasm, uh, but unless I actually do the work it's not going to happen. And that creates a problem because in fact one of the dangers that we have from the vantage point of South Africa, and particularly a place like Wits University, is that colleagues elsewhere on the Continent see us in the same way they see Northern institutions (P9).

This is further illustrated in reflections on a long-standing research partnership with institutions in Mozambique:

> There was a little bit of resentment, you know, it's like we South Africans think we know everything, and we come in there…a bit like the Americans, they think, oh, the Americans come in there and they like take, take, take. But I don't think so, I think we're much more sensitive than the Americans because of our background. So I'm always very sensitive that I don't know anything and that I, you know, that I'm not gonna tell them what to do, you know, and that (P4).

Equating Wits with the North is based on the availability of resources and, related to that, the wielding of power and control, as "we're important because we come with the resources. Uh, and therefore there's a danger of replicating the inequality between North and South in relation to creating partnerships between Wits University and universities elsewhere on the continent" (P9).

The same dynamics can even come to bear within South Africa, in engagements between previously advantaged and better resourced institutions like Wits and their previously disadvantaged partners:

> I mean, you will know that I tried to even more locally to develop partnerships at Limpopo University and Venda University[72]. Well, they've got the same attitude and so - 'Who are you, from Wits University, right? You want to colonise Limpopo Province. Uh, you can't come and do research here' – so, uh, and, you know, it, it's worrisome that people say that, uhm, but I also know where it comes from (P9).

[72] The University of Limpopo and the University of Venda are both rural-based institutions in South Africa's Limpopo Province.

The complexities around the notions of North and South are inherent in bilateral relationships. They can also be noticed in triangular relations such as North-South-South partnerships, which have become a partnership model favoured by a number of funders.

> So, you know, the European Union in particular but also the United States but principally the European Union, uh, you know, often funding is raised and they say we want, uh, a triangular relationship - North-South-South, right? It tends to be North, Wits University or UCT[73] and someone else. And so, uh, it's very, it's very attractive, right, because one is seen almost as potentially an equal partner with a Northern university. But then you have this third partner, uh, which is somewhere else in the South, typically elsewhere on the African continent, which comes in, quite frankly, as a secondary partner. Uh, so the triangular relationship is, uh, potentially interesting because there're often very important positive benign intentions behind them, but they do also tend, or they, they, well, ja, they do tend to reproduce inequalities. And then those of us who are at Wits University feel sufficiently privileged because we are regarded as an equal partner but the third partner, uh, is often regarded as secondary, uh, as almost a, a, an appendage to the main relationship that has been brought on in order to gesture positively the idea of South-South relations. You have South-South but in fact the North still determines, uh, the terms of reference, uh, where the funding flows etcetera (P9).

While arrangements like North-South-South partnerships have the potential to encourage South-South collaboration, such collaboration frameworks also carry the danger of mirroring existing North-South dependencies in South-South contexts.

> You cannot for one minute take for granted that because this is a South-South the issues of power and power imbalance and inequality don't come into play. Of course they come into play because even in a South-South relationship there are certain universities that are more, better resourced than others (P3).

What this means for an institution like Wits is that "we have to take care in criticising the North-South connection, right, and then be complicit in reproducing precisely what we're critiquing in our relations, uh, with universities elsewhere on the continent" (P9).

[73] University of Cape Town

An example describing Wits' stance in negotiating agreements with other universities on the continent clearly illustrates this point.

> So we've dealt with a couple of those and then I almost feel as though we're in the position of power there and so for us it's, it's a thing where you come to us and we are doing this lovely thing for you and we're Wits and you're not and so you should be grateful to us for sending our academics and our students to you in Somalia and, you know, get the honour and the privilege of hosting our people. So it's a bit, it's a bit ironic that we get a bit upset when we're treated like that, (chuckles) but we do sort of the same thing, on a lesser scale, but we do. Umm and then those universities never give us problems with anything. They're always willing to accept, they're happy with whatever we put on the table. And I think it's from that, they're coming from that same point, that they want to put a foot in the door, they want the engagements and they're willing to compromise on things because they really desperately want these things to happen (P16).

Noting such irony, it is important "to coin a phrase that the students have used in #FeesMustFall, we've got to watch, we gotta check our own privilege" (P9). For Wits, the process of checking its privilege entails, for example, recognising that "we complain about the resources in South Africa, but, as you know, you go elsewhere on the continent and you think 'Phew, you know, what are we complaining about?', right?" (P9). Another colleague shares an example that illustrates resource scarcity starkly:

> Umm ja and when your colleague has to open their desk drawer and say, because say you're going to the bathroom, and give you the toilet paper and the soap to say oh you're going to the bathroom, here you better take it because this is our monthly or our term issue (P8).

In the broader sense, Wits and other universities in South Africa have a fairly robust educational infrastructure.

> Uh, as I said, it has, it, it, not just the resources, but it has got the what you call the institutional, the infrastructure here for collaborative linkages. There are good universities still fairly well funded. (laughs) The library, libraries are, I mean, we attract, they attract students from the rest of Africa, you know, because the libraries are good (P13).

In addition to institutional infrastructure, South African institutions operate in a national landscape that provides funding opportunities, for example, through bodies such as the National Research Foundation (NRF).

> …but the other interesting thing about South Africa being, wearing a Northern hat is that it actually has more resources because the NRF, for instance, the NRF is a critical institution here that most African countries don't have. So you can get a pot of money where you can bring in scholars or it's actually, you can leverage the NRF for partnerships, particularly in Africa, which gives South Africa a lot of actually clout, uh, on its own, on its own despite I think what we are saying the, the dominant north-south. But South Africa can actually has, has a pot of resources that it can use to foster a collaboration with the, with the rest of Africa (P13).

Apart from resources, "at Wits I don't experience, uh, academics from the global North coming here to shape our debates. I notice academics coming from the global North to learn about certain things" (P3). At the same time, there is a realisation that other institutions in South Africa might be more on the receiving end of the North-South relationship.

> I don't think it's the same throughout the country by the way. I think there're still many universities that are heavily dependent on academics who come from the global South (sic) who come and sort of preach here, and then their courses, and their materials are put in courses. What I see, what I see at Wits University, is a significant, uh, uh, international perspective that's taken on a variety of topics (P3).

Wits is also different from other institutions on the continent in terms of institutional reputation and visibility internationally.

> Umm, and other African universities haven't necessarily had the same opportunities that we've had maybe because of their own internal strife, maybe because they haven't been the economic player that we have been, maybe they just don't have the trade relations, that sort of thing. And they haven't maybe had these imminent academics come from their ranks and, and gone oversees to show that Wits and maybe have the alumni overseas that are saying that our university is as great as, as Wits might have the opportunity to do. So I think it's, it's a bit about reputation, it's a… I mean Wits has had a bit of a longer history. We've, we're coming on our centenary so, you know, we're been around a bit longer (P16).

A privileged position also means that "in as much as, you know, you lose people to the North, uh, a lot of talented Africans come here, right?" (P11). So while there is brain drain, there is also brain gain, and the people who come to Wits are not only from other countries on the continent. There are some who return from the African diaspora.

> …my experience when I was, lived in Sweden was that, you know, people wanted to come back. I haven't been the only one who wanted to come back. In fact, almost all of us on the corridor here were either educated in Europe, the United States or Asia. And we're all here because of the strong desire to come back. Uh, and what I noticed that when, if people come back, if their careers are progressing and they're comfortable, almost no-one wants to go back to the North (P1).

And others are coming from the North.

> What I have found quite interesting and fascinating about being at Wits over the last several years is the way in which some academics who are from the North choose to stay here. So I would be curious about your observations or about that. I mean I, I think even if you look across the faculty but also across the university, and I'm not talking about other Africans. I'm very clear in my head about those who come from Europe or the US and create a kind of research relevance to stay and who those people are and what are the conditions for their engagement? I would ask you about that, 'cause that to me is quite interesting. It's, it's very easy to point fingers at Africans, oh we, you know, the diaspora and is it a brain drain or whatever, but I sometimes listen to colleagues when they're from somewhere else and it's not a, it's a not a like oh I'm phobic or anything, but I always also think about their research and like, you know, not that expression of we, why to stay, but like what is, why would a European, what is it? How do you find your relevance in this context? (P8).

While the question of why researchers from the North come to South Africa and find relevance in the country was not directly asked in any of the interviews conducted for this study, some possible reasons might be found in the following statement on experiences with brain drain:

> I haven't experienced it. In fact, if anything I've experienced scholars from the global North wanting to come here. And that, that maybe something to do with Wits but also something to do with the country and where we are and the opportunities that people see and the slump in the global North. So you'll see many post-docs coming here, not

> only because they think we're so great and because they like us. They can't find jobs in the global North, so there's a slump in the market there. So, I think you mustn't underestimate economic forces that influence partnerships (P3).

Whatever their individual reasons, Wits' ability to attract and students and staff from all around the world is seen as a contribution to the institution's advantageous position:

> The other distinct advantage that we do have is, we do have quite a cosmopolitan staff and students. We've got a good number of international students, good number of international staff, lots of continental uh, connections. But the interesting thing about the staff is they're not inward looking, so almost everyone, even young people coming in, come with a connection of sorts, wherever that connection is. And those connections are pursued. And we have quite a vibrant visiting professor scheme and visiting associations scheme, and so on (P3).

Partnerships around such connections tend to "then be at a personal level and fairly informal" (P15). They are particularly important in areas where research is heavily based on equipment and technology and therefore expensive.

> …half our staff are international and come from the global North. And so they, you know, they, they don't all come in as, as lecturers, they might come in as associate professors, professors and so on, so they bring with them, uh, a set of contacts. And those contacts are particularly important because the science itself requires a huge amount of, of investment in terms of instrumentation (P15).

Another distinct advantage is linked to the University's location in the cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg:

> I think one of it is its own location, I mean, it's, it's a city university, loc, in the most connected city if you think about it, right? It's a hub for people coming from throughout the world. So, I think that does give us a distinct advantage (P3).

Apart from benefiting from its location and its cosmopolitan student and staff bodies, Wits' privilege stems from the fact that the institution is not seen "as an opportunity to exploit. They do see us as a, as an opportunity to collaborate" (P6). Furthermore, "we've been able to build on that, uh, and from I'd say a, a fairly advantageous position, right, uhm, because we are sought after, uh, by colleagues who look to us, uh, for collaborations" (P9).

This position of advantage is linked to the University's international standing, particularly in areas in which Wits has developed expertise, which is often connected to the country's geography. For example:

> Wits Geosciences is in the top 1% in the world in terms of its research capacity. And that is built both on the excellence of what we, what we can study and also on the excellence of the people who then studied it and have those reputations (P15).

In such a position, Wits is a sought after partner:

> I think it's important to note that, that we have something that is of use in terms of global geosciences. We, we have a particularly rich heritage in South Africa, to the extent that one of the more common features of our, umm, of our year will be the visits by two or three, four groups of post graduate students from, from northern hemisphere universities and from Australia for that matter, umm, coming to look at the superlative geology. So they literally have to come here to look at this thing that we have in our geographic space, South Africa. Umm so, so it means that maybe people are more inclined towards an approach umm in, in, you know, looking at partnerships with us (P15).

In the context of North-South partnerships, Northern institutions are also interested in working with Wits, as

> …some of them are beginning to use us as a conduit into the South. So, so, so, we, we we're saying you know what, that's to our advantage because now we can have even stronger relations with people in the North, because they want to work with others in the South that we are already working with. And it just strengthens everything all around (P7).

In this way, Wits uses its existing connections in Africa to leverage partnerships with other regions in the world. The privileged position that Wits enjoys does not mean that inequalities do not occur or matter at the institution. They do.

> But the point I'm making is that the power balance and all you have to be aware of every time. You can't take for granted because we're Wits it won't happen to us. It can happen at any time and all of the time (P3).

However, privilege breeds confidence.

> So, I think the power imbalances and all of that, I think it happens a lot in the sector, but I think Wits in particular, we're overly critical about a lot of things, so we establish the issues of power and knowledge and whose knowledge counts and all of that quite upfront. I mean, the one thing that we're very clear about is that our university is never gonna be the place where you come and collect your data and you write about. It's not going to happen. Our university's also not gonna be the place, or our country, where you're gonna send your research assistants to work with our professors to do X, Y and Z. However, we can take such an assertive role because we're quite well established in the field, in the sector. And I don't think that happens in other places (P3).

The conviction that Wits "is never gonna be the place where you come and collect your data and you write about" (P3), as expressed here, is not shared by everyone across the institution. As previously mentioned regarding 'hit-and-run' science, "there's still quite a bit of that today" (P15). Also, Northern institutions continue to treat their Southern counterparts as junior partners.

> Uh, and I think the bigger criticism has always been, uh, especially in the social science and that, if you partner with the North or with Northern institutions they still want to treat you just like a research assistant. (laughs) That hasn't died up, it actually hasn't gone away that we are using African institutions, uh, we just use them and then, uh, we don't really, we don't treat them like partners actually (laughs) in the real, in the real sense of the word (P13).

However, it appears that the frequency of such instances has been reduced, particularly over the last 10 to 15 years, perhaps because "Wits does a certain amount of talking back" (P5). So, Wits seems somewhat different from other institutions, as "I'm sure that happens at Wits in some places, uhm, yeah, I just don't think it happens quite as [inaudible]" (P5). For example, people who have experienced incidents like the one concerning microbes described earlier say "I'll never let this happen again, if I, you know, but this was 15 years ago" (P4). Such personal resolve is now also supported by international conventions such as, for example, the Cartagena Protocol[74].

[74] The *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity* came into force in 2003.

> …by the way this was before Carta, the Cartagena Protocol, you know, that you don't pillage other peoples' biodiversity. You know, now you would not be able to do that, and I wouldn't have allowed them to do that (P4).

The confidence to say no to relations that are not beneficial grows from and with painful experiences.

> I said to him, 'I was deeply, deeply upset to see all those publications, you didn't just acknowledge, it's not even that we demanded anything more than one sentence that said: we acknowledge that this work was done in the laboratory in the microbiology department at the University of the Witwatersrand'. I said 'You Americans come in here, you pillage our data and you take it back with you. […] And I refused to let him to come back. Do you know that he couldn't believe his ears. I said 'Get out of my office'. Okay, I wasn't quite as rude as that but I just said 'You know what, you didn't even acknowledge us. Not once sentence. […] And I didn't say it rudely, I'm telling you it like this, I didn't say it as, you know, but I just said to him '[*Name of partner*], I am disappointed, I think I might have used that, you didn't acknowledge us. And, you know, we feel a bit used and abused (P4).

Such assertiveness is important, as lack thereof is considered "dangerous because it's just almost inviting somebody to come in and, and, and re-establish a, a new colonial order" (P6). Confidence is facilitated in an environment that appears to have a strong sense of self-identity and agency, where "we have a strong, uh, intellectual belief in our purpose, in our place as a university in the landscape" (P17). Referring to the pillaging of data as described earlier, one way of preventing this is by making the data publicly available, which is why Wits supports "the government's idea of open source data" (P7).

> And we've started that, and you know about this, we started when [*name of colleague*]'s work started, you know, in the Homo Naledi[75] and all of that, we started making all that data available to everybody in the world to say 'You know what, come use it.' So, and slowly, slowly we're starting to talk to other schools to say 'You know what, make your data available to everybody. You're gonna benefit in the long run' (P7).

Wits is an institution that "has amazing, amazing dynamic people doing fabulous things that are absolutely imaginative and resourceful" (P8). Furthermore, "I think we have great talent.

[75] https://www.homonaledi.org/

And I think we think differently" (P4). Regarding the latter, new ways of thinking are encouraged at the University.

> And Wits is proudly one of the best examples of that, where there's a lot of new thinking and new research, and new kinds of ideas are being accommodated. So we don't reject out of hand the #FeesMustFall or the demand for decolonisation and so on (P17).

On Postcolonialism, Decolonisation and Southern Theory – Criticality, Agency, Self-determination, Changing Paradigms, Different Futures, Hope

The student protest movements and the decolonisation agenda are two issues that arise almost automatically in conversations on higher education in South Africa. The term decolonisation is understood and approached in a variety of ways across the institution.

> …it depends what you mean by decolonisation. And, I don't know, we're also stuck with labels. I think to me it's something like a decolonising has become, uh, more of a political label than an academic label (P11).

Referencing the student protest movements of 2015 and 2016, there is a view that decolonisation in South Africa is a recent trend:

> …and it actually, the whole decolonisation concept was in the, largely in the twenty, in 2016. So, it's still loa, it's still laden with, uh, conflict-type positions, and, uh, until the dust settles that people can start with clear heads think about without just attaching and affixing labels (P11).

However, decolonisation is also thought to be a phenomenon that is as old as colonialism:

> I would say it like this: For a black person, I heard a colleague phrase it like that, for a black person the minute colonialism started we were in the business of a decolonial agenda because we always, you're in the position of finding ways to subvert that hegemony (P8).

Attitudes towards decolonisation vary widely, ranging from indifference and scepticism to acceptance and investment. For example, "Between you and I, I have not really, I've thought about it, but it doesn't, with, in my, in the world I live in it's still an abstract concept" (P11).

There is a certain degree of scepticism regarding the concept of decolonisation, for different reasons. For example, it is rather suspiciously viewed as an imported concept:

> I think that because, it's also to me, uh, decolonisation was largely driven by Latin Americans, right, within a particular context. You know, if you know what I'm saying, it started in Latin America, the concept, so therefore why don't we do things that are not derivative and come with a concept that actually, even itself decolonisation is really Latin American thinking that we've imported, it is, kind of derived social sciences scholarship and partially also derived from the African American experience, which to me is a bit problematic as well (P11).

This is contrasted with someone who is fully invested in the process of decolonisation:

> …what I'm offering and especially because, as you can hear, I'm very invested and I have I mean in my own writing invested in presentation of sort of de-colonial approaches especially with film. I'm quite interested to say I'm, I'm, I'm investing, investing and defining this term in an atemporal way. I want to dehistoricise the term and, and there's an investment in it (P8).

There are different opinions about the origins of decolonisation, and the concept itself can also be understood differently. It is noted that "there is a faction in the country, not the university, that are trying to go the other way, you know, the Mugabe way is cut out the North." (P4) At the University, this would be associated with "a lot of it it's about, well, let's break the links with the former colonial masters, let's have our own versions of these disciplines" (P1). This meaning of decolonisation is criticised and rejected, albeit for different reasons. For example:

> To be quite frank, uh, yes, the mathematical or scientific canon can be expanded but not decolonised because it's a global phenomenon, right? Quantum mechanics was developed at a particular setting in Europe at the time, and, but the implications of quantum mechanisms are global, right? From your cell phone to, or, to the, to the watch you wear, you know, these things are determined by quantum mechanics (P11).

This view seems to have its foundation in the convention that Northern knowledge is universally valid, a view which is contested by others who point out that Northern knowledge is not free from other influences, suggesting that is not bound to a particular place and time, as "the global North is made up, even that archive has contributions from the global South. It doesn't, it's not like it stands by itself. It has grown from somewhere" (P3). More specifically,

it is pointed out that the origins of the mathematical or scientific canon, as referred to above, are not only European.

> Well, first of all, the knowledge base that we use in a university system is not necessarily European. If you look at the origins of mathematics and physics and philosophy, they all don't originate from Europe. Some of them are Middle Eastern, Arabic, so central Europe, and some of it is Asian. So already the basic assumption that whatever we have is Western European is already erroneous. It betrays a solid understanding of the history of human knowledge because it assumes that, you know, everything we know now came from Western Europe, which is not true (P1).

Apart from rejecting the idea that "everything we know came from Western Europe", there is also scepticism towards the idea that being educated in the North makes Africans less African.

> …if you look at the generation of Africans who led their countries to independence, they were educated in the United States, they were educated in the UK, they were educated in France, they were educated in Germany. However, they were no less African because of the programmes they took. Even if the education they had in the United States, in the UK and all these places actually made them even more eager to come back and liberate their countries. So I don't see how anybody can argue that if you took a degree that is, has an American orientation, it makes you any less interested in liberating your country (P1).

There is also a suggestion that decolonisation might mean different things for different academic disciplines, and that it is, first and foremost, something to be seen "in the context of, you know, I mean, it's nicely a social science phenomenon, really" (P11). Furthermore:

> I mean I will need to, to hear what, the people in the social sciences and humanities can give me a perspective in the arts or anything else, in a very, not scientific work, but in a kind of way that speaks with robust critical scholarship. Not just label throwing and, and, and jumping to the latest fashion show in town (P11).

There seems to be consensus that on the African continent, decolonisation is linked to Africanisation.

> I'm actually arguing that decolonialism or decoloniality as an approach is atemporal. It's about the way in which we think about multifaceted ways and shifting the paradigm

> from which we're operating. So if, if for example in a colonial framework the position is writing the world from a Western perspective, a postcolonial feeling feels like, ok, then we write Africa back into it because in many ways that's what the Humanities were arguing (P8).

The process of 'writing Africa back into' the world, is generally understood to be an inclusive approach, where the local context is included but not at the expense of other contexts.

> I used to teach a class called African Political Thought, so we can still teach African Political Thought even though we are also acknowledge or we are also knowledgeable about Western political power. That's my, my simple reading of, of decolonisation (P13).

Comparing the two options, exclusion of voices is considered "a very radical, not really helpful, not helpful reading" and inclusion the "the more, more attractive part" (P13). Decolonisation is linked to contextualisation.

> …in the Sciences we are already aware of it. We, for us we always try and put our knowledge in context where we are and we've been doing this for years; this is nothing new to us. I always try and concentrate on South African examples, African examples. But DNA is DNA and one and one is two (P4).

Understood in this way, even someone who generally views decolonisation sceptically offers support for the inclusion of African local perspectives. For example, if the curriculum "is widened in a way that allows for the recognition of the local context …to the global context. I think that to me is something that, uh, one needs to worry about" (P11).

In the realm of partnerships, "for us Africanisation of our partnerships does not mean, uh, ending or not pursuing new, uh, partnerships with Northern institutions" (P9). While engagements with the North continue, the Vice-Chancellor has "made that pretty explicit, you know, that Africanisation will need to be part of internationalisation" (P5). Such an approach fits well into the mission of an institute such as, for example, the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER).

> I think it would help to sort of do what WISER wants to do, which is to, do a certain amount of bringing Africa and the rest of the global South, put Johannesburg into the

> global South and into Africa and then into global studies. And, uhm, you can't do that just from Johannesburg (P5).

Africanisation is also reflected in the institution's focus on strengthening African research, specifically through alliances such as ARUA, which is expected to be a motor to drive research development on the continent.

> …so ARUA type alliance, just to be clear that's African research-intensive universities, so those 16 universities. That's another way of, of promoting African research excellence, and it'll start off slowly, no, no doubt, but it, it will grow, it, it, because it's highly ranked research-intensive universities producing high quality research (P6).

While an approach that is inclusive of Africa finds general support, it is not always a given that such inclusiveness has to be problematised within a decolonisation framework, particularly as far as the curriculum is concerned. In that regard, Africanisation can, for example, be discussed in the context of teacher training as well.

> So, the real obstacle to Africanisation of the curriculum is the big elephant in the room, which is the rest of the world has started training their teachers, university teachers, how to teach and we still haven't. So we're out of ideas on how to indigenise the curriculum. So, the problem is not the text books, the problem is how do you design a course that actually takes into account the local context. So there are ways to Africanise a curriculum, and you can do it in ways that do not exclude knowledge of the international context. So, it's a failure to, it's a lack of skills in curriculum design rather than ideological colonisation (P1).

In the broader context of discussions on decolonisation, including an African element in the curriculum alone does not seem to be enough. Decolonisation is understood as a more holistic concept, which also entails an element of critical engagement with existing privileged knowledges.

> Decolonialism is kind of an attitude. It's a, it's an attitude to education. It's an attitude to thinking about curriculum and transformation. It says how do you actually bring all these different historical registers in conversation with each other? And sure we recognise that there are certain privileging at certain points but to expose the privileging, in other words, to expose how those ideological frameworks are actually shaping the way in which that educational framework is operating (P8).

Furthermore, decolonisation debates are embedded in broader discussions on a number of related issues and topics, as an example of the Faculty of Humanities suggests a

> …calendar of events, seminars and programmes, it is thick with all kinds of topics that cover questions around the, uh, uh, the North-South divide, the subaltern, the postcolonial. I mean we've just finished a workshop on the theory, uh, theory from the South (P3).

The concept of Southern theory is something that emerges from conversations on decolonisation and Africanisation, and "the subject of quite a lot of debate around the notion of decolonisation and a growing interest of the last few years on something called Southern theory" (P9).

Theory from the South is concerned with unmasking the underlying power dynamics that shape North-South partnerships and relations in general, and "one has to understand the fundamental fact of power which has pervaded the world over the last 400 years. It makes us believe that it's only knowledge produced in the last 400 years that's fruitful" (P17). The dominance of Northern knowledge is acknowledged, as is the need to address the suppression or marginalisation of Southern knowledges that goes hand in hand with it.

> So, so, I am very aware that we slip into a Western paradigm of knowledge very easily, uh, given the University's history, uh, given my own personal, uh, upbringing, education, so it is very easy to slip into that. Uh, but I also recognise the value of other knowledge paradigms, and, and understand that they are of equal value , they, they are just different ways of looking at the same knowledge, uhm, and so we have to promote that but that can never ever be an excuse for a lack of quality. Uhm, it has to be rigorous quality, uh, uh, assessed by rigorous peer review. So long as those things are in place then we need to invest, encourage and support other knowledge paradigms (P6).

Furthermore:

> So the idea here is to try and think about the global South, the former colonised parts of the world who have suffered from this amnesia and ignorance of their own intellectual tradition, to be able to engage with it fruitfully and to move out of that deference from the idea of the North, deference towards the idea of the North which is premised on a lot of these kinds of understanding, right? (P17).

The process of moving out of 'colonial amnesia' and 'deference to the North' is complex. It involves looking at the North and the South at the same time, recognising the existing dominant paradigm:

> If you think of China, Islam, India, you could go on… Even Africa you think about the manuscripts of Timbuktu, these precede any forms of, uh, European knowledge. And one of the first fundamental statements of equality is indeed not the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the French Revolution but the Mandinka oath of the 11th century which talks about the fundamental equality of humans – the Mandinka hunters' oath where it says that "no human being should enslave another" – it's as simple as that. So it's actually the forgetfulness that colonialism has brought, wrought in us (P17).

In other words, there is an

> …archaic notion that the North is the expertise and the South provide, the Southern sphere provides the kind of developing background or playing field for the North to sort of facilitate their research. So on the one hand, there's this historical notion that the North is sort of the centre of knowledge for want of a better phrasing, and the South becomes the space in which the North implements ideas (P8).

Within the framework of Southern theory, there is an attempt to challenge this paradigm. For example:

> So what we are trying to do with the idea of the South is to think about, uh, a kind of a succession of categories that relates to the colonised parts of the world, right? And where one of the things that has happened is an amnesia as a result of colonialism regarding their own intellectual traditions, right? So we tend to see our space as a space of experiences, not of theory. So when we talk about Southern theory it is an attempt to move outside of this paradigm, of this binary of European theory and, uh, African region or Caribbean experience (P17).

Apart from addressing the binary of European theory versus Southern experience, Southern scholars also realise that the Northern theory is, in part, formed through observing the South, rather than engaging it.

> The other sort of, uhm, conceit of that research framework would be, uh, kind of also a throwback from disciplines like anthropology and sociology, where you have the South

> or let's say Southern spheres being the space for research and fieldwork, and then the way in which the North creates or facilitates their knowledge production by observing the South (P8).

While establishing Southern theory as a counterbalance to Southern experience and Northern theory is important, it is also noted as much as the South is criticising the North, the South has to remain critical of itself.

> But if we don't think about the global South more critically, then all we're doing is replacing one kind of hegemony with another. So I think seriously about the North-South divide but I don't think we need to or should follow it in a way that says you're replacing one with the other (P3).

Furthermore:

> I think in challenging that one has to be careful, uh, in my mind, not to draw a sharp distinction between something called Southern theory and something else called Northern theory, as if those two can be clearly demarcated, because I don't think they can (P9).

What needs to be recognised in this regard is that knowledge is not something that is static. It has circulated around the globe. We require

> …a, quite a deep historical understanding about the development of theory – to understand that theory, uh, even if someone at, uh, you know, University of Oxford developed a theory, she or he probably over time drew on theories that came from elsewhere in the world anyway, right. So, ehm, the kind of circulation of knowledge is something one needs to take into account when one talks about Northern, Southern theory. It's far more complex, and it overlaps more in terms of long historical, uh, evolution and circulation of ideas than one imagines now (P9).

As part of thinking about what it means to teach in the South, it is highlighted that a Southern classroom should be distinguishable from others.

> And that's part of this thing, part of what creating Southern knowledge is about, that every, that a classroom in Africa or in South Africa, in the University of the Witwatersrand, is different from a classroom in India and different from a classroom in New Jersey or Oxford. That has to be the crux of teaching (P17).

Such a unique classroom needs to be contextualised. A classroom in Africa should be distinctly African, which is where Africanisation has a role to play. It should, for example, be recognisable in terms of the languages spoken and the content taught in it. For example, "the fact that Southern knowledge will have to be premised not only on our traditions and things but on language. Right. The issue of language is absolutely crucial and central" (P17).

Language policies at South African universities have been debated and reviewed in a number of places. At Wits, for example,

> …one of the things that the university has done of late is to say that look if people want to do their masters dissertations in Zulu or Sotho or their mother tongue that this should be. And this is a fairly obvious thing, right, when you think about a multilingual landscape and to have a monolingual university in a multilingual landscape makes no sense (P17).

In addition to language, the curriculum should be aligned with the needs of the classroom:

> And the question of how, uh, pedagogy or a new generation comes up will depend on a whole jettisoning of attitudes, of hierarchies, and of creating an openness to say that the syllabus should be structured according to the needs of the classroom. The syllabus need not be structured in accordance with the demands of an abstract idea of a discipline, ok (P17).

The 'jettisoning of attitudes and hierarchies' involves a critique of the status quo. This includes a questioning of the concept of the university itself.

> …the idea is that new liberalism and new liberal economic policies has smashed universities. So what you're producing is not intellectuals, you're producing people who will service the economy etc, etc. (P17).

The following example from the mining industry illustrates this well.

> …the significance of the minds is that people have gone into geology to go and work on the mines. The mines require, the mines prefer not to have anything beyond an honours degree. They don't want you too clever. They don't want you to ask too many questions. They, they need people to do the basic work (P15).

Related to that, another concept that is being challenged is that of merit, dealing with:

> …the abstract idea of merit, right, and which actually goes into the question of who can go to university, right, and the fundamental question of who can go to university. There is a simple answer – everyone should be able to go to university. If somebody says that they want to go to university of course they have to meet a minimum pass mark still but given the fact that they have a certain uh, uh acceptable level of pass marks they should be available, they should be, it should be possible for them to go to the university. The university should be available to them. But that's not what is happening because the twin with the idea of competition and being competitive is the idea that look we can't take in students who don't meet certain criteria. And in a landscape of poverty, of deprivation, of bad schools, bad teaching and so on this [inaudible] will multiply. To expect the student to take only those students who have already merit in them defeats the purpose of the university because the university's there to teach. And the merit of the university is not in actually polishing new leather. If people who are actually already so well equipped that they don't need the university but actually create forms of teaching, create forms of incorporation, democratise university in such a way that somebody who desires to go to university can come here and at the end of four years is a different person all together. That's where we have to get to. There's a lot of gate keeping that happens around the idea of merit (P17).

There is also an opportunity to challenge what we know about the classroom and the curriculum.

> And that the idea of a syllabus also we need to rethink because, uh, if you think about a classroom, every classroom has different requirements and the components of a classroom in terms of class, race, gender vary from year to year. What we have is a varying composition of students coming up against an unvarying idea of a syllabus. And that's again something worth thinking about as to how one is to create a more subtle syllabus, you know, something that actually answers to the demands of the classroom as much as, so it actually demands engaging the questions of hierarchy of teacher and student, the absolute expertise, or the presumed absolute expertise of the teacher and so on. So it's a big question that we're actually looking at when we think about North and South because we've inherited structures of knowledge and pedagogy from the North which we are just implementing here without, unthinkingly (P17).

There are examples at Wits where the jettisoning of attitudes and hierarchies has been turned into practice, where decolonisation and contextualisation have been taken on as a project, resulting in changes in the curriculum and in ways in which pedagogy is approached. This, it is argued, might be easier in some disciplines than in others. For example, art practice is interesting in that regard, as the arts have always been a mechanism conducive for critiquing conventions, which is illustrated with the example of music.

> Art practice always challenged it. The theory was always slow to catch up. And so, to go back to where I interrupted myself, umm, the example I love using is if you, if you, if you think about the history of let's say black music – and I'm being specific about black music – music constantly challenges very, very, umm, conventionalised form. So jazz doesn't emerge because jazz happens to be something that ?, it's a direct response to challenging the forms and conventions that are imposed by a particular white understanding, Western understanding of music making, right. The same with contemporary music. Hip Hop emerges as an act of resistance. So if you think about actually the histories, various histories, uh, whether it's capoeira[76], umm, as a form, whether people think about it as dance or martial arts, umm, these are all actually pockets of resistance that emerge actually from a colonial agenda. This, I would argue, is part of a decolonial project (P8).

Within the decolonial project, questions emerge not only regarding what to teach but also how to teach. These are taking on quite enthusiastically by some, who are "…excited about teaching a curriculum that is about a decolonial position because it doesn't offer a centring for either one [position]." (P8) In an environment like this, where not one perspective is centred or privileged, several positions can be explored, taken their specific context into account.

> So to draw attention in the process of educating is to reflexively show how the position that we're taking in this particular section is informed by a certain kind of historical or ideological constructs. It's a complicated way to teach. I, in my experience now it's the more, the easiest way for it to translate is actually mostly in the post-graduate programmes I teach (P8).

Once explored, different positions can be compared, contrasted, accepted or rejected.

[76] Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art that combines elements of dance, acrobatics and music, developed in Brazil at the beginning of the 16th century (https://en.m.wikipedia.org).

> And, and it seems to have worked. I mean sometimes I actually very simply say to students, "We are going to learn and unlearn at the same time and how does that look, what does that look like? How does it feel in the classroom?" So you teach two sessions where you, where you impose a certain, let's say, for want of a better word, impose a certain set of doctrines and paradigms and then in session three you say, "Ok, all those things I told you, let's say that those things are not possible or they're only possible if and only if these historical situ… circumstances are understood as they are" (P8).

As indicated, contextualisation is an important feature in the context of decolonisation and Southern theory. It also applies to the subject matter that is being taught. For example, referring to the hegemony of Hollywood in film, it was noted earlier that Hollywood's "film language has become so conventionalised that you understand how to read it" (P8).

> And then if you go to a film that looks slightly different, for example an African film or an Iranian film, the argument is 'Oh, it has to do with their culture.' And I'm actually arguing it has, it has less and less to do with the culture as much as it has to do with the way in which the language of the film is also used. And that itself is a decolonial project (P8).

Furthermore, in a contextualised classroom, relevant local knowledge needs to be part of the syllabus, for example, by including local thinkers This means:

> …we have to create a, an, a mission, a desire for adventure and a desire for actually saying that we have the confidence to study our knowledge, you know. So when people in the, people in England confidently claim Plato who's a Greek through some genealogy, ok, in our space, too, we should be able to confidently claim some of the thinkers who have come up in the 19th century (P17).

To illustrate this further, in the case of Wits, such local knowledge includes the work of South African thinkers.

> So, for example, [*name of Wits colleague*] here, you know, who's worked on Magema Fuze. And then you have a whole lot of Zulu intellectuals, Xhosa intellectuals whom we could derive and which are closer(?), also derived from and who, who's writing and knowledge is closer to that of the experience of a lot of our students who come through these spaces. And it's not in the space of traditional literature that we put it, we actually

> allow these works to percolate into our teaching of history, philosophy, literature and so on and not make them optional courses (P17).

The question of when to introduce (South) African knowledge in the curriculum is also important, as it speaks to whose knowledge is being foregrounded for relevance.

> There are some departments that have been more responsive and, you're right, anthropology has been very responsible, political science has been. And it also comes out of not a desire among the academic faculty alone but, but pressure from a new generation of students who are asking, "So why are we studying all of this?" But that has to happen systematically, and one has to have innovative methods of doing it. So anthropology, for example, from what I understand from conversations with colleagues in the department, is that even a simple thing like reversing the order of education makes a whole lot of difference. So you begin studying African experience (?), then go to the big theories – canonical theories – so that students may feel that this entire inheritance may either be relevant or can be questioned (P17).

As acknowledged here, students have played a role in the decolonisation project by demanding change. There is a view that they should not be the major driver of change.

> …but, I mean, the scholars must actually take the lead, not the other way around, on academic matters. Young people can raise issues but the lead must be taken now by the intellectuals who can actually sit and think it through in a very, you know, wise and proper way. And that will take time (P11).

However, patience is not generally a virtue of the youth, and the students have not been idle. They have already become part of the change they want to see. In the Humanities faculty, for example, academics and students have both been active in driving the debates.

> …in some parts by the academics themselves for students, academics for academics, and I now see quite a strong thrust of students driving certain debates around the, postcolonialism, decolonisation, transformation. So, initially you saw, you see stuff for academics for students, academics for academics, but now your're seeing students for students, students for academics. So, I'm seeing that mix, I'm seeing that turn, and the turn I'm seeing particularly in the last 3 to 4 years (P3).

It is possible that such a strong level of student involvement is peculiar to Wits.

> I think this is very much a Wits thing where there is a considerate effort to find ways in which students can also have their own platforms. And it's not us giving students that platforms, students have taken some platforms for themselves and say "We're going to use this to do x" (P3).

The role of student activists as drivers of institutional change is acknowledged:

> And, uh, students are saying, "Look this is not what we want to learn." It's a very simple demand. Well one of the questions that we need to ask is – and I'm completely in agreement, right, with the idea that the university. Wits has changed dramatically in the nine years that I've been here as a result of these student agitations (P17).

Students have been activists across the country, and it is "unexceptionable as a statement, right, that the imperative for change does not come from above, it always comes from below" (P17). This applies as much to students in South African universities as it applies to South African universities in North-South partnerships. In the context of such partnerships, change is driven from the South, facilitated by a decolonial agenda.

> And, and you know we, we have this kind of urgency around a decolonial agenda which I think is transformative and enabling. And, and how could we not actually at this point in history really use these opportunities in higher education in much more – here's my favourite word, Samia – in much more imaginative ways rather than actually the, "Oh yah, wouldn't it be great to just go to Harvard because their library is better." Because I hear my colleagues say sometimes as simplistic things as that (P8).

To effect change, the South has to acknowledge its complicity in maintaining the dominant position of the North.

> Now the interesting thing about that is for a long time many Southern institutions also indulged that position. Why? For two simple reasons which you know quite well. It had to do with resources, and when I say resources I don't just mean money, I mean any kind of infrastructure, any kind of mobility. Umm so resources was a primary driver. And the second thing is there was no direct vision for self-determinism in the South, right? (P8).

With this complicity acknowledged, it is clear that the South has to assume agency to bring about change.

> We can complain, complain endlessly but unless you're actually get off your backside and go and do the work you're not get anywhere. You're gonna complain about the same issues in 10, 15 years' time. (P9)

Assuming agency involves making a choice to act, and doing the work includes changing attitudes. For example:

> If we, if we sort of, if we behave like junior partners, if our view is inward-looking, we always will be junior partners. So, to succeed we have to, to stand up in terms of the quality of what we do, the ambition of what we do, the reach of what we do, to see ourselves as global, we have to be the best in the world (P12).

Wits has to build its own confidence.

> I think people need to believe that Wits is the brand that it says it is and that we do actually have some strength and power and authority and we need to exercise it instead of rolling over and saying, 'Uh whatever, you're up in America, you guys are so great.' Umm and I think, ja, if perceptions may be changed. But perceptions aren't going to change if we keep rolling over (P16).

Similarly, "We need to have enough self-confidence in ourselves to play a key role in this global project knowing that we are good" (P11),

> …right? And that we are able to, you know, uh, come to the party, have a seat at the table, not because people owe us anything but because we want to be there, and we have to be there. And I think that's something that to me, we need to have a sense of self-agency to actually have the initiative and a self-agency to actually drive the process on our own terms (P11).

In that sense, quality cannot be compromised.

> So, for it to work, I think it, I think it's the quality of what we do. So, I think we can't, and you know, I think it's true for any Southern organisation, sort of organisation of the South, we can't survive on what I call an, 'agh shame factor' (P12).

As expressed here, agency relates to the South's capacity to act, which is strengthened by competence and confidence and the determination to take control of the future. In partnerships, such agency can translate into premising the relationship with a Northern partner on the

condition that Southern needs and goals are addressed, and arrangements are put in place for them to be met. For example, "when we, uh, applied for the Swiss South Africa Joint Research project funding, uh, it was clear to us that we would only do it if we could do the kind of research that we proposed" (P9).

Partnerships can be also be used as a means to effect the change we want to see beyond the immediate partnership context. Going back to the example of film and film language:

> What we're also trying to do in our collaborations is say, ok if we change the grammar even at the level of film schools then slowly over the next fifteen to twenty years people will become more familiar with different kinds of languages of film because it's, we're starting from the film schools. The problem is for me, as an educator, the film schools are also are very commiserate with and we participate in reproducing the ideology (P8).

As these examples show, changing the paradigm within North-South partnerships is possible, which was also shown earlier in the discussions of how challenges in such partnerships can be met. This paradigm shift, which has happened in the last "ten to fifteen years, is the perception that the North is a provider of a roadmap for the South to follow" (P8). More specifically:

> So then there are some important shifts and moves that happen in academia where then you have people saying "Hold on, this is not actually working for us because the paradigms that you bring to us, this concept of, you know, we hand over to your knowledge paradigm, we hand over to understanding something about ourselves because you're telling us something about who we are", or the conventions or paradigms in which we teach are inherited from the North and then we find ways to implement it. So, so I think for me the exciting thing about having been involved in, umm in, in the last fifteen years actually of developing these programmes is being part of this kind of radical shift to see that the North is not actually the playing field, oh the South sorry, is not the playing field for the North but actually we can come in as equal players (P8).

There is a belief that the South, as an equal partner, would also be a more attractive partner for the North.

> I should think that we would be even more interesting partners because otherwise you're mere, uh, shadows of something that's being done elsewhere, ok. So we do badly, we do in a more impoverished fashion something that's done elsewhere and

> that's not due to intellectual attainment it's due to circumstances, funding, a whole host of things like that. So I think the interesting thing here would be to become equal partners (P17).

In addition, there are examples where Northern partners welcome more equitable relationships with their Southern counterparts. For example:

> I think the exciting thing is my colleagues in the North are, are very, feel very liberated by this because then it doesn't put them in a position where they feel like they're been counted, you know. Also when you do research mutually you don't want colleagues in the North to also feel defensive about their whiteness or their Eurocentricness because we need those things as well (P8).

This speaks to the notion of inclusivity, which is important, particularly when partnerships address issues that are relevant to both the North and the South, albeit with varying meanings or to varying degrees. In the face of global challenges, "the global North is going to realise that the world as it stands is not sustainable" (P11). One such example is the issue of diversity, which gains importance in the North as a consequence of recent migrations.

> Europe is looking to the South and that's what has made, in my opinion, it's so exciting to be from the South because we absolutely now have the skill sets to deal with issues of diversity. So one of the things that was very exciting when I was at the University of, um, of the Arts in Amsterdam, or actually it's called Amsterdam University of Arts, and what was really great about, uh, being there is they, at a drop of a hat, totally recognise the opportunity of having me there. To put me on every single diversity committee, brainstorming session they could find because they recognised that, actually, the people who are living it and doing it every day are us. And they need us to figure this thing out (P8).

Another positive outcome of more equitable North-South partnerships in higher education is the premise that they can produce new types of knowledge.

> So and, and the fabulous thing is institutions have become very receptive to recognising that there is a really important way to be open to facilitating a more equitous relationship because then it allows new kinds of knowledge and opportunities to present, be presented. So there's not this kind of this phrase that we use like handing over to the North and feeling imposed or put upon but actually a mutual kind of respect

> and sharing in which the research question then is mutually constructed, not constructed from one end or the other (P8).

It is noted that the relationship between the North and the South has changed and is continuing to change towards more equitable partnerships. Some speak of a paradigm shift in that regard. However, there is also a realisation that a broader paradigm shift is needed, one that goes beyond the context of North-South partnerships, as "I think conceptually, philosophically we need a new paradigm" (P17). This need for a new philosophical paradigm is based on the belief that partnerships cannot be genuinely equal while "these conversations happen under the shadow of both the political and intellectual domination of Europe and America, to put it very broadly" (P17). Economically, a lot of the funding for South-South engagements comes from the North.

> Uh, and the funding was actually to bring African scholars here. Uh, and then when that funding ran out, uh, those, those, uh, those partnerships in fact died also. But you could see that there's already a Northern component to, to that partnership - it was Ford Foundation funding Wits to bring (laughs) African scholars uh, to Wits. So we can't do it on our own (P13).

It also recognises that issues regarding North-South partnerships in higher education have a reach beyond the context of the university.

> …the university doesn't exist as an island. It exists within a space, a political domain, where there are structures of power, there are structures of funding, all of which are hierarchical, unequal and so on and so forth. This is the landscape within which we're trying to think the idea of, uh, North-South partnerships (P17).

What is viewed critically is not only the concept of North-South partnerships but the very use of notions such as *global North* and *global South*. It is noted, for example, that by using the North-South terminology, and particularly verbal tricks such as 'North of the South' or 'South of the North' we continue to buy into the existing hierarchies.

> Similarly with the idea of the North, you know, like in the example that you chose that Wits in relation to Venda is more North than South. And I think this kind of formulation is quite, in that sense, misleading because we stick with the ideas of an existing hierarchy and with the supposed values of barbaric Europe, right? Europe has been responsible for, uh, the kind of levels of violence – epistemological and physical – for

> the last 300 years, which, uh, do not leave one with, uh, much to venerate in it, right? So when we say the North, it's a complex category just as much as the South – not that we don't have our own iniquities (P17).

Within the broader higher education landscape, the playing fields are still unequal. For example:

> So if you write in English you already begin to defer to the protocols of academic writing in English. And so then comes the thing of, ok, who will publish our work? Do we have the, you know. So this, the question is already, it's like you're already handicapped before you begin. Ok? And so I think that the, uh, and for example again, I mean, if you think about research publications and their weightage, right? The idea that you publish in a foreign journal is ? huge, it's ?, publishing in a local journal is not. Ok? Which again speaks to the lack of self-confidence and the lack of political and intellectual will to actually create our publications as, uh, speaking to a new intellectual paradigm (P17).

In the context of internationalisation, it is noted that the term itself orients us towards the North. "You see, internationalisation, in short, is really looking to the North, that's what internationalisation is" (P17) because

> …internationalisation is seen as making the university compatible with norms and standards set elsewhere: that we need to become a better university, we need to have our meritorious(?) students, we need to make ourselves competitive, we need to have, uh, intellectual production that matches that of universities elsewhere and so on and so forth (P17).

'Elsewhere' is here synonymous with 'in the North'. Overall, then:

> …the aspiration is to become like universities in the North rather than have an independent intellectual agenda or, or an intellectual agenda that is in dialogue with and sometimes even critical of an existing university agenda. So that's where we are right now (P17).

The situation 'right now' is characterised by participation, as contrasted with innovation, as "You want to participate, we don't want to innovate, it's as simple as that" (P17). In terms of moving from here towards a new philosophical paradigm, a number of observations are made.

For example, it is recognised that the work has already begun, both within the university as well as around the globe. One of the research institutes at Wits' Humanities faculty "is, it's completely about international partnerships in many ways, and completely about understanding or critiquing concepts like the global North and the global South" (P5). Furthermore:

> It is happening in a very disparate and scattered manner. There are centres, there are individuals who are all over the globe who are trying to grapple with this idea of how to produce new knowledge within an intellectual space that is already overdetermined by structures of power(?) etc, in fact some of things we have spoken about earlier (P17).

However, changes made, for example, with reference to the curriculum in certain disciplines, are not considered far-reaching enough, as "the university syllabi in the particular discipline is more or less undisturbed" (P17).

In addition, China offers an example where new, non-Northern patterns of knowledge production are being established.

> Now if you take what is happening in China, there's a section of the Chinese, major Chinese universities, which are trying to actually, uh, engage with the world university space but at the same time there is a simple thing that is happening there which is not happening in Africa or India, i.e. scholarship being produced in Chinese that people study Chinese, write in Chinese, think in Chinese, are aware of Chinese intellectual traditions, that you can study scientific subjects in Chinese, you produce scientific papers in Chinese and so on and so forth. Ja we're not, we have not even started, ok, and this I think is a crisis of confidence (P17).

One way is which this 'crisis in confidence' can be addressed is by building stronger links across the South. It is highlighted in this regard that re-thinking the North-South relationship cannot be separated from thinking about the South-South relationship. In the context of partnerships, for example:, "if we only have partnerships with Northern scholars, then you are reinforcing existing dominant networks that are suffused with power relations" (P9).

For Wits, both North-South and South-South linkages are important, and "Wits is proud of the fact that it's in Africa, but it's also proud of its international st, reputation and standing and quality and whatnot. And so it's bringing those two together, not doing one or the other" (P6). It appears that relations with the South have not received as much attention as the ones with

the North but that seems to change, as "we're really putting more effort into the global South" (P7). This means that for international engagements, there is a new overall policy in place.

> So the inside-out policy is a concentric circle, a set of concentric circles. The innermost circle are the 23 South African universities, we give preference to that. So, we want to work with all the South African universities to try and strengthen the higher education system in the country. We have signed an agreement with Limpopo and Venda. […] So whenever we now apply for funding from the European Union, from anybody, we always got them as one of the partners. So, the idea is that they will get part of that funding, so that they can build capacity at their university. We also, uh, give their staff preference to come and do PhDs at Wits and all that, and we're entering into what we call three plus ones and three plus two agreements, where people can do a BSc and then come and do engineering at Wits, so that's the innermost circle. Then the next level of circle is what we call the SADC countries, and obviously because SADC is right next to us we want to talk to all the SADC countries. And the future of the SADC countries influences the future of South Africa, so if the SADC countries do well, we will do well, and, you know, you know it, of the 3,000 some international students that we have, most of them come from SADC countries, so we're gonna make sure that things are happening well in SADC countries. The third circle is African Union, so all the African, the rest of the African countries, which will then include ARUA and non-ARUA members 'cos ARUA is only like 16 universities, but we talk of the whole of Africa. Then the fourth circle is the BRICS countries. And then the fight circle is the rest of the world. So, it, it's what we call our inside-out approach, and we say that we give preference to the people closest to us, and then we move outwards (P7).

This increased effort in terms of partnering with institutions in the global South is currently focused on particularly the other BRICS countries as well as the continent. While the change in focus is noted, it is also pointed out that things move rather slowly. For example, it appears that a flagship programme such as "…ARUA is really on the back burner, nothing much is happening with them." (P17), compared to engagements with Northern institutions. A possible explanation for this is that working with the South is not as productive if international rankings are taken as a measurement, for example:

> …we are part of Africa and we gotta get part of Africa more and more and whatnot, but it doesn't necessarily, you know, change the university ranking that might be assessed through those bibliometrics so there's a, there's a conflict there (P6).

However, in line with the University's mission there are a number of initiatives undertaken across the University to build stronger links to institutions in the South, particularly on the African continent. These linkages are pursued in addition to existing relationships with the North, "although we have multiple Northern partnerships, we have over the last period attempted, uh, with some degree of success, to focus more on partnerships within the African continent" (P9). There are deliberate attempts to foster Southern thinking and theory building across the continent.

> And that's why the theory from Africa, I mean, I started the theory from Africa so that we could establish more connections with African universities and we make it clear that only graduates from African universities currently at African universities can apply (P17).

Such deliberate attempts are needed to

> …produce new networks, and those new networks have to be produced on fundamentally different bases, different understanding, different relations that are informed by, uh, challenging dominant narratives, dominant relations, creating new relations, new research projects, etcetera, etcetera (P9).

In other words, re-thinking the North-South paradigm also requires a stronger and more principled engagement with the South.

> So if one were to think about this North-South exchange, it has to be premised first, I think, and that's what we need to have, it has to be premised on a principled, honest, confident engagement with universities in the South where we are working to create an intellectual agenda that works with our traditions of thinking, our traditions of philosophical reflection, our histories, our particularities because a university in Africa is not the same as a university in New Jersey, Witwatersrand cannot be Princeton. You have to think about standards, you know, think about questions of abstract standards, we have to think about what this education is for and so on and so forth. So this is a project we have to embark on (P17).

Embarking on the project of more principled engagement with universities in the South is a project that takes money and time. Regarding funding, there is a concern that South-South partnerships will continue to depend on Northern resources.

> …because we… uh, uh, uh I think the, the university has been very aggressive I think in reaching out to the rest of, to the rest of Africa but I'm, I'm very sceptical about the continuity of those, those initiatives unless there is money to bring to the table. And again we keep running to Ford or Carnegie (laughs) to fund those kinds of, uh, partnerships. So it reinforces the, the North-South component of, of our of our partnerships. If you want to talk to the Ugandans, if you want to bring Ugandan scholars here, we have to do it through, via Ford or Carnegie. So that's my, my reading of it. And I don't think that's going to end any time soon (P13).

Such a project also takes time.

> …but it does mean that it's quite slow. Okay? Uh, but we must, we must keep in mind that the rel…, the dominant relationship has been, has evolved over centuries, so one's not simply, one isn't going to overcome it in a generation or two, uh, but one has to create the, uh, the basis for that (P9).

It is about laying the foundations for a different future now. There are, of course, different opinions about what the future holds. Whatever happens at Wits will be shaped by developments in the national and international contexts. For example, democratisation of higher education, as championed by decolonisation, is faced with an opposing trend of increased elitism, particularly given the reality that across the world "higher education, unless you're a private entity with a huge endowment, is in a major crisis. (P8) This means that:

> …research will become increasingly more and more privileged, which means that international programmes will become increasing more and more privileged. And I'm not even talking about study abroad programmes which is cash cows for North American institutions. I'm talking about just research. And that to me is really the bigger question (P8).

There is an overall concern regarding the impact of scare resources.

> And that has been a big problem here, and in South Africa we got lucky enough that we have the relative infrastructure where [we're strong???]. Yes, we know there's a

> history associated with that but that requires real, very thorough cl…, clear thinking of how we are able to leverage the resources that these universities have, I mean, these are dwindling resources, to ensure that we capacitate these universities for generations to come. And the next generation of scholars must be able to pick up where we left off (P11).

However, that next generation of scholars is not yet secured.

> I think all these beautiful, beautiful people that we are bending over backwards to make sure that they finish their PhDs, certainly a whole cohort of PhDs that have gone through my hands, young black academics, scholars, practitioners, artists, creative researchers, I don't think in the next twenty years we'll find them here. I think they will go elsewhere because we're gonna be competing for resources. Umm, and yah, so that's, uh, Samia, that's what worries me. If you really… And, and I don't see how we're gonna get out of that conundrum (P8).

Despite the challenges affecting higher education, there's hopeful discourse regarding internationalisation and partnerships. Referring to the attitudes of suspicion and resentment towards international staff, particularly those from the continent, as mentioned earlier, the following observation is made:

> Ahh, look, uhm, I tell my colleagues, the young people we teach here are probably the only hope of breaking through some of these mindsets. Uh, and the value in that is that, look, research also has shown, that the academic performance of black students depends on whether they have black teachers or not. That research is already very well established. And so, secondly, this generation is now interacting, in a certain sense, with all these Sub-Saharan African academics, which hopefully will break some of these stereotypes about the value we bring to this country. You realise that's probably were we need to target our efforts, this young generation of people coming through these great programmes are probably going to become tomorrow's internationalists. They're going to be probably the linkages we're going to be able to build between South Africa and the rest of the continent and the rest of the world (P1).

This is a hopeful general outlook towards South Africa's engagement with the rest of the world, including the global North and the global South. Regarding the latter, "The ideal is to get more of those." while continuing "…to engage the North but more on, on, on our own terms." (P13)

Regarding partnerships in general, there will always be the question of how the local and the international relate to each other.

> The future of partnerships won't just be about the international. It's also the national and the local. And the new demands on partnership is gonna be looking at the national, looking at the local, national and international together in sort of a conceptric (sic) circle, all embedded in each other (P3).

For Wits, the perspectives of the local and national are firmly embedded in the South. Therefore:

> So, I think the future of partnership has to ask the question first of all about what does the Southern perspective mean, then who is the Southern, and then what knowledges would count for the future. I mean, if the Southern is only talking about postcolonial without talking to the posthuman, I think we're in big trouble because the posthuman is the, is the future around the humanities and artificial intelligence or the humanities or man and machine kind of thing. So, there may be a need to rethink again, uhm, uhm, uhm, the idea of what partnership is, and sometimes it might be starting right here next door (P3).

Furthermore, "a principled engagement with the idea of the Southern university" (P17) will lead to questions such as for example, "What is the landscape of a Southern university? Who are the potentially collaborator? What should be the themes that we address? And so on" (P17). It is believed that universities are spaces where such re-thinking can happen.

> But the university has the space, has the wherewithal, has the history and has the lineage to actually think through clearly what a programme of North-South engagement would be which is based on a very principled engagement with the hierarchies that exist. Has a very principled engagement with the idea of new knowledge. Has a principled engagement with, of who comes to the university and who cannot get into the university and how do we structure knowledge for those who come into the university with their own demands, ok? (P17).

In the current South African higher education landscape, many of these questions and issues are being addressed in the context of frameworks such a Southern theory and decolonisation, as they offer an opportunity to imagine the future differently. For example:

> I think it actually offers a kind of what I would call an epistemic rupture and an institutional rupture because in some ways it gives us an opportunity to talk about, umm, remodelling, uh, the Humanities and remodelling the opportunity to really think what is the, what is the function of education in the Humanities? (P8).

The time we live in now is important.

> So it, you know, we're at the fork's road, whether we let it narrow, you know, if, uh, these links are linked to the economies of these countries, right? Ah, we got advantages in terms of the demographic dividend and the fact that the global North is going to realise that the world as it stands is not sustainable with all the challenges. So therefore, but we need to develop and grow on our own terms, and that is something that we need to really worry about. So the appropriate political environment, the appropriate social environment that allows scholarship to thrive would be very, very key (P11).

In other words, while the University can play a critical role in re-imagining the future of not only partnerships but higher education in general, it is clear that the issues that are at stake are much broader than the university itself, as "it's too much of a burden for the university to be bearing by itself in a space where we're thinking about a national consciousness and a political framework" (P17).

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WEBSITE SOURCES

ACCA https://www.accaglobal.com/africa/en.html

BRICS Network University https://nu-brics.ru/

The British Council https://www.britishcouncil.org/

CHE https://www.che.ac.za/

DHET http://www.dhet.gov.za/

DST https://www.dst.gov.za/

EAIE https://www.eaie.org/

EUA	https://www.eua.eu/
IAU	https://www.iau-aiu.net/
IEASA	http://www.ieasa.studysa.org/
NAFSA	http://www.nafsa.org/
NRF	https://www.nrf.ac.za/
UCT	https://www.uct.ac.za/
USAf	https://www.usaf.ac.za/
WC2	http://wc2network.org/
Wits	http://www.wits.ac.za