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ACADEMICS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE IN SERVING THE PUBLIC GOOD: A STUDY AT TWO UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Humanities at the
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in fulfilment of the conditions for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Co-Supervisor: Prof Elaine Unterhalter

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original and unaided work. I have correctly referenced all the sources I used. This thesis has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any University.

Mthobisi Ndaba



Date

05.08.2022

DEDICATION

To my Mother, Jabulile Veroni Ndaba, this work is testimony to the values of believing in the ideas I have and daring to try them out.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give Glory to God the Almighty for His guidance and always being my pillar of strength.

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ABSTRACT

Since the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the highly contested concept of 'the public good' has been at the centre of debates about the purpose of higher education. In this thesis, I explore how academics from two universities in South Africa understand this concept as it relates to higher education, their perception of academics' role in higher education's contribution to the public good and the conditions under which this contribution is possible. I adopted a qualitative approach to carrying out this study. I used a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct 15 in-depth, one-on-one, face-to-face interviews with academics in different disciplines at a historically black and historically white university. I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods to select participants for this study. I analysed the data using thematic analysis.

I found that academics' understanding of the public good in higher education is strongly influenced by the transformation imperative of the democratic dispensation in South Africa, which emphasises addressing the injustices of the country's colonial and apartheid pasts through redress, social justice, inclusivity, reduction of inequality, and alleviating poverty and unemployment, among other things. In terms of the role of academics, I found that academics are seen as playing multiple roles that can either be in conflict or complement each other. These include teaching, research and supervision, community engagement, activism, public intellectualism, mentoring and role modelling. These roles are not equally valued by the university, which influences academics' decisions about which role to prioritise. Finally, I found that, in participants' view, the transformation of higher education institutions, funding, collaboration, and academics' personal attributes that are aligned with the vision of higher education for the public good.

These findings give us an insight into the micro-level perspective of the relationship between higher education and the public good. Moreover, this has implications for future research and transformation of higher education in South Africa. Firstly, the findings of this study imply that our understanding of how higher education and the public good connect has to be grounded in people's real experiences, and for this to happen, researchers have to initiate a dialogue between the experiences of people on the ground and the abstract concepts in literature. Secondly, the personal qualities of academics do matter in higher educations' contribution to the public good, which is crucial for thinking about the transformation of the academic staff as not just about their racial and gender identities.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis explores how academics in South Africa understand the public good in their work in nuanced ways compared to those who write about higher education and the public good in the literature. It is also to show that transformation is at the heart of academics' notion of the public good in South Africa, where transformation is a process of change that involves redressing the injustices of the country's colonial and apartheid pasts, reducing inequalities, and ensuring inclusivity. In this study, I understand transformation as both a form of the public good and a condition of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good. Moreover, the thesis also shows that the notion of transformation is contested in different higher education institutional settings.

In this chapter, I introduce the concept of the public good, which is at the heart of this study. I demonstrate that it is itself a contested concept that can be understood differently from various perspectives, and I consider how it has often been juxtaposed with the notion of private good and public bad. I then introduce the problem statement and the rationale for the study, arguing that the literature on higher education and the public good focuses mainly on the macro-level in examining the relationship between higher education and the public good. It analyses this relationship from the angle of what higher education systems and institutions do for the public good. This misses the nuances that can be uncovered by also looking at this relationship from a micro-level perspective, considering the perceptions and experiences of key role players in higher education's contribution to the public good. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the thesis.

As a black student from a working-class family background, I have always perceived higher education as a vehicle for social mobility. This has triggered my interest in studying education inequalities, student access, success, and academic development in higher education. Both my honours and master's research projects focused on these issues from the students' perspective (Ndaba, 2015, 2017). Having focused on students' voices in my previous projects, I was interested in academics' voices as key role players in higher education. In 2017, I had an opportunity to be part of a three-year research project on Higher Education, Inequality and the Public Good in four African countries, i.e., South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana (Unterhalter et al., 2019). Working on this project introduced me to the extensive body of literature on higher education and the public good, much of which draws on the work of Paul

Samuelson (1954) and Simon Marginson (2011, 2012, 2014). The debates in the literature on higher education and the public good captured all my areas of research interest in a way that relates them to the notion of the public good.

Defining the Public Good

Since the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the concept of 'the public good' has been at the centre of debates about the purpose of higher education, university organisation and governance, resource allocation, access, and arguments over market-based and neoliberal approaches to higher education reform (Marginson, 2011; Neubauer, 2008; Pusser, 2006). It is a normative concept with a long history of contestation, which dates back to the works of ancient Greek Philosophers. Since Plato's Republic, engagements on the debates over the concept of the public good have engendered a multiplicity of understandings that prevail to this day. Some scholars interpret Plato's work as asserting that public good is a body of objective and substantive truths and principles arrived at within a community (Etzioni, 2014; Pusser, 2006). In this conception, as Etzioni (2014) suggests, there is no tension between the private and public good, as individuals are thought, for example, to attain happiness, which is a private good, through the pursuit of justice a public good. However, this is understood as contrasting Aristotle's conception. According to Pusser (2006, p. 13), Aristotle advocated for an understanding of the public good that encompassed "virtue, justice and material wellbeing." He argued that the community, as a city-state *(polis)*, to be for the sake of life, and exists for the sake of the good life and human beings lead a good life by contributing to the good of their community (Etzioni, 2014). However, both Plato and Aristotle

> … present a vision of the common good that cannot simply be reduced to the sum of all private interests, but whose promotion is nonetheless conducive to those interests– virtuous, fulfilled citizens and harmonious communities are both consequences of the pursuit of the good life. (Etzioni, 2014, p. 603).

Moreover, they both did not consider the distinction and the tension that exists between public good and private good, which have become more important in contemporary debates on higher education and the public good (Pusser, 2006). As philosophers such as John Locke and Thomas Hobbes paid more attention to it in the 16th century, the distinction between private and public good became clearer. The former was generally ascribed to monarchs, and the latter generally referred to actions that benefitted the whole community (Pusser, 2006). From this distinction, philosophers admitted to the possibility of an interaction between private interests and the

public good. They first understood it as an individuals' obligation to serve the public good, "a devotion that (while sometimes but not always, related to religious duty), also both benefitted the individual as a member of the broader public and elevated the individual's personal and social standing" (Pusser, 2006, p. 13).

Economists in the 17th century did not understand the public good as an objective goal to pursue (Etzioni, 2014; Marginson, 2011; Neubauer, 2008). Instead, they understood it as an aggregation of individual goods or individual actions. Adam Smith, the Scottish economist, was the first to articulate this conception. He argued that an individual, in pursuing his or her private good, unwittingly promotes the good of the society more effectively than when he or she intends to do so (Etzioni, 2014; Pusser, 2006). He referred to this as "the invisible hand" of the free market. This, however, does not mean that he believed it was the responsibility of the individuals to provide public goods. As Neubauer (2008) argues, the notion of the public good historically derives from the early formations of European nation-states and liberal political theories about the responsibilities and obligations of the state. With this formation emerged the sense of "good" that the state produces for its citizens. This good was understood as an indivisible one that devolves into citizens because of their membership in the state. Many public good scholars quote Adam Smith as among the first to argue that the provision of public goods is a fundamental function and a core responsibility of the state (Anomaly, 2015; Neubauer, 2008; Pusser, 2006; Speth, 1999).

Although the notion of the public good is highly contested, many scholars in the field of education cite Paul Samuelson's definition of public good(s), which he articulated in an article *The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure* published in the Review of Economics and Statistics in 1954 (Bodansky, 2012; Desai, 2003; Holcombe, 1997; Kaul et al., 1999; Marginson, 2011; Tilak, 2008). Paul Samuelson, an American economist, argued that a public good is any good that is non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Non-rivalrous means that one person can consume it without diminishing its availability for consumption by others, and non-excludable means that its benefits cannot be limited to individual buyers and that it is consumed collectively. In other words, a public good is something that is not provided exclusively to some people and not others; and whose consumption by some does not hinder or limit other people's consumption of the same good. Marginson (2011) argues that Samuelson, as a card-carrying member of the American economics profession, has a *prima facie* bias in favour of economic markets. He sees

goods as open to private ownership and full market production unless they have special qualities that prevent this. He adds that:

> Public and part-public goods are a residual concept, goods under-provided in markets. It is unprofitable to pay for goods that can be acquired free as the result of someone else's purchase and unprofitable to make goods available for no cost. Hence there is a case for state or philanthropic financing of public goods, and possibly also provision, to ensure the desired quantity: though 'the desired quantity' raises normative issues. (Marginson, 2011, p. 416).

Tilak (2008), an Indian Educational Economist, drawing on Samuelson's (1954) work, further explains the characteristics of public goods. He asserts that public goods generate a significant number of externalities[1] that, in economics, are often referred to as social or public benefits. He went on to argue that for any good to be considered as a public good, it must be available to all equally.

Distinctions in Notions of Public Goods

Literature, particularly but not exclusively from the field of economics, distinguishes between *pure* and *semi*-public goods. Goods that have all the characteristics described in Samuelson's definition are *pure* public goods. Marginson (2011) also emphasises this point. He argues that only a few public goods are absolutely non-rivalrous and non-excludable. Many of them have one or the other characteristic, in part or full. Such public goods, which do not necessarily have all these characteristics are *semi*-public goods[2] (Marginson, 2011; Kaul et al., 1999; Tilak, 2008). Peace is a good example of a pure public good (Kaul et al., 1999). Citizens of a country where there is peace can enjoy it collectively. Its enjoyment by one part of the country's population does not prevent or limit its enjoyment by another part of the population. According to Kaul et al., (1999), semi-public goods fall into two categories, club goods and common-pool resources. Club goods are those that are non-rivalrous in consumption but excludable, whereas common-pool resources are those that are non-excludable but rivalrous in consumption. There are numerous distinctions that different scholars make between different types of public goods over and above the distinction between *pure* and *semi*-public goods. These distinctions reveal and somewhat unpack the complexity and nuances of the public good, which is useful for

[1] "Externalities arise when an individual or a firm takes an action but does not bear all the costs (negative externality) or all the benefits (positive externality) of the action" (Kaul et al., 1999, p. 5). However, in the context of public goods, the focus is on positive externalities (social or public benefits). I further discuss this later in this chapter.

[2] Some scholars, such as Kaul et al., (1999) refer to semi- public goods as impure- public goods.

understanding better its relationship with higher education as well as the role of academics in this relationship.

Some scholars distinguish between *local* and *global* public goods (Bodansky, 2012; Kaul et al., 1999; Marginson, 2011; 2012, 2014c; Tilak, 2008). Local public goods are those whose benefits are geographically limited. Global public goods, also called international public goods (Tilak, 2008), are those whose benefits accrue to the whole world. They are produced and provided by nation-states, or alternatively, by institutions in the unregulated global space (Marginson, 2012). Literature has more to say about global public goods than local public goods. While Tilak (2008) uses the terms "*global public goods*" and "*international public goods*" synonymously, Kaul et al., (1999) suggest that these terms do not necessarily mean the same thing. They argue that international public good is inclusive of both *regional* and *global* public goods. This suggests that "global public goods" refers to a type of international public goods rather than its synonym. These nuanced ways of using terms still point to the contestations and complexity of the concept of public goods. Kaul et al., (1999), building in Samuelson's (1954) definition of public goods, provide a comprehensive definition of the concept of global public goods, which seems to capture its essence better than the definition I have discussed so far. Their definition reveals the geographic dimension and the sociological and temporal dimensions of the notion of global public goods.

> Global public goods must meet two criteria. The first is that their benefits have strong qualities of publicness— that is, they are marked by nonrivalry in consumption and non-excludability. These features place them in the general category of public goods. The second criterion is that their benefits are quasi-universal in terms of countries (covering more than one group of countries), people (accruing to several, preferably all, population groups), and generations (extending to both current and future generations, or at least meeting the needs of current generations without foreclosing development options for future generations). (Kaul et at., 1999, pp. 2-3).

According to Kaul et al., (1999), the growing number of international regimes, providing common frameworks for international transport and communication, trade, harmonised taxation, monetary policy, governance, and others, provide good examples of global public goods. As I will show later in the literature review chapter, knowledge is considered by many scholars to be a global public good (Bodansky, 2012; Kaul et al., 1999; Marginson, 2011; 2012, 2014c; Tilak, 2008). For this reason, the concept of global public goods is an important one in

my attempt to better understand higher education's contribution to the public and the role of academics in this contribution.

Simon Marginson, who has provided a sustained theoretical engagement with the notion of public good and its link to higher education, distinguishes between three versions of this notion: public goods (plural), public good (singular) and the public sphere (political version) (Marginson, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016b). He describes 'public goods' (plural), which derives from economics, particularly Samuelson's (1954) definition of public goods, as referring to non-rivalrous and non-excludable goods. In this version, the term "goods" generally refers to "all production, including benefits that are intangible/ non-corporeal, such as educational services" (Marginson, 2011, p 415). He argues that this version is objectivist and empirical in form and can take individual or collective forms. An example of the collective form is clean air, and an example of the individual form is externalities created when a new graduate enters the labour market.

He describes public good (singular) as a more normative version of the public good, which tends to be collective in orientation and is more eclectic in usage. He argues that most notions of the singular version "refer to broadly-based interests, whether pursued democratically or by surrogate as when someone claims to represent the public interest on behalf of the public" and it is often "expected that public good is widespread if not universal" (Marginson, 2011, p. 418). Moreover, he argues that, unlike the plural version that derives from economics, the singular version derives from democratic political philosophy, which associates the public good with democratic forms, openness, transparency, popular sovereignty, and grassroots agency. However, this is not the only understanding of this version. There is also a pro-capitalist interpretation, which suggests that the unrestricted operation of Adam Smith's invisible hand of the market results in the general benefit. In other words, the uninterrupted accumulation of profits drives the prosperity of all, whereas, in the socialist discourse, the general benefit is achieved through statist regulation, which contradicts an unregulated capitalist market (Marginson, 2011). Another interpretation brings the notion of public goods that rests on civil society and institutions that the state partly controls, such as universities, rather than nation-states. Marginson (2011) concludes that the singular version of the public good relates more to higher education than the plural version.

The last version of the public good he presents is a more politically inclined one, the public sphere, which he borrows from a German Sociologist, Jürgen Habermas. In his book, *The*

Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, published in 1989, Habermas described the public sphere as "the public dimension of discussion, criticism, debate and opinion formation in 18th century England" (Marginson, 2011, p. 418). It is a fluid space of media, local public meetings, and lectures in which public reasoning and critical commentary on society are aired. In the context of higher education, the public sphere is, ideally, a space for the formation of attitudes of participation, citizenship, and critical belonging in and through higher education institutions. Marginson further explains that the notion of the public sphere refers to all the places (such as homes, salons, coffee shops, inns of court, counting houses and semi-government agencies), mainly in London, where people went to form and communicate opinions on critical matters of the day. He adds that the public sphere cultivated and sustained a capacity for criticism that was independent of the state but was often directed towards it and to brainstorm strategies for the consideration of the state. It also allowed for nonviolent social integration that was based on discourse rather than money and power. Literature shows that the role of the Habermasian public sphere in 18th century England has parallels to the public good role of the university in society (Marginson, 2011; Nixon, 2011; Pusser, 2006; J. Williams, 2016).

Habermas' idea of a public sphere draws on Kant's (1798) ideas on critical reason and the need for universities to maintain autonomy from the state to scrutinise politics, economics and society critically. For political liberals, the space of the overlapping consensus is a public space in which we all need to co-operate, for the common good, regardless of what different ideas of the good one might hold (Rawls, 1987). While Rawls (1987) derives this notion from the history of attempts to deal with the legacy of religious wars in 16th and 17th centurie Europe, we need to consider the extent to which this form of overlapping consensus, as a means to deal with histories of violence, racism and dispossession, is appropriate in the South African context, or whether other notions of a public sphere of recognition, forgiveness and acknowledgement of difference might be more appropriate.

Another related version of the public good is the notion of the common good, which has some different features from the notion of the public sphere. In how it is often used, the term 'common good' is the same as 'public good'(Deem & Mccowan, 2018). However, for some writers, the common good is a shared space of collective construction, thereby having a procedural in addition to a substantive meaning. This emphasises the importance of some of

the experiences of higher education as offering access to this form of collectivity. As stated by Deneulin & Townsend (2007, p. 25), cited in Deem & McCowan (2018),

> [T]he common good is not the outcome of a collective action which makes everybody better off than if they acted individually, but is the good of that shared enterprise itself. It is the good of the community which comes into being in and through that enterprise.

In this way, Locatelli (2017) uses the term 'common good' to refer to the shared space for the construction of education in practice by communities and thereby as a critique of the individualist conception of public goods in economics. This use of this term is different from how it is used in economics, where it refers to a good that is non-excludable but may be rivalrous. It is this term that appears in the title of Marginson's (2016, p. 17) work on higher education, where his use of 'common good' has the sense of "formation of common relationships and joint (collective) benefits in solidaristic social relations within a country." This articulation of ideas about higher education's relationship with the common good, as delineated by Marginson (2016), draws mainly on examples from Europe and the USA. In so doing, Marginson (2016) does not address how this would work in highly divided societies like South Africa (Deem & McCowan, 2018).

Letizia (2015) makes a distinction between "public goods" and "the public good" that is slightly different from Marginson's (2011) articulation of the distinction between the two. Letizia (2015, p. 7) argues that "[t]he notion of the public good both precedes the creation of public goods and is a result of them." In other words, "A society with a strong conception of the public good can more readily produce necessary public goods and their subsequent positive externalities" (p. 7). In another article published in 2017, Letizia defines "the public good" as a constellation built with numerous ideas, which can enhance citizens' quality of life. He suggests that this constellation must provide citizens with more than just material comfort but also opportunities for democratic participation and essential services such as education and healthcare. This constellation, he adds, "is nebulous", and "it grows with new ideas, knowledge and discoveries" (Letizia, 2017, p. 147).

Nixon (2011) argues that the notion of public good needs to be differentiated from public interest. The latter refers to the aggregate of individual interests or preferences, whereas the former "involves complex moral and political judgements regarding what constitutes the good for the polity as a whole" (p. x). This reveals the normative nature of the concept of the public good. It foregrounds the important issue of context in how one understands and uses this

concept. It means that what might be understood as being in the public interest may not be judged by everyone to be a public good. It also suggests that what may be understood as a public good in one context may not be understood as such in another. As Letizia (2017) argues, the notion of the public good is not a static one rather, it is fluid, and changes as social conditions and environmental contexts shift.

Public Good, Private Good and Public Bad

Having discussed the different ways in which the public good is defined, I see it fit to turn to the juxtapositions of the notion of public good with 'private good' and 'public bad'. In much of the literature I review in this chapter, 'public good' is mostly juxtaposed with 'private good' (Kaul & Mendoza, 2003; Marginson, 2007; Tilak, 2008; J. Williams, 2016). Although neither 'private good' nor 'public bad' is the subject of this study, it is useful to understand these for making sense of the debates about the relationship between higher education and the public good. Prevailing understandings of the distinction between 'public' and 'private' goods mainly come from neo-classical economics and or statist political philosophy.

The neoclassical economics approach uses Samuelson's criteria of rivalry and excludability to define and distinguish between public and private goods. According to this approach, a good is public if it is non-rivalrous and non-excludable, and private goods are those goods that are excludable and rivalrous (Kaul & Mendoza, 2003; Marginson, 2007; Tilak, 2008; J. Williams, 2016). In other words, those who own the good can exercise property rights, which prevents those who do not own the good and have not paid for it from enjoying its benefits. The consumption of a private good by one consumer prevents simultaneous consumption of the same good by other consumers. Moreover, Samuelson assumed that the market is the norm, that its realm is both non-state and non-private. For this reason, he believed that private goods should be provided in the markets and that public goods tend to be underprovided in the markets because it is unprofitable to do so. Hence, there is a case for state provision (financing) of public good.

In his critique of this neoclassical approach, Marginson (2007) argues that Samuelson presents the boundaries between public and private as if they are natural and universal, which means that, according to Samuelson, a good is intrinsically either public or private. In other words, Samuelson views a good's 'publicness' or 'privateness' as determined by its nature rather than socially constructed, as Kaul and Mendoza (2003) and Marginson (2007) suggest. Marginson

(2007) argues that it does not help to treat 'public' and 'private' as static and universal attributes because activities such as education often oscillate between private and public and vice versa. Treating them as universal attributes blinds us from seeing the complex mixing of private and public qualities in higher education systems and institutions. Notable here is that Samuelson's approach presents a more normative and intrinsically oriented understanding of 'public' and 'private'. Marginson's (2007) proposes a more descriptive and analytical understanding.

While acknowledging that there is some usefulness in Samuelson's approach, Marginson (2007) claims that it is poorly equipped to analyse and place value on collective goods. These are goods that have no individualisable component at all, such as the contribution of education to the formation of literacy in a population, in contrast with the individual benefits conferred by each single degree certificate. He claims that it is more helpful to consider a good to be potentially rivalrous or non-rivalrous and potentially excludable and non-excludable. In other words, the public or private character of a good is not determined by its intrinsic nature. For him, this is determined by policy choices in different contexts. In other words, things that are seen and treated as a public good in one context may not be seen and treated as such in another context. Tilak (2008) concurs with Marginson (2007) on this one. He claims that the classification of public goods depends on "government policies, market conditions, level of development and political realities" (p. 451). As a result, it is in no way absolute.

Both Marginson (2007) and Tilak (2008) concur with Kaul and Mendoza (2003), who argue that the "publicness" or "privateness" of a good is socially constructed. This is to say that "society can modify the (non)rivalry and (non)excludability of a good's benefit" (p.80). They observe that goods become public or private based on deliberate policy choices. They recommend that it must, therefore, be acknowledged that in most cases, goods do not exist in their original form but as social constructs, generally determined by policies and other collective human actions. They make the example that land is a rivalrous and excludable good in its original state. For this reason, there have been many struggles over land throughout the history of humanity. Many societies introduced property rights regimes to address these conflicts. These property rights make excludable goods like land to be private goods. They make clear who has exclusive rights to benefit from the good or determine how it can be used (Kaul and Mendoza, 2003). These include the right to trade the good in the market.

Using the same example of land, Kaul and Mendoza (2003) show that policy choices can determine the publicness or privateness of a good. They argue that some societies, particularly

traditional societies, still have grazing and hunting fields open to everyone. Doing so, they argue, is a societal and policy choice. This choice then gives the land a socially constructed status of being non-excludable even though its basic and original properties suggest that it is an excludable good. The argument about the social construction of "publicness" and "privateness" that Kaul and Mendoza (2003) present reaffirms an argument I made earlier, which is also echoed in different ways in Desai (2003), Letizia (2017), Nixon (2011) and Tilak (2008) about the significance of understanding the notion of the public good in context. As Desai (2003) argues, the provision of public goods began a long time ago in the middle ages, and they need to be redefined from time to time in consideration of ever-changing political realities. Policy choices are influenced, among other things, by the social, cultural, political, and economic climates of the context in which they are made.

The political philosophy approach offers a broader meaning of 'private' and 'public' than what neoclassical economics offers. In political philosophy, 'public' is associated with goods that are produced and or consumed collectively, goods that are broadly accessible, whose production is subject to a process of common decision making in a community. 'Public' also encompasses multiple factors such as "how the good is produced and by whom, who controls it, how and how widely it is distributed, who benefits from it" (Marginson, 2007, p. 313). These are crucial factors to consider in an attempt to understand the link between higher education and the public good. However, Marginson (2007) finds it unhelpful that the political philosophy approach defines 'private' and 'public' in statist terms. According to this approach, 'public' has an ownership-based definition associated with the government or the state, whereas private refers to non-state ownership or production. 'Private' is associated with the markets, the home and family, and the inner self. According to Marginson (2007), this statist definition neglects the potential for collective goods and externalities generated in civil association and from the markets as well. It also neglects the possibility of global public goods because, within its framework, public goods cannot be produced where there is no government in the international or global dimension (Kaul et al. 1999; Marginson, 2007). In other words, it suggests that the national dimension is public terrain, and the global dimension is market terrain.

While both the neoclassical economics and political philosophy approaches are widely "accepted" ways of understanding and distinguishing between 'public' and 'private', even in higher education literature, I concur with Marginson's (2007, p. 313) argument that "both notions are flawed." They are both dualistic, reflecting the respective political claims of

economic liberalism, which are centred on the market (the private side of the duality) and social democracy centred on state institutions (the public side of the duality). They treat 'public' and 'private' as mutually exclusive. Such a dualistic framework suggests that the more private a good is, the less public it is and vice versa. Therefore, they are both limited in analysing the complex middle ground between ideologically drawn extremes, especially because they fail to acknowledge that 'public' and 'private' elements are not necessarily zero-sum. This also means that they are analytically and empirically weak when applied essentially because state agencies can set up and manage markets and conduct businesses that generate profits. Such activities are impossible in a world where there is a strict separation between 'state' and 'market' (Marginson, 2007).

However, Marginson (2007) does not completely disagree with these approaches. Instead, he draws what is useful from both of them to develop an alternative non-dualistic and non-formalistic approach that is useful for analysing the link between higher education and the public good and is applicable at both the national and global dimensions. The approach he proposes claims that a good is public when it has a significant element of non-rivalry and or non-excludability and that it is made broadly accessible across populations. Any goods without these attributes, he deems to be private. This approach also acknowledges the social construction of 'publicness' and "privateness" of a good. Moreover, it acknowledges that though state-owned agencies often give explicit attention to the production and provision of public goods, they can also produce private goods. Even though markets are often concerned with the production of private goods, they can also produce public goods. In other words, contrary to the view associated with some works in political philosophy, state ownership does not necessarily translate to the production of public goods. However, Marginson (2007) acknowledges that generally, public goods are under-produced in markets, where producers and consumers are explicitly concerned with private benefits for themselves, and public goods are implicit by-products of the 'invisible hand' of the market but are not produced by design. I find Marginson's (2007) alternative approach more appropriate for the purpose of this study. Having said that, I now turn to another juxtaposition of 'public good" with "public bad" as it appears in literature.

The literature says much more about the juxtaposition of 'public good' with 'private good' than it says about the juxtaposition of 'public good' with 'public bad'. In other words, there is no extensive conceptual engagement with the notion of public bad though is it not regarded as

something inconsequential or non-existent. However, some scholars do engage with this notion, although not to the same extent as 'public good' and 'private good' (Kaul et al., 1999; Marginson, 2011, 2012). Marginson (2011, 2012) uses the term 'public bad' without providing a clear definition of it. However, he used it in the same way that Kaul et al., (1999) defined it. Kaul et al., (1999) defined 'public bad' as referring to negative externalities. They observe that "externalities are by-products of certain activities—spill-overs into the public sphere" (p. 5). Therefore, they define a public good as a special case of 'positive' externalities and public bad as referring to 'negative' externalities. They also acknowledge that this opens room for the contestation of what is positive and what is negative. However, they adopt a stance that is more inclined with economics, which suggests that "positive and negative externalities are distinguished by their positive or negative utilities to third parties" (p. 5). As a result, they use the term public good to refer to goods and activities that have a positive utility, and if there is public disutility, they refer to it as a 'public bad'. They argue that judgements of what is positive (or negative) utility are context determined:

> At the local, national and global levels, most judgements of what is desirable can only be the result of a political process, given the tremendous disparities in living conditions and value systems that exist within countries, let alone the world. Thus, the measuring rod has to be found within existing policy consensus. For example, if society values knowledge, a library could be said to be a good with a high positive utility. Other communities, however, may prefer to spend resources on roads. (Kaul et al., 1999, p. 6).

This reaffirms the significance of context in understanding what public good or public bad is. Actions that may have positive externalities in one context may have negative ones in another and vice versa. According to Kaul and Mendoza (2003, p. 87), public bads "may primarily affect voiceless future generations or politically weak groups or may be perceived as being too costly to correct or secondary to other concerns."

Problem Statement and Rationale

Engaging with the literature on higher education and the public good, I found that the notion of the public good and its relationship to higher education is highly contested (Calhoun, 2006; Fongwa, 2019; Hazelkorn & Gibson, 2019; Holcombe, 1997; Mamdani, 1993; Marginson, 2011, 2012; Mohamedbhai, 2015; Tilak, 2008; Walker, 2015; Walker & McLean, 2010). There are economically oriented understandings of the relationship between higher education and the public good that see this relationship in terms of higher education's instrumental role in

economic growth and development (Bloom et al., 2006; Cloete et al., 2011; Cloete & Maassen, 2015). Some understandings draw on the capabilities approach, which sees higher education as a site for the expansion of capabilities and experience of human development (Boni & Walker, 2016; East et al., 2014; Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020; Walker, 2015; Walker & McLean, 2010). There are also socio-politically oriented understandings (Badat, 2009; Davids & Waghid, 2016; Leibowitz, 2012; Leibowitz & Holgate, 2012; Letizia, 2017; Nixon, 2011; Pusser, 2006; Singh, 2001, 2011; Walker, 2015).

The contestations also seem to be based on context (historical, social, political, economic, geographical etc.), particularly the idea that what is regarded as a public good in one context may not necessarily be a public good in another context (Leibowitz, 2012; Letizia, 2017; Nixon, 2011). For me, these contestations raise the question of how the relationship between higher education and the public good is understood by academics in the South African context of higher education, which is strongly framed by the country's colonial and apartheid histories.[3] This question is not addressed in the literature because most of it analyses the relationship between higher education and the public good at a macro-level. This macro-level view mainly provides an abstract understanding of this relationship, which does not give a deep enough insight into the dynamics of this relationship in practice. This is also demonstrated by the findings of the study of Higher Education, Inequality and the Public Good in South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana (Unterhalter et al., 2019). Moreover, the literature focuses mainly on the public good role that higher education (systems and institutions) plays in society, which tells a one-sided story of the relationship between higher education and the public good. That is the story of how higher education benefits society.

Very little is said about the other side of the story, which is about what goes into producing the public good of higher education. This side of the story gives us insight into the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good, which deepens our understanding of it. The small portion of the literature on these issues that gives attention to the micro-level focuses mainly on students' experiences in higher education institutions and the role of graduates in society (Ashwin & Case, 2018; McLean & Walker, 2012; Walker & McLean, 2010). For these reasons, more micro-level focused research is necessary to elucidate

[3] The influence and continuing legacy of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa's higher education system is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

the other side of the story, which is about the micro-level dynamics and intricacies of the relationship between higher education and the public good.

Given the need for micro-level focused research, in this study, I explore academics' conception(s) or the meaning(s) they attach to the concept of the public good and how these conceptions and meanings may be shaped by the context in which they work. This gives us an insight into the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good. It also gives us an insight into the role that context plays in what counts as a public good and what does not. I also explore the role(s) that academics see themselves playing in advancing the public good and what they see as conditions of possibility for their contribution to the public good. This contributes to extending the debate about the public good role of higher education beyond discussing the benefits it offers or should offer society. It does this by drawing attention to the conditions of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good from the vantage point of academics. Therefore, the main research questions of this study are:

1. What is academics' understanding of the concept of the public good of higher education in South Africa?
2. What role(s) do academics play in higher education's contribution to the publicgood?
3. What are the conditions of possibility for higher education to be a public goodand to contribute to the public good?

I acknowledge that there are multiple different stakeholders involved in higher education's contribution to the public good and that these may have varying views on the issues in question. However, I chose to explore the microlevel of this relationship from the vantage point of academics because they are the ones at the helm of the work that brings about the public good contribution of higher education. They do research, teaching, and community engagement, which are often described as the three core functions of the university. This puts them in a better position to give us an insight into the other side of the story, which I have argued is not sufficiently represented in current debates about higher education and the public good.

Thesis Overview

In this introductory chapter, I introduced the aim of this thesis, the rationale of the study and the problem that it investigates. I have also defined the concept of the public good, arguing that it is a normative and highly contested concept. In so doing, I emphasised the importance of

taking context into consideration in our use of the notion of the public good, given that what is regarded as a public good in one context may not be regarded as such in another. Over and above that, I also discussed the 'private good' and 'public bad' as important concepts with which the notion of the public good has been juxtaposed.

In the next chapter, I review the literature about the relationship between higher education and the public good. In this chapter, I set the scene for the study in chapter three, describing the evolution of higher education in South Africa from colonialism to the recent changes sparked by the student protests that began in 2015. This is to demonstrate that higher education in South Africa was unequal from the onset, favoured the white minority, and was fashioned according to European models of the university. Then I move on to the literature review, foregrounding how this literature focuses on higher education systems and institutions, the abstract and macro-level view of the relationship between higher education and the public good. This is followed by the methods chapter, in which I describe the qualitative research methods I used in carrying out this research.

In chapters five, six, and seven, I present the findings of this study. Chapter five presents the findings of academics' conceptions of the public good, which are mainly inspired by their institutional contexts and the transformation imperative of the post-apartheid dispensation. Chapter six focuses on the roles academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good and the tensions that sometimes arise between academics understanding of their public good role(s) and the institutional structures and agendas under which they operate. This gives an insight into the micro-level intricacies of the link between higher education and the public good. In chapter seven, I present the conditions of possibility for academics' contribution to the public good. These include funding, collaboration, transformation, and the qualities of public good academics. In the final chapter, I summarise the main contribution of this study to the body of knowledge. In this chapter, I also reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the study, draw out the implications of the findings of this study, and consider some areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Background of Higher Education in South Africa

The history of higher education in South Africa dates back to the 19th century. In this chapter, I provide a background to this history, setting the scene for this study. This is key for thinking about the relationship between higher education and the public good because of the influence of context in what is seen as a public good, as discussed in the previous chapter context (Leibowitz, 2012; Letizia, 2017; Marginson, 2007; Nixon, 2011; Tilak, 2008). I begin with a discussion of the establishment and evolution of university education during the colonial era. This is to indicate that from the onset, higher education in South Africa favoured the white minority and was fashioned according to European models of the university. Then I move on to discuss the state of higher education under the apartheid government from 1948 to 1994. In this section, I argue that the apartheid government inherited an already segregated and unequal higher education system and further augmented this segregation and inequalities through laws and policies that disadvantaged the black majority in South Africa. Then I move on to the post-1994 era, characterised by numerous transformation initiatives aimed at redressing the injustices and inefficiencies of the past. This includes numerous mergers of institutions and widening of access for previously disadvantaged groups. I show that the legacy of apartheid and colonialism is still evident in South Africa's post-1994 higher education system. Different waves of student movements brought much attention to this legacy, with the recent one being the nationwide protests that began early in 2015 under the banner of the #FeesMustFall. In the last section of this chapter, I discuss the role that the student movement has played in the most recent changes in South Africa's universities, foregrounding the view that the root of some of the injustices that the student movement pointed out goes back to the colonial foundations of the university in South Africa.

The University in the Colonial Era

The foundations for university education were laid early in the 19th century through the establishment of state-aided proprietary colleges that offered secondary and post-secondary education in the Cape Colony (Sehoole, 2006). The first of these colleges was the South African College, established in 1829, followed by Diocesan College in 1848, St Andrews College in 1855, and Victoria College in1866. The Enactment of Acts 12, 13, and 14 of 1916 resulted in the proper establishment of university education in South Africa. In terms of this act, the South

African College became the University of Cape Town, and the Victoria College became the University of Stellenbosch in 1918. The University of Cape of Good Hope was established in 1873 and renamed the University of South Africa in 1916. The University of the Witwatersrand, established in 1922, and the University of Pretoria, established in 1930, are among the other institutions of higher education that predated the apartheid era (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Pre-apartheid higher education institutions were established according to the model of European institutions from which they drew much of their academic staff and curricula (Sehoole, 2006). According to Heleta (2016), colonialists saw these colonial institutions mainly as symbols and disseminators of European civilisation in the colonies. He argues that they played a role in promoting white supremacy and were established to capacitate the white youth to maintain and expand colonial society. Moreover, given that colonial domination required a discourse in which all that is advanced, good and civilised was defined and measured in European standards, education played an instrumental role in promoting the European ways and worldviews, subjugating everything else, including local knowledge, which was disvalued to promote western knowledge as universal knowledge (Heleta, 2016). Racial segregation, therefore, was an integral part of South African higher education from the onset.

Except for the South African Native College established in 1916, which became the University of Fort Hare in 1951, universities in South Africa were primarily intended for white people only and, as a result, most black people who had a chance of entering higher education sought access at overseas universities (Sehoole, 2006). Sehoole (2006) describes how the establishment of the South African Native College was a racial and segregationist act:

> The context of the establishment of this college is important to understand the role of racial segregation in its establishment. In 1901 JT Jabavu, one of the pioneers and a key figure in the shaping of African educational thought in South Africa, applied to get his son (Davidson) admitted as a student at Dale College. The application was turned down by the Dale College Committee for racist reasons as demonstrated in the following press reports attributed to the school: 'Our social system does not at present admit innovations like that which Mr Jabavu's request involved'; 'other requests from natives for similar privilege would follow, 'we scarcely think that the life of the handful of native youths among a crowd of European boys in a colonial school would be a happy one' (quoted in Cross, 1992, 50). This led to the agitation for the establishment of an institution for higher education to cater for black matriculants. Meanwhile, Davidson Jabavu was forced to study overseas at the University of London as a result of lack

> of opportunities at home. He completed his degree in 1912 and became the first lecturer at the South African Native College in 1916. (p. 8)

Sehole (2006) argues that the emergence of some of these universities was connected to the development and industrialisation of the South African economy, driven by the discovery of gold and diamonds in the 19th century. He further observes that though these institutions were established after the English model of the university, they used both English and Dutch as their languages of instruction. Later, after 1925, when Afrikaans replaced Dutch as an official language, higher education in South Africa became characterised in terms of English and Afrikaans medium languages. This laid the foundation for how South Africa's higher education would be organised under apartheid.

The University in the Apartheid Era

The apartheid era dawned on South Africa when the Afrikaner-dominated National Party came into power in 1948 and introduced apartheid, a highly unequal social, economic, and political system of discrimination and segregation on the grounds of race (Fiske & Ladd 2004). According to Reddy (2004), this redesigned the state to enable the government to organise and classify the entire population of the country, primarily along the lines of race. The country's population was formally classified into four main groups: 'whites' (people of European descent), 'African' (Native people), 'Indian' (people of Asian descent), and 'coloureds' (people of mixed descent, with ancestry from European, African, and Asian ethnic groups). There was a lot of tension between these racial groups. However, literature shows that the apartheid state only institutionalised, further augmented and made explicit what was implicit during the colonial era (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Reddy, 2004). This is also evident in apartheid's underpinning premises.

As early as 1930, the colonial government had already established segregationist and unequal educational structures, which privileged white people. The government provided very few schools for black people, but Christian Missions from Britain, France, Germany, and Switzerland, with minimal support from the state, established primary schools and later high schools that catered for black people (Christie & Collins, 1982; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Holsinger & Jacob, 2008; Reddy, 2004). The quality of this education was poor compared to what was provided for white people (Ainsworth, 2013; Holsinger & Jacob, 2008). The first higher education institution for black people, the South African Native College, now the University of Fort Hare, was also established by missionaries, notably James Stewart of the Lovedale

Missionary Institute. It took many years before the University of Fort Hare received any kind of funding from the state (Reddy, 2004). This demonstrates the reluctance of the state to support the education of black people. On this foundation laid by the colonial state, the apartheid government engineered the education system of its time.

As a social and political ideology, apartheid rested firmly on four premises (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The first one was that for South Africa's four race groups to preserve the purity of their national identities, they must live and develop separately from each other. This came from Afrikaners' belief that the diversity of races and nations was the will of God and preserving it was, for them, obedience to God's will. The second premise was that black[4] people might be divided into nations, whereas white people, both the British and Afrikaners, constitute one nation. The third premise was the belief that white people were custodians of civilisation and had an obligation to civilise other groups. The fourth one was that for white people to civilise other groups, they had to have their privileges protected. In the forty-six years of the apartheid era, the Nationalist government dedicated itself to securing the social, economic, political privileges of the white minority at the expense of black people. It did this very successfully, in such a way that the white privileges and black disadvantages were carried over into the "post-apartheid" era (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Muthayan, 2005). This, directly and indirectly, shaped all aspects of life in South Africa, and education was no exception.

When the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948, they introduced laws and policies that further augmented white privilege and black people's disenfranchisement. The legacy of these laws and policies is at the root of the inequalities that continue to manifest themselves in the country's education system of post-1994 South Africa (Bunting, 2006; Christie & Collins, 1982; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; HESA, 2014; Kallaway, 1984; Reddy, 2004). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 is a good example. It sought to eliminate all educational activities opposed to the states' apartheid project, but it did not succeed (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Kallaway, 1984). According to the apartheid state, black people's intellectual capacity and level of educability were lower than those of their white counterparts. This was overtly stated by the then Minister of Native Affairs Hendrik Verwoerd, who said: "What is the use of teaching a Bantu[5] child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?" (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, p. 43). It is also evident

[4]The term 'black' here refers to previously disenfranchised African, Coloureds and Indian populations of South Africa (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

[5] 'Bantu' was another term used to refer to black people under apartheid in South Africa.

in Fick (1939, cited in Kallaway, 2002), who argued that black learners were four to five years inferior to the white learners in terms of educability. These were the justifications that the apartheid government gave for providing an inferior form of education, which aimed to produce black people who felt inferior and incompetent and socialise them to subservient positions of service to their white counterparts. This was also a way of meeting the country's need for cheap labour, particularly in the mining, agricultural and domestic service sectors (Kallaway, 1984; Nkabinde, 1997).

To achieve its separatist ends, the apartheid government established separate education departments for the different racial groups of South Africa. Moreover, after the establishment of the tricameral parliament in 1984, which aimed to give a limited political voice to Coloureds and Indians, further administrative changes followed. The education for white people was under the administration of the House of Assembly (HOA), the House of Representatives (HOR) for Coloureds, and the House of Delegates (HOD) for Indians. Education for Africans in townships remained under the administration of the Department of Education and Training (DET). Four additional departments of education were set up to government schools in the "independent" homelands (also called Bantustans) of African people, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei, and Venda. Over and above that, more departments were set up, one in each of the six "self-governing" territories (KwaZulu, Lebowa, QwaQwa, Ovamboland, Kavangoland, and East Caprivi) that were only granted autonomy and not independence. As a result, the apartheid state had fifteen independent departments of education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Table 1: Apartheid Government's Educational Expenditure for Different Race Groups from 1984 to 1993 (Nkabinde, 1997)

Year	Africans	Coloreds	Indians	Whites
1984	R234	R569	R1 088	R1 654
1989	R927	R2 115	R2 645	R3 575
1991	R930	R 1983	R2 659	R3 739
1993	R1659	R 2902	R3 702	R4 372

Having separate departments also differentiated the quality of education they offered. Schools for Africans offered the worst quality of education (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Kallaway, 2002; Nkabinde, 1997). This was also evident in the government's per capita expenditure for the education of the different race groups. Table 1 above demonstrates the discrepancies in the government's per capita spending on the education of the different racial groups. It shows that

the government spent the highest amount of money on the education of white people and the least amount of money on the education of black people.

Consequently, most black African learners' schooling inadequately prepared them for higher education. Consistent with the project of segregation, the school language policy was used to segregate learners into ethnolinguistic groups. The policy legislated mother-tongue instruction for the first eight years of school for African learners. Subsequent to those years, they had to be taught half of their subjects in Afrikaans and the other half in English. This was enforced using aggressive measures whereas, at that stage of their development, African learners had no mastery of either Afrikaans or English. They were, therefore, set up for failure. These aggressive measures triggered one of the most defining events in the history of educational inequality in South Africa, the Soweto uprising of 1976 (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Kallaway, 2002; Nkabinde, 1997). School learners in Soweto took to the streets on the 16th of June 1976, protesting the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. This escalated the level of opposition faced by the regime and its unequal education system throughout the country (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Nkabinde, 1997). Some changes were made, including increasing the per-capita expenditure on black learners and some degree of desegregation in white schools (Nkabinde, 1997).

Higher education was not exempted from the power and control of the apartheid state. Even though English-medium universities, which I discuss in detail below, resisted state control in the name of academic freedom, the apartheid government saw universities as mere 'creatures of the state' (Bunting, 2006, p. 42). Higher education institutions were divided along racial lines. Some were designated for the exclusive use of white people, while others were designated for the exclusive use of black people (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). On the one hand, white institutions were generally well funded, with highly qualified faculty and adequate facilities. As a result, they were of good academic quality. On the other hand, black institutions (as described below) were marginalised, systematically underfunded, with poor facilities and low qualified faculty (Bunting, 2004; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). White institutions were further divided along linguistic lines: Afrikaans and English-medium universities.

Afrikaans-medium universities included the University of Stellenbosch (1918), University of the Orange Free State (1904), University of Pretoria (1908), Potchefstroom University for Christian National Higher Education (1951), the University of Port Elizabeth (1964), and the

Rand Afrikaans University (1967) (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Bunting (2004) argues that these institutions had an instrumental approach to their functioning. They did not pursue knowledge for its own sake, but their pursuit of knowledge was as a means to an end. It was for social, economic, and political agendas to maintain apartheid. They dedicated themselves to preserving and propagating the Afrikaners' language and culture (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). They significantly supported the Nationalist government and its apartheid policies and played a major role in training government administrators and other professionals to implement the governments' policies (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). According to Bunting (2004), their support for the apartheid government enabled them to secure state funding. English-medium universities were established mainly by the British descendants: the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, as mentioned above, and the University of Natal in 1910 and Rhodes University in 1904 (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). These were liberal institutions in the sense that they divorced themselves from the interests of the state and depended mainly on funding from the business community.

In addition to the University of Fort Hare, new universities were established for black people in line with the Extension of Universities Education Act of 1959, and they were divided along ethnic lines (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). These were the University of Zululand for Zulus, the University of the Western Cape for Coloreds, the University of Durban-Westville for Indians, and the University of the North for the Sotho-Twana ethnic groups. The University of Fort Hare was designated for the Xhosa people. These had Afrikaans management that was loyal to the government's aim of entrenching the apartheid ideology and subordination of black people (Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Weber & Vandeyar, 2004). As a result, their academic programmes echoed those of Afrikaans-medium universities. Bunting (2004) argues that these institutions were created for the instrumental purpose of training black civil servants, administrators and professionals for the apartheid state and propagating apartheid's socio-political agenda. The Extension of University Education Act of 1959 prevented institutions designated for the use of one race group from enrolling students of another race (Badat, 2012; Bunting, 2004; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). According to this Act, an institution designated for the use of one race group could only enrol students from other race groups when it was granted a permit by the department of education to which it was accountable (Bunting, 2004). Permits were granted only when there was evidence that the applicant's proposed programme was not offered in the institution designated for the use of the applicant's race group.

The apartheid government also categorised higher education institutions as universities or technikons based on the functions they were allowed to perform (Bunting, 2006). Universities were meant for science which the government understood as "… all scholarly activities in which knowledge for the sake of knowledge is studied …" (Bunting, 2004, p. 37). Technikons were meant for technology which was understood as "… activities concerned with the application of knowledge …" (Bunting, 2004, p. 37). Therefore, universities could not be involved in technology, and technikons could not be involved in science and the production of new knowledge. Technikons included: the Cape (founder in 1967), Free State (founder in 1981), Natal (founder in 1967), Port Elizabeth (founder in 1967), Pretoria (founder in 1967), Vaal Triangle (founder in 1967), and Witwatersrand (founder in 1967). These were set up for the exclusive use of White people. The Border (founder in 1988), Eastern Cape (founder in 1987), Mangosuthu (founder in 1979), Northern Transvaal (founder in 1970) and Setlogelo College (1976) technikons were set up for the exclusive use of Africans. ML Sultan (1969) and Peninsula (founder in 1972) technikons served Indians and Coloureds, respectively. Vista University was established in 1982 to cater for the black people in the townships, with a specific focus on teacher training and a number of campuses around the country. Two distance-learning institutions which were not subjected to racial quotas, the University of South Africa and Technikon South Africa, were also established in 1946 and 1980, respectively.

This section has shown that the apartheid regime inherited an already racially divided and unequal system of education established by British colonialists, and it further augmented the segregation and inequalities through laws and policies aimed at propagating its nationalist agenda. In the late 1980s, apartheid began to lose its grip and was eventually abolished in 1994 (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). This led to numerous changes in the educations system that had to be made in line with the new democratic South Africa. Moreover, this history shapes the context in which ideas about higher education and the public good in South Africa are lived out and grappled with. The next section mainly focuses on the transformation that has taken place in South Africa's higher education system since 1994 and the continuing legacy of colonialism and apartheid, which shapes South Africa's higher education today.

Higher Education Post-1994

When the African National Congress government assumed power in 1994, it inherited a racially divided higher education system of 36 universities and technikons (Bunting, 2004; Fiske & Ladd, 2004). Therefore, higher education transformation (with regards to student access,

affordability of education, the kinds of knowledge produced, standards, curriculum design, and the type and quality of graduates produced by universities) became an imperative in the country's transition to democracy. The main goal was to create a higher education system that would "contribute to the common good of society through the production, acquisition and application of knowledge, the building of human capacity, and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities" (White Paper 3: A Program of Higher Education, 1997, p. 1.20).

Without denying that the apartheid legacy continues to shape South Africa's higher education in negative ways, Webbstock (2016) argues that two decades post-1994, the sector is very different from what it was under apartheid. One of its major restructurings was the creation of new intuitions through mergers such that there are now only 26 universities instead of the 36 that existed under apartheid (Weber & Vandeyar, 2004). Of the 26 institutions, 11 are traditional universities (offering university-type programmes), 9 are universities of technology (offering technikon-type programmes), and 6 are comprehensive universities (offering both university and technikon-type programmes) (Unterhalter et al., 2019).

Massification has been another critical component of the higher education transformation agenda. This opened access to students of racial groups that were marginalised under the apartheid regime. According to Webbstock (2016, p. 6), the student body has exponentially increased from half a million in 1994 to close to a million in 2015.

> The total number of student enrolments in public and private HEIs in 2019 was 1 283 890, reflecting an increase of 424 when compared with 2018 (1 283 466). The majority of students enrolled in public HEIs (83.7% or 1 074 912), while only 16.3% or 208 978 enrolled in private HEIs. An increase between 2018 and 2019 was recorded for private HEIs (11 080), while public HEIs enrolment decreased by 10 656. (DHET, 2021, p. 8).

As demonstrated in Table 2 below, the student body is now more racially diverse than under apartheid. In 2019, African students constituted 77.3% of the student body, while White students accounted for 11.8%, followed by Coloured students at 5.8%, and the lowest enrolment was for Indian/Asian students, 4.0% (DHET, 2021, p. 10). However, the student body is still not representative of the country's population. South Africa's higher education system was and is a low participation system with high attrition (Khuluvhe & Ganyaupfu, 2021).

Table 2: No. of students in public higher education institutions by population group and gender, 2019 (DHET, 2021, p. 10).

Population Group	Female	Male	No Information	Total
African	495 556	335 214	27	830 797
Coloured	39 570	22 785	7	62 362
Indian/Asian	26 115	17 215	0	43 330
White	72 669	54 067	19	126 755
No Information	6 423	5 233	12	11 668
Total	640 333	434 514	65	1 074 912

Literature also shows that success rates continue to be skewed by race and prior education (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; DHET, 2021; HESA, 2014; Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014; Webbstock, 2016).

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of average undergraduate success rates in public HEIs for contact education programmes by population group, 2009 – 2019 (DHET, 2021, p. 23)

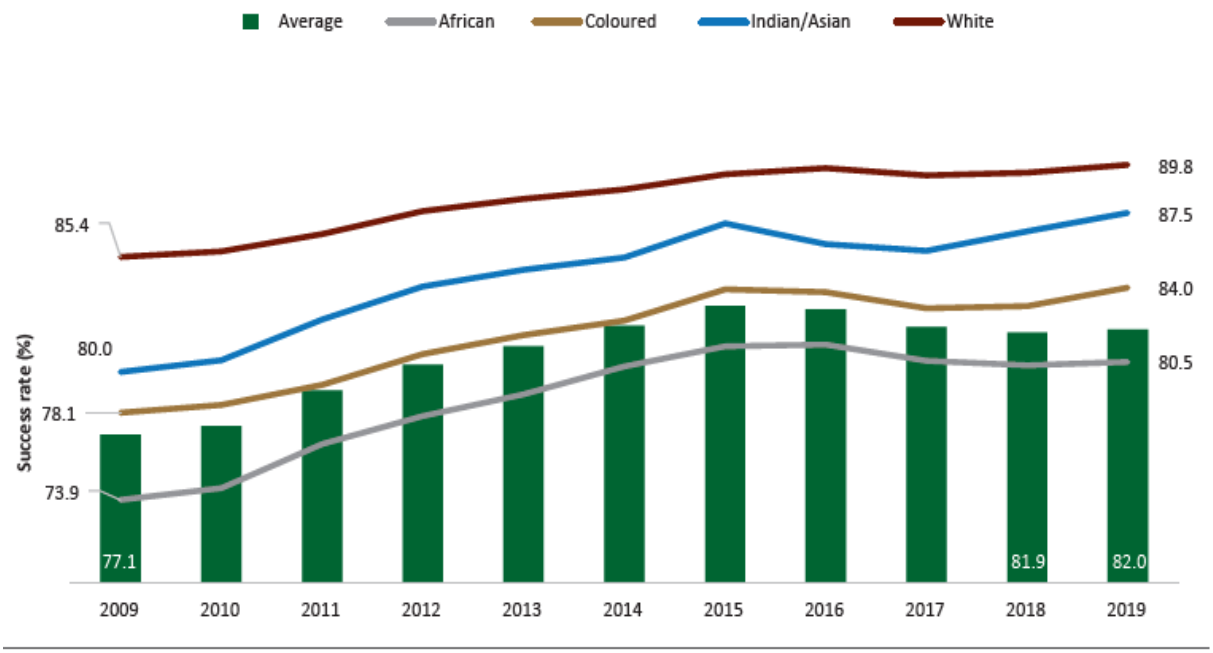

Figure 1 above exemplifies this, showing the percentage distribution of average undergraduate success rates[6] in public higher education institutions for contact education programmes by

[6] Success rates are determined as follows: a calculation is made of full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolled student totals for each category of courses. A further FTE calculation, using the same credit values, is made for each category of courses for those students who passed the courses. The success rates are then determined as: FTE

population group from 2009 to 2019 (DHET, 2021, p. 23). It shows that White students recorded the highest success rates, followed Coloured and Indian/Asian students, and African students recorded the lowest success rates from 2009 to 2021. Although success rates increased for all population groups, they still reflect patterns of the country's apartheid past.

In 2019, White, Indian/Asian, and Coloured recorded higher success rates than the average undergraduate success rate (82%) for students enrolled through contact mode of learning. On the other hand, the success rate of African students for the same year was 80.5%, which is below average. These differences in success rates raise salient questions about the nature of public good in higher education and whose public good is higher education.

Demographic Profile of Academic Staff

There has been a slow transformation in the representation of black academics at faculty and senior leadership levels of South African universities (DHET, 2019, 2021; Naicker, 2016; Weber & Vandeyar, 2004). Strikingly, nearly two decades after the demise of apartheid, the racial composition of the academic staff in South African universities continue to mirror the inequalities of the country's apartheid past. For example, according to HEMIS data from 2017 cited in the *Report of the Ministerial Task Team on the Recruitment, Retention and Progression of Black South African Academics* (2019), the total of permanent instructional/research staff at South African universities was 19 631. 46% of these academics held PhDs. 17 377 (88,5%) of the permanent academic staff were South African, and 42,5% of them held PhDs. As shown in the second chart below, 10 309 (52,5%) permanent academic staff at South African universities in 2017 were male, of which only 51% held PhDs, 9322 (47,5%) were female of which 40.8% held PhDs.

passes divided by FTE enrolments. The success rates shown are, therefore, weighted averages for contact and distance courses for each population group. (DHET, 2021, p. 23).

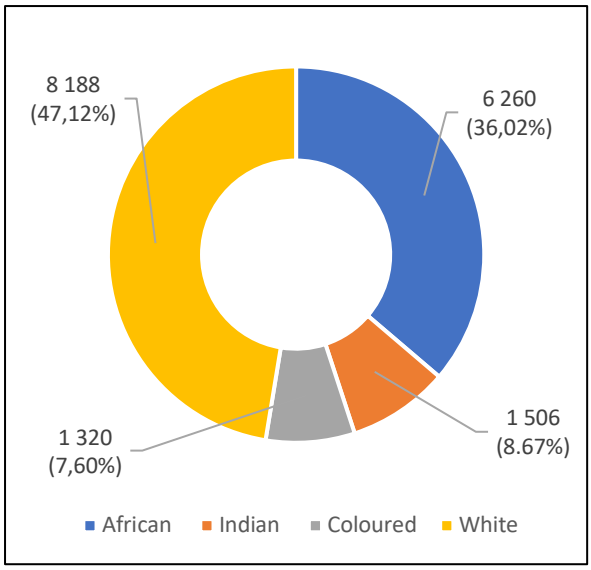

Figure 2: Racial Group distribution for the 17 377 South African Staff in 2017

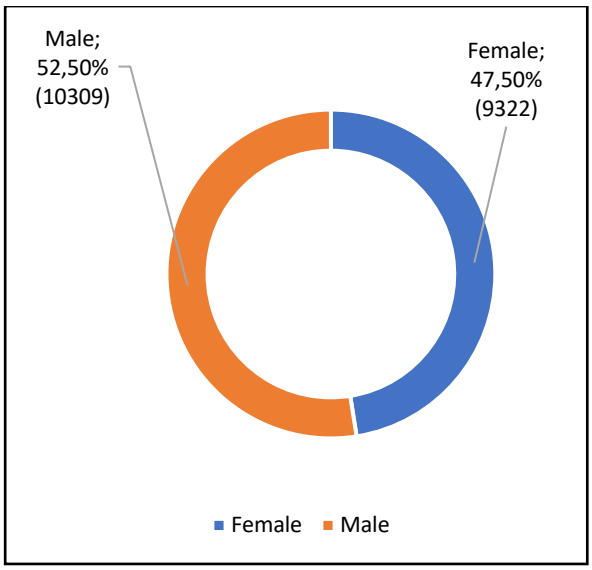

Figure 3 Gender Distribution of Permanent Academic Staff in South Africa in 2017

Table 3 shows the number and percentages of South African academics of different population groups who held PhDs in 2017. These numbers reflect the patterns of the country's apartheid regime with Africans at the bottom, Coloured and Indians in the middle and Whites at the top.

Table 3: Racial Group Distribution of PhDs Among South African Academics in 2017

Race Group	**No. Holding PhDs**	**% Holding PhDs**
African	1 880	30%
Coloured	503	38.1%
Indian	622	41.3%
White	4 303	52.6%

According to Naicker (2016), statistics from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for 2011 show that at the University of the Witwatersrand, where black students accounted for 74% of the student body, the percentage of black permanent academic staff was at a low 32%. Only about 28% of the permanent academic staff at the University of Cape Town was black, while black students constituted about 51% of its student body. Rhodes University, where black students accounted for only 59% of the student body, had 20% black academics in its permanent academic staff. Only 20% of the permanent academic staff was black at the University of Pretoria, while black students accounted for 46% of its student body. Worse, Stellenbosch University had only 18% black academics in its permanent academic staff, and 32% of its student body was black. The picture is significantly different almost ten years later.

Figure 4 below shows that the percentages of black academics in these universities have significantly increased since 2011.

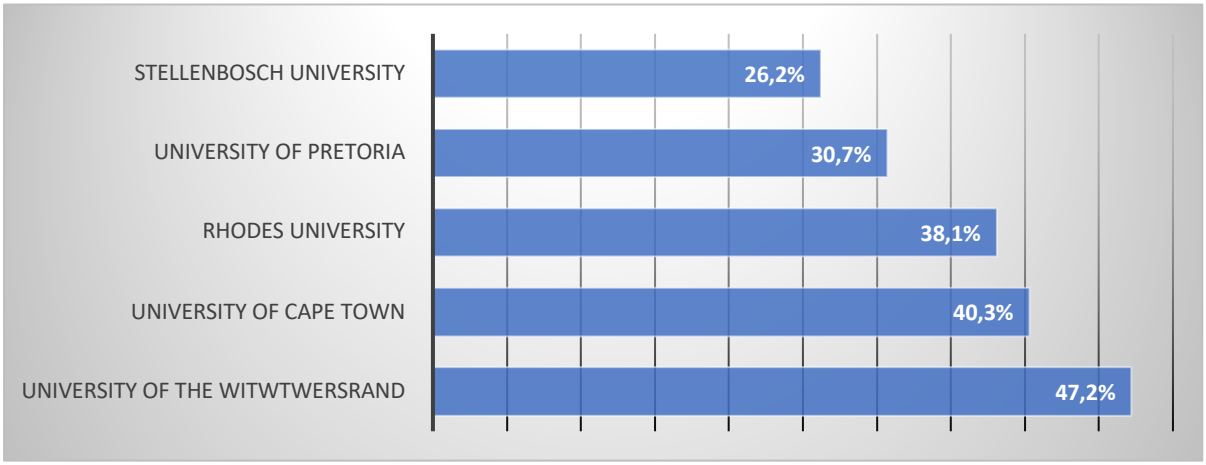

Figure 4 Percentage of Black permanent academic staff at historically whit universities in South Africa, 2019 (DHET, 2021).

Nevertheless, according to Weber and Vandeyar (2004, p. 176), "The professoriate in post-apartheid South Africa, as elsewhere in the world, is no longer as pale and as male as it once was." However, most recent data suggests that it still follows the patterns of the apartheid regime. For example, according to 2017 data from the Higher Education Analyser (HEDA), even though whites form comprises about 7,8% of the population in South Africa, they occupy 74% of permanent academic positions as South Africa's top universities and 88% of the professors in these universities.

Table 4: Distribution of White and Non-white Academic Staff for 2017 (Albertus, 2019, p. 6).

University	Headcount	White	White%	Non-White	Non-White %
Wits	3200	1,733	54.2	1467	45.8
Cape Town	3037	1,798	59.2	1239	40.8
Pretoria	2840	2,022	71.2	818	28.8
Rhodes	738	497	67.3	241	32.7
Stellenbosch	2396	1,805	75.3	591	24.7

The Student Movement

The student movement has played a significant role in the struggles for transformation in higher education, both during apartheid and post-1994. Student organisations played an instrumental role in the rise of the student movement against apartheid. The National Union of South African

Students (NUSAS), established in 1924, is comprised of representatives from Student Representative Councils of various universities, voted in by their respective student bodies. Initially, NUSAS was dominated by white students from white universities (Reddy, 2004). However, as the number of black students increased, dissatisfaction with NUSAS emerged. This was because NUSAS demonstrated no commitment to tackling the deep racist structures and policies of both the universities and the government (Badat, 1999). As a result, black students left NUSAS and created the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), which was launched in 1969 at the University of the North (Turfloop). SASO aimed to:

> Mobilise black students by increasing contact nationally; identify crucial issues/grievances that affected black students; represent the interests of the black student; establish a solid and strong identity to boost black students' confidence in themselves, and begin concrete programmes to respond to pertinent issues to get the majority of black students directly involved in SASO activities. (Reddy, 2004, p. 24).

During the apartheid era, the student resistance movement challenged the racist status quo within universities and South African society in general (Bunting, 2006; Reddy, 2004). According to Reddy (2004), the emergence of student resistance was partly fuelled by the conducive conditions for resistance that came as an unintended consequence of the establishment of black universities. These conditions included terrible material conditions, especially in residences, at black universities, and racist and discriminatory policies. Solidarity between student organisations at different institutions emerged, and experiences of struggle and conflict strengthened the foundations for the development of a collective identity, which gave grounds for student political mobilisation and protests against the apartheid regime. According to Bunting (2006), these universities increasingly became sites of antiapartheid struggles in the late 1980 and early 1990s.

According to Badat (1999), student organisations like SASO and the South African National Students' Congress (SANSCO), which was originally the Azanian Students Organisation (AZASO):

> Were revolutionary national student political organisations that constituted black students as an organised social force within the national liberation movement, functioned as catalysis or collective action and school or political formation, and contributed to the erosion of the apartheid social order, as well as to social transformation in South Africa. (Badat, 1999, Preface Para 4).

Much can be said about the role of the student movement in the anti-apartheid struggle (Badat, 1999; Bunting, 2006; Reddy, 2004). However, for the purposes of this research, I want to focus more on the most recent student struggles for transformation in higher education in South Africa. This is because, as I will show in later chapters, the recent hashtag student movements seem to have had a significant influence on participants' notion of the public good.

Many other areas of the South African higher education system are undergoing a slow pace of transformation, causing much disgruntlement among students and some members of the academic staff. These include curriculum, admission policies, institutional cultures, and other areas (Dlamini, 2019; Khunou et al., 2019; Langa, 2017). The disgruntlement with the slow pace of transformation became apparent from the year 2015 with the emergence of an unprecedented wave of student movements in democratic South Africa (Luescher, 2016), which include #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, #ReformPukke, #TuksUprising, #OpenStellies, #RhodesMustFall, #SteynMustFall, #PatriarchyMustFall, and #TheTransCollective among others. The thread that connects these different formations is the struggle for transformation in South African universities (Luescher, 2016). The most prominent of these hashtag movements were the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall.

The demonstrations of students' disgruntlement with the slow pace of transformation, particularly at historically white universities, began with the 'WITS Transformation Memo 2014' which was written by a group of post-graduate students at the Politics Department of the University of the Witwatersrand late in 2014 (Naicker, 2016). These students were calling for the decolonisation of the curriculum and an increase in the number of black academics in the university's politics department. The memo also demanded the acknowledgement and appreciation of the African political, philosophical, and historical intellectual traditions as a means of building a post-colonial African university. However, 2015 marks the year of the emergence of the unprecedented wave of student movements in democratic South Africa. According to Luescher (2016), there has never been a student movement in democratic South Africa that received the level of media attention, intellectual scrutiny, and high-level government response as the collective of hashtag student movements.

On the 9th of March 2015, students at the University of Cape Town started protesting the presence of a statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the university's upper campus. These protests culminated in the emergence of the #RhodesMustFall movement quickly gained momentum,

leading to the removal of Rhodes' statue on the 9th of April 2015. The #RhodesMust Fall Movement sparked a national debate about the decolonisation of universities in South Africa (Albertus, 2019; Heleta, 2016; le Grange, 2018). This was beyond the mere dismantling of colonial symbols like the Rhodes statue; it also included the decolonisation of the curriculum. This call for decolonisation was carried over by the #FeesMustFall movement, which also emerged in March 2015, when students at various campuses took to the streets protesting tuition fee hikes of up to 11.5% announced by the Department of Higher Education (DHET) (Naicker, 2016). The initial message of this movement was that the costs of higher education were too high and unaffordable for the majority of poor black students, and therefore, the movement demanded no fee increases to the fees that were already high.

In the same year, the estimated tuition fees for the first year of a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in South African universities ranged between R13 600- R46 000, with the University of South Africa being the cheapest and the University of Cape Town being the most expensive (Grant, 2015). Other degrees can cost even more. Even though the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was established to provide funding of up to R71 800[7] for academically talented students with financial need, higher education has become unaffordable not only for students from low-income families but also for those who are now referred to as 'the missing middle' (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012). These students' families are too wealthy to qualify for funding from the NSFAS and too poor to afford self-funding (Freerks, 2015). They have an annual household income between R160 000 and R600 000 (de Villiers, 2016). Jansen (2004, p. 301) also alludes to this issue, and I agree with him in arguing that, given the post-1994 changes:

> … the problem for South African higher education will not be race — at least not in the black majority state. The problem will be the background class, and regional character of students as urban institutions are strengthened and deracialised while rural universities remain marginalised in terms of institutional capacity, racial character and class status. The problem for urban institutions, on the other hand, will be the complex task of transforming institutional cultures in ways that are more inclusive and accommodating of the statistical diversity of the student population.

The movement's demands later evolved to also include a call for decolonisation of education, the transformation of universities to address racial and gender inequalities, in transformation

[7] This NSFAS capped amount is calculated on an average weighted full cost of study, and it is communicated as part of the funding parameters each year (NSFAS, 2016).

in terms of the staff composition, and the insourcing of general workers (Dlamini, 2019; Hodes, 2017; Langa, 2017; Naicker, 2016).

According to Butler-Adam (2016), President Zuma's[8] announcement in October 2015 that there would be a 0% fee increase for 2016 signalled the government's understanding of the financial difficulties faced by students. He argues that this inspired students' demand for free higher education in 2016. However, it must be noted that the concerns raised by the student movement are about more than just exorbitant fees. The student movement is also concerned about the neo-liberalisation of the university, universities' failure to transform, the politics of knowledge, the long-lasting legacy of institutional racism and Eurocentrism, and Black students feeling marginalised, alienated and intimidated, particularly at historically white universities (Hodes, 2017). It also demanded free-quality-decolonised higher education (Waghid, 2016). According to Dlamini (2019, p. 48), "the demands made by students reflect democratic South Africa's struggle to alleviate poverty and create an environment conducive to sustainable development."

The #FeesMustFall movement emerged in the context of an upward trend of neo-liberalisation of the university worldwide (Naicker, 2016). South Africa has not been exempted from this trend, even though the effect of this phenomenon is not as significant as it is in countries like the United Kingdom and the United States of America. As evidence of this trend in South Africa, state funding for higher education dropped from 49% of the overall income of universities in 2000 to 40% in 2012 (Hodes, 2017). As a result, universities resorted to private fundraising to make up for their budget shortfall. This necessitated an increase in the contribution of student fees towards the total revenue of universities from 24% in 2000 to 31% in 2012, making higher education even more expensive and less accessible to many, particularly the poor. This happened when higher education was massifying and reaching more students than ever before.

Given the colonial history of higher education in South Africa, students also called for the decolonisation of the curriculum. As Peter (2015), cited in Waghid (2016), argues, the university curriculum is Eurocentric and excludes 'blackness' and renders it invisible, a situation that the #FeesMustFall attempted to disrupt. The domination of a Eurocentric

[8] Jacob Zuma is the fought democratically elected president of the Republic of South Africa who was in office between 2009 to 2018.

curriculum in historically white universities, which continue to showcase their Black students as symbols of their transformation agenda, is inconsistent with what it means to be inclusive (Waghid, 2016). Such a curriculum perpetuates Eurocentrism which views what is African as its marginal other (Waghid, 2016).

While it has received the support of some, the call for decolonisation of the curriculum has also been criticised by some scholars. For example, Butler-Adam (2016) suggests that for students to demand the decolonisation of education and the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in university curricula is to demand the decrease of the quality of what is learned and the degrees that graduates will earn at university. This is implied by his rhetorical question, "Why take the trouble to access higher education, at no or low cost, with changed curricula and teaching (issues that might well be matters for contention), if what is learned is of low quality?" (Butler-Adam, 2016, p. 2). He argues that students acquire knowledge and values that make them successful and confident world citizens. He believes that success and confidence will be unattainable through the free, quality, and decolonised education that #FeesMustFall students' demand. Butler-Adam (2016) supports what Naicker (2016, p. 65) refers to as the "proliferation of the kind of knowledge that is fashionable within the neo-liberal model of the academy that sees itself as part of a global knowledge market and network." This, as Nash (2006) argues in the opening quote, makes the university a space in which Black students feel marginalised because the needs of their communities are made alien in the academy.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the historical background of higher education in South Africa from the colonial era to the apartheid era and the post-1994 era. It has shown that the kinds of concerns that the student movement(s) raised in the past few years are about issues rooted in South Africa's colonial and apartheid history and their continuing legacy. These concerns and debates around transformation, decolonisation, and fees, raise salient questions about the relationship between higher education and the public good in the South African context. The issue of protests about higher fees suggests that for the majority of the poor in South Africa, higher education is unaffordable, and therefore, inaccessible. Given the continued legacy of apartheid and colonialism, if higher education is for the public good, for whose good? These are questions about the university, its purpose, and its role in society. Against this backdrop, the next chapter reviews the literature on higher education and the public good from South

Africa and elsewhere, arguing that much of this literature discusses the relationship between higher education and the public good at an abstract and macro level. This limits our understanding of the complexity of this relationship, particularly in a context like South Africa characterised by persistent inequalities associated with the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, as discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

What Are Universities for? Higher Education and The Public Good

Across the world today, there are more universities than there ever were before (Szmigiera, 2021). Universities are one of the oldest surviving types of social intuitions. However, their role in society remains highly contested. Many scholars continue to grapple with the question of what universities are for in numerous and diverse ways and to varying degrees (Boulton & Lucas, 2011; Cloete et al., 2015; Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Collini, 2012; De la Rey, 2015; Kerr, 2001; Newman, 1852; Pelikan, 1992). Collini (2012) argues that there is no single common purpose of the university because there are diverse types of institutions referred to as universities, and there are a diversity of activities taking place within these institutions.

Research and Teaching as Core Function of Education

Some of the earliest articulations of the purpose of universities in society include the early 19th century writings of Wilhelm von Humboldt, a Prussian philosopher, linguist, and government functionary, and John Henry Newman, an English theologian, poet and later a Catholic priest and cardinal (Collini, 2012). John Henry Newman's book *The Idea of a University,* first published in 1852, is one of the canonical works in debates about the purpose of the university in society. In this book, Newman was justifying a Catholic University to Catholics. As a result, it has the truth of the Catholic religion as an unquestioned authority. It puts a strong emphasis on theology and correct doctrine as central to the university he was justifying. Newman argues, among other things, that the purpose of the university is to provide 'liberal education' and not a professional education. The ultimate aim of the education that a university provides is the liberation of the student from all forms of one-sidedness (Collini, 2012).

Newman's (1852) exposition of his idea of a liberal education was set out in three discourses: "knowledge its own end" (p. 124), "knowledge viewed in relation to learning" (p. 150), and "knowledge viewed in relation to professional skill" (p. 179). Throughout these discourses, he insists that the practical end of a liberal education provided at university is "training good members of society" (p. 206). In Newman's view, the core mission of the university is the formation and development of good members of society. In Newman's view, the pursuit of research does not seem to have been core to the ends of liberal education. His views on research imply that it is best conducted outside of the university. The emergence of research as a core and defining purpose of the university is generally attributed to a memorandum written by

Wilhelm von Humboldt, a Prussian philosopher, linguist, and government functionary, which led to the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 (Boulton & Lucas, 2011; Collini, 2012; de la Rey, 2015).

Collini (2012, p. 23) writes that Humboldt's establishment of the University of Berlin "is conventionally regarded as a symbolic founding moment" of the modern university in Europe." This brought about the notion of the research university, also known as the Von Humboldt model, which massively expanded in the 20th century. Underpinning this type of university were three principles: the unity of research and teaching (as opposed to conducting research in separate institutes that do not have the responsibility of teaching students), freedom of teaching and academic autonomy (Boulton & Lucas, 2008; de la Ray, 2015). Humboldt's idea of uniting the research and teaching functions of the university was about more than just that; it was about complementarity. The basic idea is that teaching is updated continuously through research, and research is made accessible and communicated through teaching. The principle regarding the freedom of teaching ensured that university professors should be free to teach according to their convictions, whereas the principle of academic autonomy aimed to prevent government control in academic work. This Humboldt model, which prioritizes research and seeks to make it complement teaching, is arguably foundational to historically white (and some historically black) universities in South Africa.

According to Boulton and Lucas (2011), Humboldt's and Newman's perspectives on the purpose of the university could come across as antithetical. This means that the ethos of specialised research underpinning Humboldt's model of the university is in tension with the liberal education of an informed and critical citizen, the core of Newman's idea of the university. However, Boulton and Lucas (2011, p. 2507) view them as complementary rather than contradictory. They write:

> Thus, Newman's "discoveries verified and perfected and error exposed by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge" is a powerful basis for Humboldt's search for new knowledge through research. Equally, to consult "the living man and listen to his living voice" emphasises the virtue of tuition by researchers who, with first-hand rather than secondhand knowledge, are best able to penetrate with their students the complex tangle in which true knowledge often lies.

This suggests that the two models can complement each other when the knowledge students are taught is generated through research, such that the teachers are also researchers.

Both Newman's and Humboldt's ideas of the university were based on European universities, and their influences on the organisation of universities in South Africa is part of the colonial legacy that has been heavily criticized. Moreover, the colonial status of these models of the university may implicitly suggest and perpetuate the false idea that the university as a social institution originated in Europe. Reflecting on the history of African universities, Zeleza (2006) provides an overview of the origins of the university, challenging the Afro-pessimists' assumption that Europeans introduced university education in Africa and that it declined in the post-independence era. He argues that university education in Africa predated the 19th-century establishment of "western" style universities of today. He traces the origin of universities to three institutional traditions: The Alexandria Museum and Library, early Christian Monasteries and Islamic Mosque Universities. The Alexandria Museum and Library in Egypt, established in 3rd Century B.C., was the largest centre of learning in the ancient world, having more than 200 000 volumes and supporting up to 5000 scholars and students. Zeleza (2006) describes it as a large research institution in which many African, Roman and Jewish scholars studied, and he explains that it left a legacy of scholarship encompassing a variety of fields, including mathematics, sciences, philosophy and religion.

Early Christian Monasteries were first established in the 3rd century A.D in Egypt. These served as essential spaces for reflection, writing and learning (Zeleza, 2006). They later spread to other African countries and elsewhere in the world as far as Britain, Georgia, India and Persia, out of which some universities later developed. One of the earliest monasteries in Africa was established in the 4th century A.D in Ethiopia. This formed a system of higher education limited mainly to the clergy and nobility. It had the school of Hymns, followed by the school of poetry, and at the top was the school of holy books. The school of holy books provided more specialised education in religious studies, philosophy, history and the computation of time and calendar, among other subjects.

Zeleza (2006) also explains that the Islamic Mosque Universities tradition gave Africa its first higher education institutions that have prevailed to the present. These include the Ez-Eztouna Madrassa in Tunis founded in 732, the al-Qarawiyyin Mosque University in Fez founded in 859, the Al-Azhar Mosque University in Cairo founded in 969 and Sankore Mosque University in Timbuktu founded in the 12th century to teach subjects like theology, logic, astronomy and astrology, history, and geography. These universities, except Sankore, have survived to the present even though they have undergone some changes, including the addition of more

secular, technical and professional fields of study. He adds that the 'western' university introduced in Africa in the 19th century had traces of Islamic influences since Europeans inherited a considerable body of knowledge, rationalism and the investigative approach to knowledge, an elaborate disciplinary architecture of knowledge, the notion of individual scholarship, and the idea of the college from the Islamic Mosque universities tradition. He argues that all of these became key characteristics of the European university that spread through the world with the rise of European Imperialism. Missionaries - both African and European - introduced Africa's "Western" style universities, more especially in the settler colonies of South Africa and Algeria, and in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the colonies of African Diaspora settlements.

Newman, Humbolt, and Zeleza's accounts of the origins of the early universities (in Africa and in Europe) all highlight teaching and research as core aspects of the university's core mission since inception, even if sometimes the two aspects compete for priority. However, the core mission of these early higher education institutions has changed over time, and the core aspects of teaching and research have been re-interpreted, expanded and extended in various ways. In the following few paragraphs, I provide an overview of how these aspects of teaching and research have been adapted and tweaked to suit the diverse needs of societies such as economic development, knowledge development, entrepreneurship, and the broader goal of serving the public good of society.

Cheryl de la Rey's 2015 paper "The Changing Idea of the University" offers a brief account of how the mission of the university has changed with changing times, social, and economic contexts. She argues that pre-industrialization era, universities were primarily conceptualised around the idea of cultivating the intellect and initiation into ways of thinking and understanding the world. At this point, in many parts of the world, the university's core mission was teaching. As governments in different countries built more universities in the 20th century, these universities were expected to produce professionals countries needed for economic development. This increased student numbers, especially in vocational and professional programmes, because of the increased potential for employability upon graduation. Collins (2002) argues that this expansion of universities was also driven by what he calls educational credential inflation: a process where an increase in the number of people with academic qualifications is accompanied by a decrease in the occupational level for which they are qualified, making the occupational value of the qualification low and increasing the academic

credentials required for high-level jobs.[9] The important change here is that teaching becomes adapted to meet societies' vocational and employability needs. This provides a striking contrast to the Humboldtian idea of 'freedom of teaching' and 'academic autonomy' because governments and the private sector interfere in the design of teaching activities indirectly by placing demands that universities produce vocationally ready professionals. This demand for universities to produce professional readiness gave rise to what has come to be known as technical and vocational training institutions. Universities of technology in South Africa are examples of institutions that are mainly expected to produce vocationally ready professionals. These institutions started as Technikons established for activities concerned with the application of knowledge (Bunting, 2006).

De la Rey (2015) discusses one more change that forced the adaption of the teaching and research purposes of the university: the widespread call for university teaching and research activities to be more relevant and engaged in/with communities (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt, & Terra, 2000; de la Ray, 2015). In the UK, for example, debates about community engagement and relevance of universities were driven by *The Dearing Report,* which "spelt out a very different idea of higher education – one in which 'relevance', 'utility', 'social inclusion' and 'accountability to a wider public' seemed to predominate" (de la Rey, 2015, p. 5). These debates gave emergence to the notions of the 'entrepreneurial university' and the 'engaged university', which foregrounded the university's relationship with the government, the industry and engagement with the social communities in which they are located. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, there have been entrepreneurial activities carried out by universities[10] with the aim of improving regional and national economies and for their own financial benefits as well as that of its academics, particularly in Europe, USA, Latin America and in some Asian Countries (Etzkowitz, Webster, Gebhardt, & Terra, 2000). Etzkowitz et al., (2000) argue that some scholars view the entrepreneurial paradigm as threatening the

[9] This, he argues, shaped their internal structure and the nature of academic work. It has increased the disciplines, specialities within disciplines and has their emphasis on continuous research. This has also widened the gap between the highly paid elite researchers and the professional underclass of temporary lecturers in some university systems.

[10] Some examples of these entrepreneurial activities include student companies at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil and student interns from the University of Aveiro in Portugal and the transformation of intellectual property laws transferring intellectual property right from individuals or governments to universities in countries like the US and Sweden (Etzkowitz et al., 2000).

traditional integrity of the university. These changes in the university's core mission, initially teaching, then teaching and research and more recently community engagement, entrepreneurship, and innovation, show that there is no timeless essence of the nature of universities.

Higher education and the public good

Though arguments that there is no single common purpose of the university (see Collini, 2012) abound, an extensive and growing body of literature argues that higher education, particularly public universities, benefits, or more normatively, it should benefit society (see Allais, 2016; Badat, 2009; Deem & Mccowan, 2018; East et al., 2014; Letizia, 2017; Marginson, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016a; McLean & Walker, 2012; Mohamedbhai, 2008; Neubauer, 2008; Nixon, 2011; Singh, 2011; Tilak, 2008; Unterhalter et al., 2018, 2019; Walker, 2015; J. Williams, 2016). This literature makes a strong link between higher education and the advancement of the public good. However, although there is broad agreement that there is a link between higher education and the public good, the precise nature of this relationship good remains highly contested. Moreover, the relationship between higher education and the public good is characterised in diverse ways by different scholars.

Some understand this relationship from an economics point of view (Altbach, 2013; Bloom et al., 2006; Cloete et al., 2011; Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Peters, 2007), focusing on higher education's role in economic growth and development. Others from a socio-political point of view (Badat, 2009; Leibowitz, 2012; Pusser, 2006; Singh, 2001, 2011; Walker, 2015) focus mainly on higher education's role in democratisation, social justice, and critical citizenship. Yet others understand it from a human development point of view (Boni & Walker, 2016; East et al., 2014; Fongwa, 2019; McLean & Walker, 2012; Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020; Walker & McLean, 2010). These look at the role of higher education in the development of human capacities and as personal flourishing. In their recent study on higher education, inequalities and the public good in four African countries, Unterhalter et al.,(2019) highlight two general conceptions of the relationship between higher education and the public good.

Firstly, higher education has been conceptualised as playing an *instrumental* role in producing various forms of the public good. Broadly, this conceptualisation of the relationship between higher education and the public good conceives of higher education as instrumental to the pursuit and achievement of the public good or particular public goods. The second conception

of the relationship between higher education and the public good views higher education as *intrinsically* connected to the public good. In this view, higher education itself is portrayed as a public good, and the public good is an intrinsic part of the higher education experience. In the next two subsections, I critically analyse the instrumental and intrinsic conceptions of the relationship between higher education and the public good. Importantly, I highlight the argument made by Unterhalter and Howell (2021) that there can be an overlap between the intrinsic and the instrumental value of higher education. I argued that intrinsic forms of the public good of higher education could have instrumental externalities.

The Instrumental Conception of Higher Education for the Public Good

The instrumental conception of the link between higher education and the public good emphasises temporal and causal relationships, asserting that higher education will lead to particular manifestations of some forms of public good (Unterhalter et al., 2018, 2019). It draws attention to how higher education directly or indirectly contributes to the production and promotion of various forms of public goods. These include economic growth and development, innovation, reduced inequality, more tolerant attitudes, social justice and transformation, better-informed citizenry, better protection and use of environmental resources, a healthier population, social transformation, the creation of new knowledge that can address pressing social problems and expand human development (Leibowitz, 2012; Singh, 2001; Unterhalter, 2017; Walker, 2015). Moreover, in the instrumental conception of this relationship, how the public good contribution of higher education is made are less important than the outcomes of education, whereas the intrinsic conception emphasises the means more than the ends (Unterhalter, 2017; Walker, 2015).

Economic Growth and Development

The most popular instrumental conception of higher education and the public good present a more economically oriented understanding of the benefits of higher education. Economically oriented views are narrow and largely focus on how higher education and investments in universities promote economic growth and development through the production of new knowledge, the benefits of innovation and the production of graduates as a productive workforce for the labour market and the economy (Altbach, 2013; Bloom et al., 2006; Cloete et al., 2011; Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Valero & Van Reenen, 2019). Valero and Van Reenen (2019) argue that increases in the number of universities are strongly associated with higher

growth, which spills over even to neighbouring regions within the same country. Moreover, they found that the economic benefits of an increase in the number of universities is likely to exceed the costs.

However, the contribution of higher education to economic growth and development is contested (Brown et al., 2020; Jerven, 2011; Pauw et al., 2006). For example, an argument is sometimes made about a paradox of high levels of growth in GDP in some African countries (name the countries) in between 1990 and 2000, accompanied by high levels of poverty, unequal distribution, and limited development of productivity or research, some of which may be linked with poor numbers and inadequate methods of calculation (Jerven, 2011). This growth paradox is associated with apparently inadequate levels of higher education to 'trigger' a deepening of the public good, although there has clearly been an expansion of participation in higher education in Africa (Mohamedbhai, 2008). The other criticism is based on the labour market paradox, a phenomenon in which, as Brown et al., (2020, p. 104) explain, "despite continuous national investment in education and economic liberalization, many developing countries are falling further behind." This labour market paradox is evident in South Africa (Pauw et al., 2006; Posel et al., 2021).

Pauw et al., (2006) argue that post-1994, there was an increase in university enrolments, especially among black students in South Africa, and yet more and more youth have become unemployed in the decades that followed. This growing youth unemployment has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Posel et al., 2021). The most recent statistics in the thirteenth edition of the *South Africa Economic Update, Building back better from COVID-19 with a special focus on jobs* by the world bank, shows that young people in South Africa face higher unemployment rates(World Bank Group, 2021). This report indicates that 63 per cent of 15-24-year-olds and 41% of 25 – 34 -year-olds are unemployed and job hunting. It shows that when this is viewed through the expanded definition of unemployment, which includes discouraged workers, the unemployment rate reaches 74 per cent for 15–24-year-olds and 51 per cent for 25–34-year-olds.

In *The Death of Human Capital*, Brown et al., (2020) argue that the brain drain phenomenon, the continuous flows of highly skilled personnel from developing countries to developed countries in the West, is another contributing factor to the failure of higher education delivering on the promise of economic growth and development. For example, there has been a massive flow of Asian doctors and nurses and others from the Philippines in the National Health Service

in the United Kingdom and Asian Indian software engineers into southern California (Brown et al., 2020). The education of these highly skilled workers is largely funded by the sending countries. Research shows that South Africa benefits from the flow of highly skilled professionals from neighboring countries like Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (Crush, 2006). There is also literature arguing that South Africa also suffers from brain drain (Mlambo & Adetiba, 2019).

While acknowledging its contribution to economic growth, Unterhalter and Howell (2021), also argued, based on findings about the role of tertiary education in low and lower-middle-income countries, that higher education "may also deepen processes and practices that lead to the benefits of growth being lodged with small elites rather than being widely distributed" (p. 7). This calls for more recognition that the benefits of economic growth are not always enjoyed by the public as a whole (Midgley, 1995, 1997), especially in highly unequal societies like South Africa. As Midgely (1995) argues:

> The phenomenon of persistent poverty in the midst of economic affluence is one of the most problematic issues in development today. In many parts of the world, economic development has not been accompanied by an attendant degree of social progress. This phenomenon is often referred to as *distorted development.* Distorted development exists in societies where economic development has not been accompanied by a concomitant level of social development. In these countries, the problem is not the absence of economic development but rather a failure to harmonise economic and social development objectives, and ensure that the benefits of economic progress reach the population as a whole. (Midgley, 1995, pp. 3-4).

Making the distinction between economic growth and economic development is important here. Economic development is more about improving citizens' quality of life, whereas the former is more about the increase in the country's GDP, which does not necessarily mean better lives for the people (Brinkman, 1995). Hence economic development is seen as more of a public good than economic growth since the benefits of economic growth do not necessarily trickle down to all the citizens. Still, there is scholarship suggesting that contributing to both economic growth and development is an instrumental public good role of higher education (Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting, & Maassen, 2011; Altbach, 2013; Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006; Sharma, 2015).

Production of New Knowledge.

The production of new knowledge through research is seen as higher education's contribution to the public good in the international literature (Altbach, 2013; Bodansky, 2012; Desai, 2003; Etzioni, 2014; Hess & Ostrom, 2007) and in local literature (Cross & Ndofirepi, 2016; Dlamini, 2019; Walker, 2015).

While knowledge for its own sake is also seen as intrinsically a public good, there is a stronger emphasis on instrumental knowledge. Knowledge is understood to play an instrumental role in the knowledge-based economies of the 21st century (Altbach, 2013; Bloom et al., 2006; Dlamini, 2019)." Some authors suggest that the emergence of knowledge-based economies has brought about a shift from Mode one to Mode two knowledge production and the capitalisation of knowledge (Gibbons et al., 1994; Jacob & Hellström, 2000; le Grange, 2009; Peters, 2007). Gibbons et al., (1994) popularised the terms 'Mode one' and 'Mode two' in the research literature. 'Mode one' refers to a university-cantered process of knowledge production that takes place in a disciplinary context with an academic agenda according to the traditional meaning of 'science', producing universal knowledge and building and testing theories within a disciplinary field. 'Mode two' refers to a transdisciplinary process of knowledge production in which academics collaborate with stakeholders and users of knowledge to produce it in context of its application. Mode two has an element of heterogeneity when it comes to the skills set that people bring into it, and it involves quality control, reflectivity, and social accountability.

According to Jacob and Hellstrom (2000), debates around this shift from mode one to mode two knowledge production draw attention to the structural organisation of the university and the ways in which this structure influences academics' reflections about and interpretations of the norms and practices of the academy. The shift and the capitalisation of knowledge connected to it are parts of developments that are characteristic of the changes in the role of the university in a knowledge society, in which knowledge is the main driver of economic growth (Jacob & Hellstrom, 2000; le Grange, 2009). According to le Grange (2018), Knowledge Capitalisation means that stakeholders outside of the university, more especially private companies, increasingly control the means of knowledge production. According to Kraak (2000), South African higher education has not been exempted from this move to mode two knowledge production.

The government higher education and training policies have been shaped by analytical frameworks pioneers of the shift to mode two knowledge production, Gibbons et al. and Scott

(Kraak, 2000). This is evident by the prominence of the politico-economic underpinnings of change- globalisation and massification- in the policy documents, which are strongly emphasised in the work of Gibbons et al., (1994) and Scott (1995) on mode two knowledge production. The influence of this work is also evident in the key recommendation put forwards in the policy documents, which create an enabling environment for mode two knowledge production to flourish. These recommendations include:

> … a shift to a more open and responsive HET system; greater emphasis on programmatic rather than disciplinary-based provision; and the adoption of a single co-ordinated national system of HET that emphasises homogeneity in the regulatory environment and pluralism in the institutional missions of diverse HET providers. (Kraak, 2000, p. 19).

The shift towards Mode two and the capitalisation of knowledge have been occurring in the context of increasing cutbacks in government expenditure on education and changes in the criteria for research funding from research foundations (Jacob & Hellstrom, 2000). Some literature suggests that this is a global trend, that in many countries is associated with the ascendancy of neoliberal politics and their influence on higher education policy and practice (Jacob & Hellström, 2000; Johnson & Hirt, 2011; le Grange, 2009; Leibowitz, 2012; Marginson, 2011; Muthayan, 2005; Neubauer, 2008; Ntshoe et al., 2008; Rustin, 2016; Tilak, 2008). Jacob and Hellstrom (2000) emphasise that most indicators suggest that it is not that science is receiving less funding as such, but that Mode two receives more funding at the expense of Mode one research. This partiality towards knowledge production only in applied fields with strong commercial possibilities threatens knowledge production in fields like the arts, social sciences, and humanities, which do not have the same income-generation potential but are also important for human development broadly defined. According to Singh (2001), fostering knowledge production in a variety of fields, in both Mode one and Mode two, is an essential public good, which allows diverse ideas and their application to nourish social development in a variety of tangible and intangible ways. However, the shift towards mode two limits the public good contribution of research in fields that do not have a greater degree of income-generations potential.

Jacob and Hellstrom (2008) argue that the shift to Mode two and the capitalisation of knowledge associated with it triggered a debate about their impact on the nature of scientific knowledge and the role of the university in society. They argue that initially, the university was perceived to be an institution that produces scientific knowledge and a skilled workforce for

the labour market, of which industry then convert both into capital (technology, goods and services). However, this role has changed to one in which the university acts as a partner in transforming the primary commodities (skilled labour force and scientific knowledge) into manufactured commodities. This change has resulted in a great deal of uncertainty about the role of the academic and the very meaning of the concept 'academic.' They argue that the debates about this shift provide an insight into how the university is structured and how this structure influences how academics reflect on and interpret the norms and practices of the academy. For example, they suggest, tenured academics in the United States of America are more likely to interpret the commercialisation of knowledge as a threat to academic freedom, while those who have fought to create an academy that is more inclusive of minority perspectives and groups may see commercialisation as a regression to a form of elitism (Jacob & Hellström, 2000).

Social Mobility

The literature also suggests that the social mobility of graduates is another instrumental form of higher education's contribution to the public good (Bloom et al., 2006; Carpenter & Phaswana, 2021; Dlamini, 2019; Fongwa, 2019; Furnee et al., 2008; Magubane, 2016). According to Dlamini (2019, p 48), for example, "the importance of an educated society cannot be overstated, particularly in South Africa with its recent history of subjugation and intentional underdevelopment of the large majority of the people. Bloom et al., (2006) argue that higher education contributes to economic growth through both private and public channels. Private channels include the benefits that higher education affords individuals upon graduation, such as better employment chances, higher salaries, and a greater ability to save and invest.

Some scholars see these as returns on investment that people make on education and, therefore, a private rather than public good (MacPherson & Schapiro, 1998; Perna, 2003; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; Shaw, 2010; Zemsky et al., 2005). This view suggests that graduate employment attributable to higher education increases their social status and lifetime earnings (Marginson, 2014; Scott, 1995). Some scholars in South Africa concur with this view, but further argue that these benefits of higher education are often shared with graduates' families and the society as a whole, thus indirectly contributing to the public good (Bloom et al., 2006; Carpenter & Phaswana, 2021; Dlamini, 2019; Fongwa, 2019; Furnee et al., 2008; Magubane, 2016).

For example, Dlamini (2019) argued that "for the majority of the country's [South Africa] population, obtaining a university degree does mean not only better job opportunities but also a drastic shift in social mobility for an entire generation." In other words, the individuals who obtain higher education qualifications are not the sole beneficiaries of its return on investment. Bloom et al., (2006) argue that these benefits may result in improved health and quality of life, "setting off a virtuous spiral in which life expectancy improvements enable individuals to work more productively over a longer time, further boosting lifetime earnings" (p. 15). Furnee et al., (2008) also echo the argument that higher education contributes to health outcomes. Moreover, Bloom et al., (2006) add that higher earnings increase government's tax revenues while easing the demand on the public purse. For example, "in South Africa, the personal income tax is progressive in nature, and in 2017-2018, it accounted for 38% of the tax collected by government" (Carpenter & Phaswana, 2021, p. 1).

From a human capital point of view, an argument is made to suggest that elements of the public good are realised in connections between communities and collectives that work at a messo or micro level. For example, a student can study towards a medical degree, and from that experience and the resulting qualification, will enjoy a high salary and a rewarding livelihood. Nevertheless, there are also public benefits accruing from the education of graduates, in this case, the positive impact on others' health through the doctor's work. Some research studies have explored how the public good dimension of teaching can be maximised (East et al., 2014; McMahon, 2009). McMahon focuses on households and formulates a notion of the role of higher education, which starts from the (highly contested) human capital paradigm and expands it by exploring the effects of higher education in households. For McMahon, "These include the uses of human capital in the community that serves the public interest. Both private non-market effects over the lifecycle and the benefits to society are or should be central to discussions of academic policy" (McMahon, 2009, p. 6). McMahon notes that human capital is used to generate earnings but is also used at home or in the community to generate non-market benefits. What is noted from McMahon's contribution is that "The monetary values of these non-market outcomes are just as legitimate as the monetary value of the earnings outcomes from higher education" (McMahon, 2009, p. 6).

McMahon's (2009) argument does not focus on the South African context. However, this echoed in the emerging literature about what has been colloquially termed "The Black Tax" in South Africa, as experienced mainly by black graduates (Carpenter & Phaswana, 2021;

Fongwa, 2019; Magubane, 2016; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019). Fongwa (2019) contends that graduate employment, and the benefits associated with it, contributes to the public good in cases where the benefits are shared with the graduate's extended family through black tax, which he defines as "the process through which a black individual (usually an employed recent graduate) uses a significant portion of their income and savings to support their immediate and extended family" (p. 2). This is similar to the global phenomenon of the 'Sandwich generation' of mid-life adults who find themselves raising dependent children and simultaneously caring for their elderly parents (Miller, 1981). In his analysis of secondary data about black tax in South Africa, Fongwa (2019, p. 6) found that "black professionals do not perceive the benefits of their degree as a private achievement", and that even though they "articulate and recognise the challenges inherent in the black tax, the majority feel it is their social and moral responsibility towards a greater good for society" (p. 6). While social mobility is often associated with the reduction of poverty and inequality, there are some scholars who argue that higher education reproduces inequalities instead of reducing inequalities (Boliver, 2017; Croizet et al., 2019).

Socio-political Arguments

In this section, I discuss socio-political understandings of the relationship between higher education and the public good, which are mainly sceptical economically oriented instrumentalist conceptions of higher education and the public good. Badat (2009) argues that economically oriented conceptions reduce the public good contribution of higher education to its efficiency for economic growth, which strips it of substantially extensive social value. Collini (2012), in his discussion of the university as a public good, echoes this criticism. While acknowledging that universities produce useful outcomes like knowledge and graduates, he argues that these outcomes are not the main justification for the existence of these institutions. He advocates for a new 'genre' of arguments for universities to be understood as "a corporation for the cultivation and care of the community's highest aspirations and ideals" (p.86). This leans more towards the intrinsic notion of the public good.

Badat (2009) writes that higher education has great social and political value, which is not accounted for in the economically oriented instrumentalist understanding of its public good. This broader social value is articulated in how other scholars have described the relationship between higher education and the public good in terms of social transformation, social justice, reduction of inequality, democratisation, the cultivation of the human (Badat, 2009; Leibowitz,

2012; Pusser, 2006; Singh, 2001, 2011). Leibowitz (2012), for example, argues that the public good of higher education institutions, particularly public universities, cannot be divorced from issues of social justice, especially in societies like South Africa that have a history of colonialism, apartheid, gross inequality, and poverty. In a similar line of thought, Walker (2015. p. 323) concludes that public good cannot be provided through market mechanisms but require public action, agency and a particular stance from academics and students to 'fight for what is valuable about universities.'

Intrinsic Conception: Higher Education as A Public Good

The intrinsic conception of the relationship between higher education and the public good puts more value on the accessibility of higher education, developing and facilitating students' acquisition of knowledge for its own sake and "the experiences of the physical, intellectual/cultural or affective spaces of higher education that express and enact public good" (Unterhalter et al., 2018, p. 3). Those who formulate this argument present a view of higher education as a space to experience public good or human development (Locatelli, 2017, Tilak, 2009). It emphasises the need to protect the accessibility of higher education to all. Thus, it relates strongly to the notion of education as a human right. Both ideas of higher education as a public good and a space to experience public good have implications for what is taught in higher education, how it is taught, some of the spatial relationships in higher education and experiential features of working and studying in particular types of institutional cultures (Unterhalter et al., 2018).

Conscientization and Citizenship

The broader social and political value of higher education is also evident in both local (Badat, 2009; Davids & Waghid, 2016; Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020; Smith, 2008) and international literature on the role higher education plays in fostering conscientisation, citizenship and civic agency among graduates (Brown et al., 2020; McCowan, 2012). Literature that foregrounds the role of higher education in the conscientization of students often draws from the work of the Brazilian Educationist Paulo Freire. According to Freire (2000), conscientisation is a process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality. That is, "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take actions against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2000a, p. 35). According to Freire (1972, p.51) as cited in Armitage (2013, p. 3):

> *Conscientization* is the process whereby an individual becomes engaged with transformative, democratic, and humanistic pedagogical practices, and are not mere receptacles of reality but who as 'knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality'.

Through conscientization, people gain a critical awareness of their material conditions and the processes and practices that constitute their reality. They develop an awareness of their ability to challenge these processes and practices, which enables them to emancipate themselves and take charge of their destinies (Armitage, 2013).

Even though Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was not particularly about higher education but education in general, many scholars have used his ideas to make an argument about higher education and its contribution to the public good. For example, Linda Smith (2008) writes about the relevance of Freire's (2000) notion of critical conscientisation in social work education in South Africa. "To achieve social change, Social Work Education thus needs to critically engage with post-colonial and post-apartheid socio-political realities of inequality, oppression, racism and cultural hegemony and facilitate a critical conscientisation" (Smith, 2008, p. 371). This suggests that, because of the country's history of apartheid and colonialism, it is important for higher education to facilitate a process of critical conscientisation among students in South Africa.

This notion of conscientisation in higher education has also been closely associated with citizenship education, which is another way in which higher education contributes to the public good in South Africa and elsewhere (Badat, 2009; Brown et al., 2020; Davids & Waghid, 2016; Kerr, 2001; Mtawa & Nkhoma, 2020). For example, Brown et al. (2020, p. 220) posit "education has a significant role to play in the development of democratic citizenship." Echoing Badat's (2009) critic of economically oriented understandings of the role of higher education, Brown et al., (2020) argue that the purpose of higher education is beyond its economic contribution but also includes nation-building and citizenship as other justifications for the existence of the modern university. "In essence, higher education was not only about technical skills but was also about developing individual character: inculcating the dispositions and attitudes desired by the culture of the society" (Brown et al., 2020, p. 100).

Davids and Waghid (2016, p. 34) describe higher education as a pedagogical site for citizenship education. They present a threefold argument that:

> The university classroom in democratic South Africa offers a relevant pedagogical site to teach citizenship education. First, higher education should be a pedagogical space where deliberative, compassionate and cosmopolitan encounters are cultivated; second, an active citizenship education is needed to prepare students to deal with violence; and third, a citizenship education in becoming seems to be most appropriate to contend with the unexpected challenges posed by violence. (p. 34).

According to Mtawa and Nkhoma (2020, p. 113), service-learning is one way in which higher education cultivates "overlapping capacities of citizenship, conscientization and civic agency and minded values among students." They assert that this contribution is due to the elements of experiential learning, transformative learning and critical reflection involved in service learning. Mtawa and Nkhoma (2020) draw from the capability perspective, which is also dominant in the following sets of arguments.

Human Development Understandings

Human Development oriented views of the relationship between higher education and the public good see higher education as a site for the expansion of capabilities and experience of human development (Boni & Walker, 2016; Walker & McLean, 2010). This is a version of the 'intrinsic' argument because the expansion of capabilities and facilitation of human development through higher education are intellectual experiences. However, it also has elements of the instrumental argument because of the externalities produced by expanding capabilities and human development in higher education. Walker (2015) and Walker and McLean (2015), writing from the capability perspective, give an example of this. They suggest that the production of professionals may not just be just about economic growth if universities can produce what they call public good professionals. These are professional graduates who have gained from higher education the knowledge, skills and values that enable them to contribute to poverty alleviation, reduction of inequality and enhancing the well-being of other people in general (Walker & McLean, 2015). This helps to unpack the broader social value of higher education that, according to Badat (2009), is missing from the instrumentalist economically oriented understanding discussed earlier.

However, this view mainly focuses on the institutional level of the relationship. Proponents of this version of the intrinsic argument locate the link between higher education and the public good in what higher education institutions do or can do for the public good, which is to produce public good professionals. However, it does not address the question of what it costs academics

to produce this calibre of professionals. The commonality between economic, socio-political, and human development understandings of the relationship between higher education and the public good is that they all present the ends as more important than the means of the public good processes in higher education. This gives one side of the story of higher education and the public good.

According to Badat (2009), the intrinsic form of public good encompasses engagements between academics and students about humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific inheritances[11] as well as historical and contemporary understandings, views and beliefs about the natural and social worlds. Both intrinsic and extrinsic forms are important to consider in pursuing a comprehensive definition of the public good contribution of higher education.

The more economically oriented definitions are narrow, and they emphasise the instrumental form of the public good contribution of higher education. They focus largely on how higher education and investments in universities promote economic growth through the production of new knowledge and the production of graduates as a productive workforce for the labour market and the economy (Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting, & Maassen, 2011; Altbach, 2013; Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006; Sharma, 2015). New knowledge and a skilled workforce are understood to be very important for the knowledge-based economies of the 21st century (Altbach, 2013). However, Badat (2009) criticises this instrumental view of higher education, claiming that it reduces the public good contribution of higher education to its efficiency for economic growth, which strips it of substantially extensive social value. However, Walker (2015) and Walker and McLean (2015) suggest that the production of professionals may not just be about economic growth if universities can produce what they call 'public good professionals.' These are professional graduates who are in a position and have the knowledge, skills and values that enable them to alleviate inequalities, poverty, and enhance the well-being of other people (Walker & McLean, 2015).

The broader social value of higher education can also be seen in the role it plays in social transformation. In Walker's (2015) view, one way in which the university contributes to social transformation is by exposing students to the "other" and helping them understand "otherness." This echoes an argument made by Bozalek and Leibowitz (2012), asserting that for higher education to contribute to social transformation and social justice requires it requires the

11 These may be in a form of books, music, artefacts, artworks, pictures and etc.

development of graduate attributes beyond skills for a job and a curriculum that inspires attributes such as dialogue, agency and engagement with the 'other.' This positions the university as a space of encountering difference, foregrounding the broader social value that Badat (2009) refers to and also appealing to intrinsic rather than the instrumental notion of the public good. This encounter with diversity helps students learn tolerance, thus contributing to reconciliation (Walker, 2015). This also finds expression, though in a different form, in Singh's (2001, p. 9) definition of 'public good' as:

> … a set of interests that are not reducible to the sum of interests of individuals or groups of individuals and that demarcate a common space within which the content of moral and political goals like democracy and social justice can be negotiated and collectively pursued.

It is evident, therefore, that both Singh (2001) and Walker (2015) resonate with Marginson's (2011) political version of public good and the notion of the university as a public sphere. However, their implication that students learning tolerance contributes to reconciliation in a divided society like South Africa gives another example of the overlap between instrumental and intrinsic forms of the public good.

I have, so far, discussed how different scholars writing about universities in the post-1994 South Africa period defined the notion of the public good. There is also literature that I discuss in the next section that suggests that both global and local forces interfere in some way with higher education's contribution to public good. These include globalisation, neoliberalism, and the legacy of apartheid and colonialism.

Access to Higher Education as a Public Good

An argument for widening access to and massification of higher education has been made based on the view of higher education as a public good and a human right (Dlamini, 2019). Widening access to higher education widens the pool of people who experience this form of public good. In the context of South Africa, the call for widening access to higher education as a public good and a human right has been a critical component of the transformation imperative of the democratic dispensation that attempts to redress the injustices of the past (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Sehoole & Adeyemo, 2016; Smit, 2012a). The main goal of the democratically elected government, as far as higher education was concerned, was to create a higher education system that would "contribute to the common good of society through the production, acquisition and application of knowledge, the building of human capacity, and the

provision of lifelong learning opportunities." (White Paper 3: A Program of Higher Education, 1997, p. 1.20). While in terms of post-1994 admission policies, higher education is now open to everyone who qualifies, the scarcity of funding, associated with fiscal austerity, has become another hindrance to access and the advancement of the public good of higher education.

Although public goods are non-rivalrous and non-excludable, as I explained in the introduction chapter, historically in South Africa, it has been made very difficult for underprivileged groups to have access to the form of 'common' knowledge that is certificated through universities. There is nothing particularly context-rich about the concept of public goods, but who can and cannot use public goods in practice will vary across socio-economic groups and is linked with forms of political power and participation. Thus, conditions in different countries will determine who can and cannot use these public goods, notwithstanding their non-rivalrous and non-excludable form. Public goods are available to all, sometimes linked with the idea of knowledge, communication, and educational exchange that is open and accessible to all, not privatized or put behind paywalls or requiring expensive technologies.

The problem of funding for higher education has become one of the most concerning aspects of higher education locally(de Villiers, 2016; Khuluvhe & Netshifhefhe, 2021; Styger et al., 2016; Wangenge-Ouma et al., 2009), regionally, and internationally (Pennington et al., 2017; Marginson, 2011; Mitchell, Leachman, & Masterson, 2016; Mohamedbhai, 2008; Hodes, 2015). The scarcity of funding for higher education has been linked to the issue of neoliberalism. International accounts of the neo-liberalisation of the university suggest that one of the major aspects of this process is a reduction, in some cases a complete withdrawal, of public funding for higher education institutions (Marginson, 2012; Mitchell et al., 2016; Mohamedbhai, 2008). Marginson (2011, p. 414) argues that this "shows how precarious the public role of higher education has become." It is not just a third world but is also a first-world phenomenon. It has occurred in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). In December 2010, the UK government withdrew public subsidies from institutions in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Marginson, 2011). Mitchell et al., (2016) provide recent statistical evidence of this in the USA. They show that nationwide state expenditure on higher education decreased by 18% between 2008 and 2015. In the same period, 26 states reduced their per-student expenditure by 20%, 9 states reduced it by 30%, and three states reduced it by more than 50%. These problems are not unique to first-world Western countries, as African countries experience similar problems (Nganga, 2021).

The findings of Mohamedbhai's (2008) survey of the effects of massification on higher education in Africa show that many African institutions experience a dearth of funds, human resources and infrastructure alongside the rapid growth of student enrolments. This rapid growth in demand for higher education has led many African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria to encourage the development of private higher education institutions to ease the pressure on public institutions to allow the latter to focus more on research-based programmes. He refers to this as the 'neo-liberalisation of access' (Mohamedbhai, 2008, p. 13). However, research evidence suggests that private institutions do not concern themselves with advancing the public good. For example, in a longitudinal study (1989-2005) of neoliberal reforms at Makerere University in Uganda, Mamndani (2007) found that these reforms resulted in the subordination of the university to the logic of the market. He argues that this culminated in the creation of a parallel 'informal' institution at Makerere, which was driven by the private good rather than the public good with no regard for quality. This is one example of the invasion of neoliberalism in the higher education sector, which is happening in most African countries (Brock-Utne, 2008; Magoqwana et al., 2019; Pennington et al., 2017; Rustin, 2016). South Africa has not been exempted from this trend, even though it is among those imposing less austerity (GroundUp, 2015; Hodes, 2017; Pennington et al., 2017).

In South Africa, the percentage of state funding for higher education as part of the overall university income dropped from 49% in 2000 to 40% in 2012 (Hodes, 2017). This is not to say that the state is not putting more money into higher education, but it means that the state funding is not keeping up with the increasing costs of higher education, and universities have resorted to private fundraising to make up for the budget shortfalls. Private funding includes funds from donors, which often come with strings attached. For example, donors who provide research funding often dictate the research agenda, which has negative implications for academic freedom and autonomy (Pennington et al., 2017).

This increased the contribution of student fees to universities' total income from 24% in 2000 to 31% in 2012, making higher education an even more expensive commodity and less accessible to many, particularly the poor majority (Hodes, 2017). The literature also provides statistical evidence to show that the Covid-19 crisis has not helped the situation. Instead, it has made it worse. As Naidu and Dell (2020) show, there have been further cuts on governments' higher education budget resulting from the diversion of resources to ameliorate the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes "a 19% drop in the allocation for established

research grants, a 29% reduction in the allocation for early and emerging career grants" (para. 20).

The University as A Public Sphere

Another aspect of the intrinsic notion of the relationship between higher education and the public good is experiential and linked with Habermas' idea of the public sphere that Marginson (2011, 2014) refers to as the political version of the public good I discussed in the introduction chapter. Marginson (2011) argued that:

> One way to conceive the public dimension in higher education is to imagine the sector as an umbrella public sphere sheltering projects that pertain to the public good (singular) and more narrowly defined public goods (plural). Most such public functions are associated with the university's roles in knowledge, learning and discourse. (p. 419).

This view of the university as a public sphere emerged strongly from those who write about higher education and the public from a socio-political perspective (Badat, 2009; Pusser, 2006; Singh, 2001, 2011). According to Pusser (2006), the university is an institutional space for reasoning arguments and contending values. Badat (2009) suggested that universities serve the public good in providing a space for discussion, debate, and deliberation, often between academics and students, about humanity's intellectual, cultural and scientific inheritances as well as historical and contemporary understandings, views and beliefs about the natural and social worlds. In this view, the university serves as a public sphere. In Walker's (2015) view, one way in which the university contributes to public good in the form of social transformation is by exposing students to the "other" and helping them understand "otherness", which positions the university as a space of encountering difference and learning tolerance.

Writing from a philosophical point of view, Waghid (2009) echoes the same view of the university as a public sphere. He argues that the public role of the university can be enhanced through democratic deliberation, compassionate imagining, and cosmopolitan justice, which are intrinsic goods that can position university education as a public good. He argues for a view of the university as "a deliberative space for the sharing of different people's commonalities" and a space where people "learn to live with the otherness of others whose ways of being may be deeply threatening to our own" (p. 75). He argued that "when university staff and students are engaged in deliberative engagement underpinned by interdependence and disagreement, they engage in democratic action with a collective identity – they share commonalities." (p.

75). Moreover, he argues that democratic deliberation cannot be divorced from cultivating compassionate imagining, which allows students and staff to acknowledge each other's vulnerabilities. He also suggests that, ultimately, cultivating compassionate imagining contributes to the production of a workforce that is able to recognise the vulnerability of others.

Another concept that has come to prominence in relation to higher education as a public good is the 'commons' – having been extended from its original usage as shared agricultural land to include the cultural and political realm, particularly knowledge in the digital age (Hess & Ostrom, 2007). The 'commons' refers to an open co-operative and non-hierarchical space, where people come to use and share a commonly owned resource – and therefore is inimical to the market, but also possibly to the state. In education, the commons have manifested itself through the new opportunities for autonomous learning offered by the internet, as well as through the emergence of open access courseware. These can question the existing form of higher education institution as a particular situated space for the public good and raise questions about the commons as a site for learning which dissolves some of the hierarchies of knowledge, pedagogies, and inequalities between institutions.

However, it must be noted that Hess and Ostom (2007) write about knowledge as commons in the USA. Although they refer to some international organisations, they do not address international issues related to the notion of knowledge as commons. For example, inequalities related to access to the internet may shape how people, particularly in underdeveloped and developing countries, may relate to the knowledge commons. The digital divide has become more evident since the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic, which necessitated a dramatic shift to online learning (Azubuike et al., 2021; Richter & Naicker, 2020). This limits the extent to which higher education and knowledge are accessible as public good.

Community Engagement

The other strand of the intrinsic formation of public good in higher education concerns community engagement (Bond & Paterson, 2005; Chambers & Gopaul, 2008; Clayton et al., 2013; Fitzgerald et al., 2012; Unterhalter et al., 2018; Winter et al., 2006). This is about the role that universities and their academics can play in creating spaces within their structures for institution-building activities for cultivating social and moral values in students and surrounding communities through the curriculum, laying the foundation for social networks that can promote public goods (Clayton et al., 2013). Some studies have focused on the

behaviour of higher education institutions and how they adjust both to be in synergy and at the same time to energize changes in the wider institutions of society as central to the mission of the public good. For example, in a study analysing participants' descriptions of higher education and the public good in the USA using phenomenological and constructivist lenses, Chambers and Gopaul (2008) found that the behaviours and decisions of institutions are reflections of their public good roles. These behaviours include values, policies, procedures, internal and external relations, and institutional cultures that speak to the level of commitment to the public good especially with regard types of changes needed for higher education to significantly contribute to addressing the complex challenges and opportunities within society generally, as well as more specifically within institutions of higher education themselves.

The literature suggests that universities have a strong commitment to community engagement in European countries as higher education's contribution to the public good. For example, the finding of a study of Academics' civic and economic engagement with the community conducted by Bond & Paterson (2005) among academics in Scotland and England found "that academics exhibit a strong commitment to engagement and interaction with their communities both in principle and practice" (p. 331). This is contrary to what the literature says about community engagement in South Africa. For example, Shawa (2020, p. 105) argued that, in South Africa, community engagement "is most often viewed as voluntary and perhaps even peripheral" even though it is widely accepted as a key performance area for academics and is well "articulated in White Paper 3 on the transformation of higher education and in institutional policies." However, contextual differences between South Africa and the European countries may account for the difference in how much emphasis universities place on community engagement.

Fitzgerald et al. (2012) argue that community engagement, as a crucial aspect of assessing the public good impact of higher education institutions, is undermined by political and economic circumstances in the United States. This include scarcity of funding, which forces institutions to consider disengaging from their communities to cut costs and prioritise disciplines that are perceived to have higher returns to both individuals and institutions. Pasque (2006) traces the beginning of higher education institutions' disengagement from active community engagement to the advent of the post-war military-industrial complex and the negotiation of new relations with America's research universities. The emergence of specialized research institutes outside the universities to support the military complex gradually shifted criteria for faculty evaluation

from broad social needs to narrow expertise. In addition, the concept of 'optimal learning' is used in the United States to refer to the capacity of universities to organize learning in ways that help strengthen democratic and civic institutions beyond the classroom to include higher education's impact on societal organizations, businesses, corporations, and value-based organizations (The National Centre for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008). However, this literature rarely looks at whether these networks are among elites who attend higher education and whether it is social solidarity with the poor that is advanced.

Universities in South Africa have integrated transformation and community engagement into their missions, "although this has tended to focus on redressing past marginalization than any broad conceptualization of higher education for the public good" (Unterhalter et al., 2018, p. 10). Nevertheless, the attention to community engagement is growing (Bhagwan, 2017; Bidandi et al., 2021). The White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education mandates universities to structure their operations (teaching, learning and research) to be "socially responsive to broader society and to democratise knowledge production" (Bhagwan, 2017, p. 172). Despite this emphasis in policy documents, community enjoyment seems not to be prioritised in South African higher education. Community engagement scholarship is emerging slowly in South Africa (Bhagwan, 2020). This suggests that more still needs to be done for community engagement to be fully integrated into the operations of universities in South Africa.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the literature on the relationship between higher education and the public good. I highlighted two lines of argument emerging from this literature, instrumental and intrinsic arguments. In the instrumental line of argument, the link between higher education and the public good is understood in terms of economic growth and development, knowledge production, and social mobility. In the intrinsic line of argument, this relationship is understood in terms of conscientization, critical citizenship, human development, access, the public sphere and community engagement. I have also highlighted the overlaps that exist between instrumental and intrinsic forms of the public good. Both these arguments look at this relationship from an abstract macro level that does not help us understand the dynamics of this relationship at a micro-level. Even though a few scholars writing from the capabilities perspective do provide some insight into the micro level, this is limited because they focused mainly on students' experiences. For this reason, in this study, I explore the micro-level

dynamic so the relationship between higher education and the public good from the perspective of academics as one of the key role players in the public good processes of higher education. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology I used to carry out this study before moving on to the findings chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

My focus in this study is on participants' perceptions and the meanings they attach to the concept of the public good as it relates to higher education. This lands the methodology of this study within the social constructivist paradigm, which others refer to as interpretivism (Creswell, 2013). For this reason, I adopted a qualitative approach to carrying out this research. I used a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct 15 in-depth, one-on-one, face-to-face qualitative interviews with academics in different disciplines at two universities in South Africa, a historically black and a historically white university. I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods to select participants for this study. I recorded the interviews, transcribed them myself, and used thematic analysis, as described in King and Horrocks (2010), to analyse the transcripts. In this chapter, I discuss the details of these methodological aspects of my study and the different ethical issues I considered in carrying out this study, i.e., informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. I conclude with the limitations of the study.

Interpretivism

According to De Vos et al., (2011), every scientific research study is carried out within a particular paradigm that has specific assumptions about the world. I also conducted this study having a particular way of thinking about the world, a frame of reference that I used to organise my research process. It helps to keep the communication with the reading public clear and unambiguous when searchers make explicit the paradigm they are working with and the assumptions that underpin it (Creswell, 2013; De Vos et al., 2011). The number of paradigms, and the names associated with them, vary for different authors. However, the generally accepted list includes 1. positivism, 2. critical theory, and 3. interpretivism (Willis, 2007). Their ontological and epistemological assumptions distinguish these paradigms.

I conducted this study within the interpretivist paradigm, which can be traced back to the work of Max Weber, a German Sociologist, and Wilhelm Dilthey, a German Philosopher. However, some of its philosophical foundations can be traced to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* in which he asserted that humans do not experience the world as it is, but they interpret their sensations (De Vos et al., 2011). The interpretivist paradigm distinguishes social sciences from natural sciences by arguing that the latter is based on abstract explanations, whereas the

former is based on an empathetic understanding of people's everyday experiences in various historical situations, which is also known as *Verstehen* (De Vos et al., 2011; King et al., 2019). The interpretive paradigm is concerned with "how the social world is experienced and understood" (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 11), which makes it appropriate for a study that explores participants' perceptions.

The interpretivist paradigm assumes that all human beings seek to make sense of the worlds in which they live and work, and they develop subjective meanings of their experiences and actions in these worlds. According to Creswell (2013, p. 24), "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 of ideas." As King et al., (2019) stated, the interpretivist paradigm perceives experiences and understandings as rarely straightforward; "people participate in intermediate lifeworlds, often attaching different interpretations and meanings to seemingly similar facts and events (p.11)." Therefore, positivists' quest to discover a single overarching truth about reality is perceived as misplaced; instead, interpretivism argues that there are numerous realities or different interpretations of reality. In other words, interpretivist research takes a relativist ontological stance, "the belief that reality is a finite subjective experience" (Levers, 2013, p. 2).

Interpretivism does not deny the existence of an external reality. However, it challenges the positivist idea that this reality is independently knowable (Willis, 2007). It also rejects the positivist premise that the scientific method can objectively study the external world. However, it argues that all scientific research is influenced by the researcher's pre-existing theories and worldviews. For this reason, interpretivism is based on the premise that research is a socially constructed activity, and therefore, the 'reality' it tells us about is also socially constructed. Within this paradigm, the goal of conducting research is to "rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation" (King et al., 2019, pp. 24-25). Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm takes a social constructionist epistemological stance, which holds that knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively determined.

Interpretivism favours the qualitative approach to research (Willis, 2007). Therefore, in this study, I adopted the qualitative approach to explore participants' interpretations of their social world. The qualitative approach is useful for exploring and understanding social or human problems by eliciting participants' accounts of their experiences, perceptions, and the meanings they ascribe to the problem in question and considering some of the reasons why they undertake

particular actions (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2014; De Vos et al., 2011). According to de Vos et al., (2011), the exploratory nature of this approach allows researchers to understand the phenomena they study from the participants' perspective. This is why it is most appropriate for this study, which is concerned with how South African academics perceive the link between higher education and the public good in the South African context characterised by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

Sampling

There are 26 public universities in South Africa, each of which has been affected in different ways by strands of the history set out in chapter two (Weber & Vandeyar, 2004). Though it would be interesting to explore how academics in all these institutions understand the notion of public good and their role in serving the public good, this is beyond the scope of a PhD project. As Creswell (2012) argues, widening the scope of a study may limit the depth of the data collected. To avoid this, I purposively selected participants from only two universities that offer contrasting settings and provide a wide range of perspectives. One university is historically white, and the other is historically black. I assigned pseudonyms to both institutions to anonymise the data I collected in them, Yellowwood University for the historically white university and Protea University for the historically black. There is no particular reason for my choice of these pseudonyms other than that they are names of South African national symbols. Selecting participants from institutions of different historical backgrounds allowed me to explore the role that institutional context plays in how academics understand and work with the notion of the public good in practice.

To gain access to conduct research at these universities, I requested permission from the office of the registrar of each university. Getting permission at Protea University was simple and straightforward. I submitted the application form, my research proposal, and ethics clearance certificate (Appendix B) to the registrar's office, and I received a permission letter. However, the process was more laborious at Yellowwood University than at Protea University. Firstly, before requesting permission to conduct research there, I had to apply for ethics clearance through one of the departments, even though I had received ethics clearance from the Wits School of Education ethics committee. It was only after my proposal was ethically cleared by an ethics committee in one of the departments at Yellowwood University that I could request permission to interview academics there. This delayed my data collection at Yellowwood

University. I collected data at Protea University in September 2018 and at Yellowwood University in May 2019.

Upon receiving permission to conduct research at these institutions, I reached out to numerous academics via email. I aimed to get a diverse sample of academics from different disciplines and seniority levels, hoping that this would give me a wide range of views on the issues in question. At the end of my fieldwork, I ended up with a sample of 15 academics, seven from Protea University and eight from Yellowwood University. For anonymity purposes, I assigned pseudonyms to each of them. Tables 5 and 6 below show the demographic composition of my sample from both universities.

Table 5: Demographic Composition of Participants from Protea University

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Seniority	Discipline	Interviewed
Prof Mathosa	African	Male	Prof	Anthropology	17/09/2018
Prof Aeron	Coloured	Male	Prof	Economics	17/09/2018
Prof Hartman	White	Male	Prof	Physics	14/09/2018
Dr Swan	Coloured	Female	Senior Lecturer	Mathematics	14/09/2018
Dr Getz	White	Female	Senior Lecturer	Anthropology	23/05/2019
Mr Dan	Coloured	Male	Lecturer	Physics	14/09/2018
Mr Martin	White	Male	Lecturer	Bioinformatics	14/09/2018

Table 6: Demographic Composition of Participants from Yellowwood University

Pseudonym	Race	Gender	Seniority	Discipline	Interviewed
Prof May	White	Female	Prof	Community Engagement	24/05/2019
Prof Jones	White	Female	Prof	Higher Education Studies	17/05/2019
Prof Smith	White	Female	Prof	Language Education	13/05/2019
Prof Logan	Coloured	Male	Prof	Education Policy	22/05/2019
Dr Elba	Coloured	Male	Senior Lecturer	Academic Literacy	22/05/2019
Dr Zoziwa	African	Female	Senior Lecturer	Academic Literacy	21/05/2019
Dr Gibbs	Coloured	Male	Senior Lecturer	Education Policy	20/05/2019
Ms Randera	Coloured	Female	Lecturer	Adult Education	17/05/2019

It was not easy to get academics to agree to participate even though I had received permission from their universities to carry out the study. Initially, I sent email requests for interviews to academics in different departments whose contact details I accessed on their university's website. This proved to be ineffective. I either got no response, or my requests for interviews were declined. I was forced to rely more on contacts I already had in these institutions, particularly Prof Mathosa at Protea University and Dr Elba at Yellowwood University. They introduced me to people they thought would be interested in participating in this study. My supervisors also introduced me to some of their contacts in these institutions. Through these contacts, I got access to other academics that were interested in participating in this study. As I will show in the limitations section of this chapter, using the snowball method introduced some limitations to the study.

Data Collection

I used a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix D) to conduct in-depth one-on-one, face-to-face qualitative interviews, each lasting 45 minutes to 1 hour. I conducted a single pre-test of the interview schedule before going into the field. This improves the dependability of data by ensuring that the questions are straightforward, easy for participants to understand, and ask for responses relevant to the aims and objectives of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). From this, I learned that most of my questions solicited the information I needed for the study. However, I learned that I was not getting information about what academics value in their job. Finding this out was very important because it could tell me whether what they value about their job relates to their notion of the public good or not. Therefore, I added two more questions to address this issue, questions two and three of the interview schedule.

Moreover, one of the questions, "what do you do to contribute to the public good? (Which was a follow up to question 5 in the interview schedule) produced short responses that did not tell much about the participants' contribution to the public good. This was a close-ended question. Therefore, I changed it to "How does your work contribute to the public good?" This required the participant to elaborate on their role in serving the public good. Using this amended interview schedule, I interviewed participants at Protea University in September 2018. After that, I did a role play with an academic who asked me the questions from my interview schedule, which helped me understand some of the things that do not make sense about how I asked questions. This improved my probing when I interviewed academics from Yellowwood University in May 2019.

I conducted these interviews when there was so much was happening in higher education in South Africa. After the emergence of the #RhodesMustFall Movement and amid the turmoil around the #FeesMustFall Movement. Both Yellowwood University and Protea University were heavily engaged in public and institutional debates about the transformation issues raised by these movements and the aftermath of their protests. President Jacob Zuma had announced that, from 2018, the state would provide free education for students from households with an annual income of less than R350 000, a commitment that his successor, President Cyril Ramaphosa[12], had to carry over into his term of office, which started in 2018 (Griffiths, 2019; Mlaba, 2021). However, early in 2019, students across the country, particularly at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Johannesburg, Durban University of Technology, revived protest demonstrations around issues of historical debts and student accommodation (Mlaba, 2021). Therefore, as I will show in later chapters, the political climate of higher education institutions in South Africa, which was dominated by discourses of transformation, may have influenced participants' perceptions of the relationship between higher education the public good.

With participants' written consent, I audio recorded all the interviews using a voice recorder and transferred them onto my password-protected laptop. I transcribed all the interviews personally, removing any potentially identifying information about participants and their institutions. Audio recording and verbatim transcription of interviews ensure the accuracy of the data during analysis and strengthen the dependability of the findings, which is an essential criterion for rigour in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2014). Moreover, it also helped me familiarise myself with the data before moving on to the data analysis phase of the research. As I was transcribing the data, I made notes on the side to help me in the analysis process.

Data Analysis

I systematically analysed the data using thematic analysis. I began the analysis process by closely reading the transcripts to familiarise myself with the data. As I was reading, I added to the notes I had made during the transcription phase. After this close reading, I moved on to systematically coding the data. According to de Wet and Erasmus (2005), such a data analysis system makes the analysis process rigorous and improves the trustworthiness of the findings.

[12] President Cyril Ramaphosa is the current and fith democratically elected President of South Africa.

Even though I followed King's and Horrocks' (2010) stages of thematic analysis, this was not a purely sequential process. Instead, it was an iterative process that required me to keep going back and forth between the different stages.

My coding process was semi-inductive (table 7 below for the coding frame), which means that some of the codes and categories did not emerge from the data, but I imported them from my research questions and the literature (See the coding frame below). To begin the coding process, I read through the transcripts once more. However, this time, I would also highlight the different quotes that stood out for me regarding the issues that my study investigates. Then I manually wrote the codes, with a brief description of what is of interest in the highlighted portion of participants' account on the right margin of the page. These became my descriptive codes, as described in King and Horrocks (2010).

The second level of my analysis was categorising the descriptive codes and interpreting the meaning of each category in relation to how it answers the questions that the study investigates. According to King and Horrocks (2010), this stage of analysis is interpretive coding. I divided my descriptive codes into three categories based on my research questions: conceptualisation of public good, public good roles of academics, conditions of possibility. This involved grouping together all the quotes that fell under each category. This was not a linear but an iterative process. I had to identify relationships and patterns in the data. This required me to go back to stage one and refine the descriptive codes as I moved from one transcript to another. Moreover, some quotes fell within more than one category.

After interpreting the meaning of each category, I read through the different quotes under each category, identifying the segments of the data that satisfactorily captured the meaning of each category to use them as evidence in the writing of this thesis. Through this process, I also identified the sub-categories of the interpretive codes. Finally, from the categories and sub-categories I developed, I derived themes by looking at the relationships and patterns in the data and how they relate to the key concepts of the study and the literature on higher education and the public good. This was also an iterative process of refining the descriptive and interpretive codes.

Table 7: Semi-inductive Coding Frame Used for Data Analysis

Categories	*Codes*	*Categories*	*Codes*
Public Good Definition	Access	***Conditions of***	**Funding**
	Student Development	***Possibility***	- Student Funding
	Consciousness Raising		- Research funding
	Transformation		- Resources
	Benefiting Society		**Transformation**
	Community engagement		-Inequalities
	Social Mobility		-Institutional History
	Local Relevance		-Racial Stereotypes
	Economic Development		-Racial Alienation
	Economic Growth		-Colonialism
	Public Sphere		**Collaboration**
Academics' Roles	Teacher		-Support
	Mentor		-Staff Mentorship
	Role Model		-Partnerships
	Researcher		-Community
	Public Intellectual		-Engagement
	Activist		**Personal Qualities**
	Research Supervisor		

Ethical Considerations

Before going to the field, I submitted the research proposal of this study to the Wits School of Education non-medical ethics committee, which granted ethics clearance for this study. The protocol number is 2018ECE015D (See Appendix B for Ethic Clearance Letter). In carrying out the study, I considered numerous ethical issues: informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity.

During fieldwork, participants were provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix A) which explains the purpose of this study and what participating in the study entailed. This participant information sheet was attached to my initial communication with potential participants. I also verbally reiterated its contents to participants before signing the consent form before every interview. This was to ensure informed consent and voluntary participation. Moreover, I ensured confidentiality and anonymity of participants' information by using pseudonyms and removing all potentially identifying information from the transcripts.

To ensure that participants gave informed consent, I attached the participant information sheet (PIS) (Appendix A) to the email sent to request their participation in the study. The PIS provided potential participants with the information they needed to know about this study, what participating entailed, and the contact detail of the people they could contact if they had any queries regarding the study. I also verbally explained to participants what the study was about and what participation entailed before every interview to ensure they were well informed. It is ethical research practice to ensure that participants are informed about all the aspects of the study that may influence their decision to participate in it (Creswell, 2014; De Vos et al., 2011). Participants were also requested to sign a consent form (Appendix C) for participation and audio recording of the interview.

Limitations of The Study

The focus is on only two universities out of twenty-six in South Africa, and this means that the findings of the study cannot represent the voice of academics in South Africa, but only a portion of it, which gives an insight into what academics in South Africa might be thinking about the relationship between higher education and the public good.

Even though this is not a problem, given that this is a qualitative study with no intention of generalising the findings, it still limits the range of perspectives I had access to. This is a limitation particularly because the contexts of different universities in South Africa differ vastly, and that has a bearing on the perspectives of the academics who work in them.

Moreover, my sample from the two universities was not as demographically diverse as I had hoped it would be, limiting the range of perspectives I could get from my participants. Using the snowball sampling method gave me access to people who are most likely to be in the same circles. For example, I only had very few participants of the African race, and I did not have Indians.

I believe that having this racial diversity would have resulted in richer findings. However, the sample was still diverse in terms of disciplines (with some limitations at Yellowwood University) and seniority levels, giving me a broad range of perspectives. Because of the challenges I faced with gaining entry at Yellowwood University and the snowball sampling method, all Yellowwood University participants were from fields related to education.

Conclusion

In this study, I am concerned with participants' perceptions about the relationship between higher education and the public good and their role in this relationship. This led to the interpretivist approach and in-depth qualitative interviews as a research method. In this chapter, I have discussed how I used this approach and method and how I thematically analysed the data to get the findings I present in the following three chapters. I have discussed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity as the ethical issues in carrying out this research. I then concluded with the study's limitations in terms of generalisability and broadness of the range of perspectives, which I associate with the snowball sampling method.

In the following chapters, I present and discuss the findings of this study, arguing that the notion of transformation is at the heart of academics' understanding of the public good in South Africa, where transformation is a process of change that involves redressing the injustices of the country's colonial and apartheid pasts, reducing inequalities, and ensuring inclusivity. I show that transformation is understood as both a form of the public good and a condition of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good. Moreover, I also acknowledge that transformation is contested in different higher education institutional settings. In the following chapter, I present participants' conceptions of the public good as it relates to higher education, arguing that academics understand the public good in terms of access, student development, consciousness-raising, transformation, economic growth and development, social mobility, knowledge production, and community engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conceptions of the Public Good: The Perspective of Academics from Two Universities in South Africa

As discussed in chapter three, the notion of the public good as it relates to higher education is complex and multifaceted. Given the re-emergence of this notion in contemporary higher education debates, this study sought to explore participants' conception of what the public good is as it relates to higher education. In this chapter, I present these perceptions drawing out their views on higher education and the public good and showing that participants see higher education itself as a public good and as contributing to the production of public goods, which expresses both the intrinsic and instrumental notions of the public good that emerged in the literature review. As discussed in the literature review, intrinsic notions present higher education as a space where public good (or human development) is experienced physically, intellectually and or culturally. Instrumental notions suggest that higher education brings about the public good, that it is a direct or an associated cause of different forms of the public good.

In this chapter, I argue that the notion of transformation is at the heart of participants' conceptions of what the public good in and of higher education is, which encompasses access, student development, conscientisation, community engagement, knowledge production, and economic growth and development. Furthermore, I suggest that this way of understanding the public good of higher education is strongly connected to the transformation imperative of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. This transformation imperative was a central theme of public attention at the time of data collection, emphasising the injustices of the country's colonial and apartheid pasts, redress, social justice, inclusivity, reduction of inequality, and alleviating poverty and unemployment, among other things. Therefore, in this chapter, I show the connection between participants' conceptions of the public good of higher education and the transformation imperative, thus demonstrating how contextual factors shape how the notion of the public good is understood and operationalised.

Transformation

Post-1994, South Africa is characterised by high levels of inequalities (racial, socioeconomic, gender, etc.) attributable to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid (Fongwa, 2019; Spreen & Vally, 2006; Unterhalter et al., 2019). For this reason, transformation is perceived by participants of this study as a "part of the bigger vision of the public good" (Prof Jones). The

data from participants in both Protea and Yellowwood Universities points to two kinds of transformation that advance the public agenda through higher education. Firstly, it is transformation within higher education institutions in accordance with the democratic imperatives of post-1994 South Africa, which leans more towards the intrinsic notion of the public good. The second one is the role that higher education plays in the transformation of society beyond the borders of the university, which echoes the instrumental notion of the public good.

It is well documented that prior to 1994, higher education in South Africa mainly benefited the white minority, marginalising the rest of the population (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Reddy, 2004; Sehoole, 2006). For this reason, as Prof Jones aptly captures, the "new higher education landscape needed to think about its public." In other words, the education system and its institutions needed to transform themselves, in terms of policies and practices, to serve a broader public, one that is more representative of the demographics of South Africa. This version of transformation came out very strongly from academics at Yellowwood University (Prof Jones, Prof Smith, Dr Zoziwa and Ms Randera). They spoke about how Yellowwood, as a historically white university, is transforming and needs to transform. In this way, the university's history seems to have influenced participants' perception of transformation as a form of the public good. These participants were mainly those close to the transformation processes, where there has been continuous engagement and discussions with government departments and communities trying to put transformation policies into practice. These policies aimed to diversify the student body by opening doors for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (mainly black students from working-class families). I discuss this aspect of transformation in detail later in this chapter under the theme of access.

The other aspect of transformation that participants identified included putting measures in place to support and facilitate the success of all students, transformation of the academic staff and institutional culture, decolonisation, and insourcing[13] of support service workers. For example, speaking about her work in the field of student academic development, Prof Jones argued that since the late 1980s, Yellowwood University acknowledged that the issue of failure

[13] In most South African universities, the support staff such those who work in clearning and security services were not directly hired by the university, rather they were oursourced to independent contractors. This meant they were not paid as musch as they would be if they were hired by the univity and they also did not have any of the benefits enjoyed by university staff. This was seen by the student movement as a neoliberal practice that is against the transformation agenda, which then created solidarity between student as support service workers during the #FeesMustFall protests.

of historically marginalised students was not indicative of a need to "fix" and assimilate them to the university, "but it was really the institution that needed to change." According to Ms Randera, assimilation was about initiating black students "into an entire system of thinking in terms of western epistemology. An entire colonial, and if you don't even wanna call it colonial, racist white supremacist way of thinking about the world and doing things." For this reason, the institution needed to transform itself in response to the diversity of students coming into it. In light of this need, Prof Jones argued, they have been working to "bring about change in the university system to address the injustices of the past", which involves facilitating a "change of values" among staff members, "improving the students' experience" and "trying to address that broader problem of barriers" that hinder student success. All these transformation issues are closely linked to the issues that were raised by the student movement, notably the #FeesMustFall Movement, as discussed in chapter two (Griffiths, 2019; Langa, 2017; Mlaba, 2021; Naicker, 2016).

The hope is that this would transform the university into a welcoming and enabling environment for students from all backgrounds. This is about doing what it takes to "make space for diversity, and that diversity is not a tick box and another racial ideology that says, oh because we have all these pigmentations in the room, we are now decolonised or transformed." (Ms Randera). Participants acknowledged that considerable progress had been made in this regard. However, they also believe more needs to be done to transform Yellowwood University (Prof Smith, Prof Jones, Ms Randera). Ms Randera, for example, put it this way, "In the historically white context there have been more and more black students, women students, people who do not fit that normative, queer students, disabled students. More space has been made for them through policy in these privileged elite spaces." The demands of student movements like the #RhodesMustFall and the #FeesMustFall demonstrated that more needs to be done to make the higher education experiences of historically marginalised students empowering and meaningful (Dlamini, 2019; Langa, 2017). It is also worth noting that some of the most intense confrontations during the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall demonstrations took place in historically white universities, where the colonial and apartheid legacies are more apparent (Langa, 2017).

For some participants, transforming the university meant diversifying the academic staff (Dr Getz, Dr Zoziwa, Ms Randera). This is about ensuring that the academic staff of a university is representative of the demographics of the student body and the country's population. As

demonstrated in chapter two, in South Africa, academia is still dominated by white (Male) academics (Albertus & Tong, 2019; DHET, 2021). According to Ms Randera, student movements have also raised the need for transformation at the level of the academic staff: "What black student movements were doing prior to FeesMustFall was saying, … "We don't just want no fees. We want to talk about the curriculum. We want to know why there's no black professor, full professor, women here." This comment demonstrates the influence of the political climate created by the #FeesMustFall protests on participants' views of the relationship between higher education and the public good. Ms Randera also argued that there is a slow pace of transformation at Yellowwood University to diversify the academic staff. She made an example about her department, which has about twenty-nine academic staff members, and only five are black. She claimed that the five black academics were appointed approximately two years before the interview. This suggests that universities need to be intentional about speeding up the pace of transformation in this regard.

Dr Getz also spoke about inclusivity as another higher education transformation issue. She made an example of the insourcing of "black service workers", which was one of the demands of the #FeesMustFall Movement in many universities in South Africa. For her, the "inclusion of them into the public of the university" is another way universities are transforming themselves into inclusive workplaces. In her view, insourcing allowed support service workers to become members of the university public, and it also gave access to all the benefits that university employees have. "The insistence that they are ours, that they belong, is part of the public good. It's part of that work of insisting that a public includes rather than divides and excludes", she said.

Another aspect of higher education transformation that emerged from the data is the issue of decolonisation. The decolonisation of higher education is a topical issue in South Africa since the #RhodesMustFall and the #FeesMustFall movements brought it back to the table (Albertus & Tong, 2019; Griffiths, 2019; Heleta, 2016; le Grange, 2018; Suelleen & Mkhize, 2018; Zembylas, 2018). However, it was surprising that only two participants, Prof Logan and Prof Mathosa, mentioned decolonisation as part of how universities in South Africa need it to transform themselves. Prof Mathosa believes that universities in South Africa need to offer a curriculum that is not "embedded in western scholarship." "Most of the theories that we teach our students were developed in relation to the realities in the global North, and they have done very well to speak to the realities there", he said. He believes that universities should offer a

curriculum that "actually speaks and is sensitive to the type of public that we are catering and the issue they are faced with". Participants at both universities acknowledged that there had been attempts to transform the curriculum through some of the department of higher education initiatives. However, as Prof Mathosa argues, "ultimately, it boils down to your lecturer, the person who delivers the curriculum." This still emphasises that the pedagogy that academics use in the classroom would also have to transform in line with the transformation of the curriculum. According to Prof Logan, a transformed curriculum will enable universities to produce "the kinds of people, the kind of students that transform society." This view links the transformation of society beyond the borders of the university to the transformation of the university for the public good, which participants see as part of higher education's contribution to the public good.

Prof Logan's view introduces the second facet of transformation that emerged in the data, which is the instrumental role that participants believe higher education plays and needs to play in the transformation of society beyond the borders of the university. As Prof Smith puts it, "[the] public good is about serving the public as a whole, and that in a context like South Africa means taking into account the incredible inequality and disadvantage that the South African society has been kind of characterised by." For Prof Hartman this transformation is about creating an "equal society", "egalitarian society". For Prof Smith it is about creating a "more ecologically aware society" and "reducing poverty and inequality." Participants believe that part of this is for universities to work for social justice (Prof Smith, Dr Gibbs, Prof Jones, Dr Gertz, Prof Logan). The involvement of some universities in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa is an example of the instrumental role that higher education plays in advancing the transformation agenda in the broader society. For example, Protea University is an institution that was instrumental in the anti-apartheid struggle (Dr Swan). As I will discuss later in this chapter, this facet of transformation is strongly connected to "community engagement" or "Social Responsiveness", which participants identified as another way higher education contributes to the public good.

Access

Participants of this study see higher education itself as a public good in so far as it is widely accessible. This echoes the intrinsic notion of higher education I discussed in the literature review (Locatelli, 2017; Unterhalter et al., 2018). Participants believe that there is a need to widen access to higher education, especially for historically marginalised black and working-

class members of the public, which captures the transformation imperative as articulated in the White Paper 3: A Program of Higher Education (1997). Ms Randera aptly captured this point very well when she said:

> The public good should be about making space for the people who've been most unfairly treated to be able to tackle and work against inequality themselves and structurally for people who don't get access to universities.

This implies that the preferential access to higher education given to the white minority during the colonial and apartheid regimes has necessitated the widening of access as a transformation mechanism in the democratic dispensation to ensure the inclusion of historically disadvantaged majority that was largely excluded. This is well documented in the literature, as I demonstrated in the literature review (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Sehoole & Adeyemo, 2016; Smit, 2012).

The colonial and apartheid regimes resulted in inequalities that continue to this day, and the demands of the #FeesMustFall movement, which emerged in 2015, as discussed in the literature review, signal the extent of these inequalities in the higher education space (Dlamini, 2019; Griffiths, 2019, 2019; Langa, 2017; Mlaba, 2021). Therefore, in this section, I argue that to maintain its public good character, higher education must be accessible to all members of the public. In so doing, I present two forms of access that I found in the data from both Protea and Yellowwood Universities. The first is formal access, which is more about qualifying and registering as a student in a university. Some scholars refer to this as "access as participation" (Akoojee et al., 2008; Smit, 2012). The second notion is substantive access, also called epistemological access (Morrow, 2009; Walker, 2020), which is about students' physical, cultural, and intellectual experiences and how these affect their outcomes or chances of success in higher education. Its emphasis on students' experience in higher education echoes the intrinsic notion of the public good, as discussed in the literature review (Badat, 2009; Locatelli Rita, 2017; Tilak, 2008).

Given South Africa's colonial and apartheid history and the inequalities inherited from these regimes, Participants put an emphasis on the need to widen formal access to higher education, particularly for the disadvantaged. Prof Mathosa and Dr Getz argued that there is a need to widen access to university for historically marginalised black and working-class students because of the country's history. Prof Mathosa argued that "the public good of higher education, first of all, is to make access to the university environment... Is to create access, especially for,

as I said, you know, those who are coming from disadvantaged institutions." Dr Getz argued that "If that space is only afforded to the middle class and wealthy kids, that immediately curbs what the public good is. So, there is a need for the kind of access into the university, through fees reduction and state provision."

Unlike Dr Getz, Dr Elba spoke about widening access using the example of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) that he created as his contribution to the public good. "The public good has always been in the forefront of what we do because of the access and the equity issues", he said. It was for this reason that he created the MOOC. He added:

> I'm gonna be the first in the academic development program to develop a MOOC, you know, which is a public resource. It is free, and that gets applauded by the department and by the university.

Given their open-access nature, MOOCs extend learning opportunities even to people who are not students at a university. Other participants echoed the significance of open access to knowledge as a public good. Dr Zoziwa and Prof Mathosa argued that higher education contributes to the public good when it codifies and disseminates the knowledge it produces in ways that make it accessible to a broader audience than those within higher education. This speaks to the idea of open access publishing, promoted by the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (García-Penalvo Carlos García de Fig, 2010).

The second form of access that emerged from the data is substantive access. Dr Zoziwa, Ms Randera, and Prof Jones from Yellowwood University argued that access is about more than just allowing students from disadvantaged backgrounds a space at university. They believe that it is also about creating an environment that enhances the experience of all students while giving them equal opportunities to succeed. They argued that it should not be merely about reaching equity requirements as it is sometimes the case for some historically white universities. They believe that having a diverse student body gives these universities a positive image, which presents them as transforming in accordance with the democratic ideals of post-1994 South Africa. As Dr Zoziwa suggested, historically white universities tend to brag about a diverse student body without considering how these students experience the university. "They are like, 'Gosh, look at our profile. Diversity', but what do you do with the students once they are here? For me, that refers to public good," she said.

Like Dr Zoziwa, Ms Randera argued that, as academics, they "support massification and opening up the university." She also believes that there has been significant progress in terms of access as participation. This is also evident in the literature (HESA, 2014; Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014; Wangenge-Ouma, 2012; Webbstock, 2016). "You can find the stats easily. Student numbers have gone up", she said. However, she pointed out that increasing formal access, "in particular for more people who didn't have access" without making it "a quality experience", does not do justice to the public good agenda. In other words, for Dr Zoziwa and Ms Randera, the university experiences of diverse students are a better indicator of the university's contribution to the public good than demographic diversity in headcount. Prof Jones made an emphasis on this point of students' experiences of higher education.

Prof Jones argued that access, as part of advancing the public good agenda in higher education, is "about improving the students' experience", "making sure that the student finish", and "trying to address that broader problem of barriers that many students feel." She added that over and above equity of access, which she believes is almost achieved, "what we do not have is equity of outcome." In other words, to ensure equity of outcomes, universities must be intentional about removing "barriers" to student success. According to Dr Zoziwa and Dr Elba, Academic Development Programs (ADPs) are one way of addressing barriers to student success at university. The idea of removing barriers echoes literature about access with success, which argues that there has been significant progress in terms of formal access since 1994. However, success rates remain skewed according to race (Akoojee et al., 2008; Lewin et al., 2014; Smit, 2012).

In Summary, the data presented in this section suggest that participants of this study perceive substantive access as offering a better indication of universities contribution to the public good. This is because substantive access is a precondition for student development, conscientisation and, eventually, graduation and social mobility. As I will show later, acquiring a university qualification increases the chances of social mobility for graduates and their families. Moreover, substantive success for historically marginalised black and working-class people is one of the indicators of transformation in a higher education system that is characterised by the legacy of colonialism and apartheid. The following section presents findings on student development as an aspect of higher education's contribution to the public good.

Student Development

Nine participants spoke about student development as higher education's contribution to the public good. This includes Dr Zoziwa, Prof Jones, Prof Logan and Prof Smith from Yellowwood University, Mr Dan, Prof Mathosa, Dr Swan, Mr Marty, and Dr Getz from Protea University. Their idea of student development includes developing professional skills, critical thinking skills, inculcation of values, and enhancing students' self-confidence. The words of Dr Zoziwa capture the essence of what many of these participants meant when they spoke about student development as a public good. "I think in terms of public good, it is about development… not development in the deficit way that we are now being accused of using for students…It is about the genuine development of an individual or groups of individuals", she said. In other words, according to Dr Zoziwa, the kind of student development that contributes to the public good does not adopt the "deficit model" that views disadvantaged students as lacking the cultural, academic, and economic resources that are necessary for academic success at university and, therefore, needing to be "fixed" and assimilated to the way the university works (Kessi, 2013; Nkambule, 2016; Smit, 2012b). Ideally, the approach to student development should recognise what students bring with them to the university and acknowledge what they need to succeed because they do not enter the university as empty vessels.

Prof Jones broke the notion of development down into what happens in the classroom, saying: "it's that students' recognition, the confidence, the skills that they acquire in that classroom that then become of a public good." Similarly, participants from Protea University spoke about student development as encompassing professional and critical thinking skills and values associated with giving back to one's community. Speaking about his contribution to students' development as a physics lecturer, Mr Dan said: "I try to get them to understand that university education is more than just getting a qualification. It is about developing yourself, critical thinking skills and all those kinds of things, all the kinds of skills that you require". Prof Mathosa, also speaking about his contribution to the public good, suggested that the public good of higher education is about developing students into decent human beings: "So that's really the kind of work that I do and, as I said, the joy to me is to see them come out of that and becoming decent human beings in their own right."

Dr Swan emphasised the need to inculcate values that are in line with the public good agenda, such as values that make students commit to addressing local problems and giving back to their communities. She argued that this is important "[b]ecause students might think that 'Once I

graduate, I'm gonna get a good job.' But that's not the end of it." "The reason why students are coming here [at the university], they should start thinking about 'I'm gonna go back to my community, and I'm gonna see what I can give back", she added. Similarly, Dr Getz believes that the public good is about developing graduates who will be committed to working towards a better society than the one characterised by racism and a history of violence. This suggested that student development is about "more than just professionalising people and training people in the set of skills that the society needs," but creating "generations of young people who expect more from our society and who are willing to think and work towards a society where we can overcome the violence of our history and the racism of our past." This view was echoed by other participants who believe that student development is more than just creating a skilled labour force for the country's economy. They claim that it is also about students becoming "intellectuals", "decent human beings" (Prof Mathosa) and "catalyst for change" (Dr Swan) who are committed to "giving back" (Dr Swan) to their communities, building a "better society" (Prof Jones, Prof Logan, Prof Smith).

Participants' views about student development echo two forms of arguments that emerged in the literature. Firstly, the argument about the intrinsic form of the public good. This is to say that the development of students in higher education enacts the public good associated with critical thinking, active citizenship, and reductions of prejudice (Locatelli, 2017; Marginson, 2011; Singh, 2011). Secondly, it echoes Walker and McLean's (2012, 2015) arguments about public-good professionalism. This is a normative approach to the development of professionals who "will be responsible agents with 'other-regarding' goals, aware of their obligation to enhance human development, democratic values, and social justice" (Walker & McLean, 2015, p. 63). Although student development takes place through teaching and learning, which is experiential and, therefore, can be considered as an intrinsic form of the public good, there was a sense that participants perceive it as not student development for its own sake but for social mobility, critical citizenship, and social change, which are all instrumental forms of the public good. This, therefore, suggests that student development is an intrinsic form of the public good that has instrumental externalities. The following section focuses on participants' perceptions of higher education's contribution to the social mobility of students and their families.

Social Mobility.

Participants from Protea and Yellowwood University perceive higher education as instrumental in giving students a better chance of social mobility when they graduate. The perceptions of

social mobility presented in this section mainly come from Prof Hartman, Prof Aeron and Mr Martin from Protea University, Prof Smith, Prof Jones and Dr Gibbs from Yellowwood University. According to these participants, social mobility involves improving the socioeconomic statuses of graduates and their families through employment and other benefits of higher education. For this reason, in this section, I argue that participants' views on social mobility express the instrumental notion of the public good by presenting higher education as an instrument of social mobility. I also argue that participants see enhancing students' social mobility as higher education's contribution to addressing some of the country's most pressing social problems attributable to the legacy of apartheid: unemployment, poverty, and inequality, as discussed in the literature review (Carpenter & Phaswana, 2021; Dlamini, 2019; Fongwa, 2019; Magubane, 2016; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019).

Participants claimed that acquiring a higher education qualification puts graduates in a better position to get "gainful employment" (Prof Hartman) or "better job[s]" in which they can earn "good salaries" (Prof Smith). This echoes a prevalent argument in literature, suggesting that graduate employment attributable to higher education increases their social status and lifetime earnings (Marginson, 2014; Scott, 1995). However, some scholars view this as returns on the investment that people make on education and, therefore, a private rather than public good (MacPherson & Schapiro, 1998; Perna, 2003; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; Shaw, 2010; Zemsky et al., 2005). Some of the participants in the present study acknowledged this view. They acknowledged that higher education helps graduate to "individually advance" (Mr Martin), that "a degree no doubt is gonna help somebody get a better job" and that it may "bring individual goods of some kind" (Prof Smith). However, they believe that in a context like South Africa characterised by unemployment, poverty and inequality, the benefits of higher education are not enjoyed individually but trickle down to graduates' immediate and extended family and beyond. In this way, higher education advances the public good, as Prof Jones aptly stated:

> So, in some sense, the public good is to ensure that everyone who comes into our institution is able to break the cycle of poverty or, if it's not poverty, to provide a new set of opportunities for themselves and obviously for their families or even for society. And if we can't do that, then we are contributing to the ruin of this country. (Prof Jones).

These views affirm an argument in the literature about the trickling down of benefits of higher education, which is most common, although not unique to, among black and first-generation graduates and has in the recent year been given the term 'black tax' (Carpenter & Phaswana,

2021; Fongwa, 2019; Magubane, 2016; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019). This argument suggests that through phenomena such as 'black tax' and 'the sandwich generation', graduate employment also serves the public good because its beneficiaries are much broader than the graduates themselves. Prof Jones also echoed this argument, claiming that when first-generation graduates from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds gain lucrative employment, they "upset", "challenge", and even "break" the cycle of poverty in their families. She believes that if higher education is not contributing to "breaking that cycle", it is "reproducing it". For this reason, she also maintained that there is a need for Yellowwood University, as a historically white university, to do more to ensure that students from underprivileged working-class backgrounds receive all the support they need to succeed. This invokes the same idea of ensuring substantive access or "access with success" discussed earlier. She said this because most students at Yellowwood University, unlike Protea University, come from privileged "middle-class" backgrounds and attended "good schools", and therefore, they do not need as much support as their underprivileged counterparts.

There was a sense that, given South Africa's apartheid past, there is a great need for higher education to contribute towards building an "equal society" (Prof Hartman) or, in Prof Smith's words, an "egalitarian society" because the disparities in this country are "shocking" (Prof Hartman). Prof Smith and Dr Gibbs argued that the public good is about egalitarianism and the role of higher education in society includes "trying to address the needs of the poor and to build a more egalitarian society" (Prof Smith). Similarly, Prof Aeron linked this to student development, arguing that the way to "reduce poverty and inequality" is for higher education to equip students with the skills in demand in the labour market.

These views suggest that the social mobility that higher education affords graduates when they are employed contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty in their families and, ultimately, the problem of inequality in society. This is what connects the notion of social mobility to transformation in the South African context. However, it must be acknowledged that participants' view on social mobility assume a universally accessible higher education. In a context where higher education is not accessible to all, the social mobility of the few who have access to higher education may reproduce and exacerbate the inequalities that participants of this study claim it addresses. Therefore, without universal access, social mobility is limited in the way and extent to which it serves the public good.

Conscientisation

The data collected from participants at both universities suggested that, over and above social mobility, higher education develops students for critical citizenship through conscientisation so that they may become agents of social change post-graduation. This is to say that in the process of teaching and learning, students are made aware of the social contradictions, inequalities, and injustices in society to become critical citizens who will contribute to social change. This indirectly relates to higher education's contribution to transformation in society beyond the borders of the university. Six Participants spoke about the conscientisation of students: Dr Gibbs, Dr Zoziwa, and Ms Randera from Yellowwood University, and Prof Mathosa, Dr Getz, and Mr Dan from Protea University. Some of these participants spoke about conscientisation or consciousness-raising as something that universities are already doing. Others suggested that they are not doing enough of it, yet others suggested that it is something universities still need to be intentional about doing. Nevertheless, they all perceive conscientisation as a significant aspect of higher education's contribution to the public good.

This theme of conscientisation expresses the intrinsic notion of the public good as described earlier in this chapter. The views that participants expressed about conscientisation echo the definition in Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This suggests that it is an intellectual and cognitive experience. For this reason, it is an intrinsic form of the public good. Evidence demonstrates this in participants' responses from both Yellowwood and Protea Universities. Participants suggested that conscientisation involves helping students "become more conscious about everything" and think "about education as not neutral" but as "having the possibility for liberation, emancipation, freedom, [and] social justice" (Ms Randera). It is about "questioning the economic basis", "social structures", and "prejudices" that exist in society (Dr Gibbs). According to Dr Getz, it is "an educational experience" that gives students "an opportunity to learn and grow their own consciousness such that they can be able to think critically about the worlds that they are entering and that they cannot just accept shit." She also suggested that it is about "getting them to see the structural violence in our society and getting them to expect more and understand their lives as related to the project of change." discussion, criticism, critical debate, and opinion formation.

The views of participants (Prof Mathosa, Dr Getz, Ms Randera) from both universities suggested that students become conscientised when the classroom becomes a public sphere, in Marginson's (2011) political version of the public good, where discussion, critical debate, and opinion formation about social and structural issues take place. In participants' view, such a classroom environment is created when lecturers confront their students with "material that make them see their own realities" (Prof Mathosa) and when the classroom becomes a space to "critique the society we have and imagine the society we want" (Dr Getz). Ms Randera shared a similar view as Dr Getz. She spoke mainly about students' conscientisation around issues of race in historically white universities and the role that the emergence of student movements like the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall has played in critical consciousness-raising. She argued that "there is a criticality that emerges at the historically white institutions around the black-led student movements." She believes this has turned the classroom into "a space where people are more willing to speak up because there is also a language that puts the question of racism back on the table." Such a classroom environment meets the "need to instil in students this kind of behaviour of criticality, being sceptical of certain things, questioning certain things", which Mr Dan pointed out.

Mr Dan does not believe that the university and its academics are doing enough critical consciousness-raising. He does not think all academics "are actually trying to get the students to be more aware of the situations that surround them" because in the sciences, his discipline, they "usually focus on getting you ready as a scientist." In other words, they focus more on students' professional development without conscientizing them about social issues and the realities of the society in which they will work upon graduation. However, Mr Dan believes that it is necessary to conscientise students because "a scientist should also be aware of all the other issues as well." He said, for this reason, he tries his best to use the classroom as a space to help students be critical of the status quo and "start looking at their own communities where they live and start looking at them differently, and perhaps see that they could be part of the solution."

Prof Mathosa believes a university that contributes to the public good is a university that also trains students to have "a consciousness that tells them that my success as an individual should not just be enjoyed in isolation from the rest of the population, especially the population which we live in, which is pretty much disadvantaged." This articulates the perception that giving back to the community is one of the ways in which graduates can advance the public good.

However, like Mr Dan, Prof Mathosa believes that "our universities are not there at the moment", they are not yet orientating students towards "the consciousness to give back" and thinking about their success as something to benefit the broader public. He argued that this is because universities in South Africa "are not there yet because they are still embedded in western scholarship", and therefore, do not expose students to the gravity of local realities.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that what academics hope to achieve through critical consciousness-raising is to produce graduates who will be public good professionals– graduates who are in a position and have the knowledge, skills and values that enable them to alleviate inequalities, poverty and enhance the well-being of other people (Walker & McLean, 2015). This is a calibre of professionals who "use the benefits of education to help others, and therefore to contribute to the public good and the expansion of well-being, agency and democratic freedoms" (East et al., 2014). For this reason, I argued that though conscientisation is an intrinsic form of higher education's contribution to the public good, it also plays an instrumental role in producing Public Good Professionals. Participants' views about conscientisation and its impact on students reflect a few professional capabilities that Walker and McLean (2010) claim are important for public good professionals. The professional capability that is more relevant to critical consciousness-raising is the one they refer to as 'Knowledge, Imagination and Practical Skills', which among other things, is about "being enquiring, critical, evaluative, [and] being problem-solvers" (Walker & McLean, 2010, p. 857). This is evident in that participants of this study see conscientisation as a significant public good contribution because it infuses students with values that are in line with the public good agenda. These include "striving for a common humanness" (Dr Gibbs), "the consciousness to give back" (Prof Mathosa), "social responsibility" (Dr Swan), and being "part of the solution" (Mr Dan) and a "catalyst for change" (Dr Swan).

While most participants' views, as outlined above, pertain to students' conscientisation, Dr Zoziwa spoke about conscientisation from a different angle. She is of the view that there is a lot done to conscientise students, but very little to conscientise academics who are not aware of the types of students who enter the university and the needs that these students have. "We need to do a whole lot in terms of staff development, conscientise academics to say, Look! This is the kind of student who comes in; this is the kind of support they need," she said. This is an interesting view considering the change in the demographic composition of the student body, particularly in historically white universities, due to widening access for students from

historically marginalised racial groups and working-class backgrounds. Dr Zoziwa believes there is a need to conscientise the academic staff about the students' realities and needs. She suggested that this need is evident in how some academics perceive student academic development services on campus as a "very quick-fix solution" for students' under-preparedness and in the deficit perspective that these academics take in their interactions with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The deficit perspective views students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds as lacking the cultural, academic, and economic resources that are necessary for academic success at university and, therefore, needing to be 'fixed' and assimilated into the way the university works (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Collins & Millard, 2013; Kessi, 2013; McMillan & Barrie, 2012; Smit, 2012).

In summary, participants deemed conscientisation to be higher education's contribution to the public good because it makes students aware of contradictions, inequalities, and injustices in society. It also inculcates values in line with the public good agenda, hoping that students will become public good professionals upon graduation. The data shows that participants acknowledge the significance of conscientisation in advancing the public good agenda through higher education. However, there is still a need for universities in South Africa to be deliberate about conscientizing both students and the academic staff. Given participants' claim that conscientizing students help them perceive themselves as "agents of change" or "part of the solution" to the inequalities and injustices that our county is facing, I conclude that the conscientisation of students ultimately contributes to transformation beyond the borders of the university. This is an essential public good contribution in a country like South Africa, which has a history of colonialism and apartheid from which most of the inequalities and injustices we face today emanate.

Community Engagement

Community engagement, which some participants referred to as social responsiveness, emerged quite strongly in the data from both universities as another way the university contributes to the public good. Community engagement can be understood as the collaboration between the university and the community (including the private sector and civil society) to enrich scholarship, teaching and learning and to strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility to address critical societal issues and contribute to the public good (McNall et al., 2009). According to participants of this study, it plays an instrumental role in social transformation and making the world a better place, which they believe to be the goal of public

good. Prof Smith argued that “there are direct ways in which universities can sort of relate to communities as well and engage in what we call engaged scholarship and community engagement, social responsiveness and so on.” This captures very well the argument that the university can and should do more community engagement. This is the connecting thread between the views that were shared by all the nine participants who spoke about community engagement. They maintained that more could be done through research and partnerships between universities, community organisations and other stakeholders. These include Prof Mathosa, Prof Aeron, Dr Swan, Dr Getz, and Mr Martin from Protea University, and Prof Smith, Prof May, Dr Zoziwa and Dr Elba from Yellowwood University.

Some participants made examples of community engagement projects that they do as individuals and those they do as initiatives by their departments at the university. For example, Dr Swan, a Mathematics Senior Lecturer at Protea University, spoke about a teacher enrichment project that she coordinates, which is one of the community engagement initiatives of the Mathematics Department at Protea University. In this project, they work with mathematics teachers from schools in the community around the university to help them improve their teaching. In her own words, she said, “we help reinforce the content that the teachers must teach at school. We help them with that content. You know, there is a crisis with the content of mathematics that our teachers are not so clued up on.” In this way, they contribute to improving mathematics teaching and learning in schools, which is for the public good.

Prof Smith also runs a program through the education department at Yellowwood University, which aims to help principals improve their schools. “So, we have, for example, communities of practice among school principals trying to improve the work that they are doing as principals in schools”, she said. This program “tries to bring in occupational health, speech therapists, a range of different disciplines in the university that can help a community of schools actually improve what they are doing in schools”, she said. Unlike Dr Swan and Dr Smith, Dr Getz made examples of community engagement initiatives that she does in her individual capacity as part of her political activism. She works with community activists “that are wanting to rethink and reboot street committees and civics and think about how to take back the streets of [their neighbourhoods] without using the police but by actually using community, organising and community projects.” This is a good example of community work that academics do, not as representatives of their universities, but on their capacities as citizens committed to advancing the public good agenda using the skills and the resources they have at their disposal.

Although there are examples of community engagement initiatives from both universities, most participants suggested that this aspect of higher education's public good is "neglected and looked down upon" (Prof Mathosa). For this reason, participants believe academics at universities in South Africa need to do more to improve in this area of the public good. In the words of Dr Zoziwa, academics should "get their hands dirty doing community work" instead of only focusing on "theorising" about communities in the articles and books they write. She believes many of them do not do community engagement because they focus more on research, "sitting in the office and chucking out the publications." She acknowledged that research "is an important aspect of the work." However, she believes that "in terms of public good, you need to get your hands dirty. You need to go to schools. You need to go to, for us, especially in education and development; you need to go to where it's hard." For her, this means academics "need to form collaborations with schools, more partnerships" instead of just "theorising" about them. Prof Mathosa echoed Dr Zoziwa's views about academics' preferring research over community engagement. He suggested that at Protea University, there is little community engagement because it is not valued the same way as research and teaching even though it is one of the key performance areas (KPAs) for academics. He believes that it is undermined. "As an academic, [in] promotion, we look at your teaching, research, and supervision and community engagement. I think the community engagement is the one that is always neglected and looked down upon."

Speaking about his observation at Yellowwood University, Dr Elba said: "We [academics] at [Yellowwood University] don't do it. We've got no contact with the community." He argued that what he sees the university do is mostly community services provided by students as part of field training; they need to meet the requirements for their degrees. "In terms of social responsiveness, I mean, we have these busses that go out to the communities, the Student Health and Welfare Organisation. They go out into the community, more things like that. And that's for students", he said. In other words, "There is a lack of engagement with communities as far as academics are concerned" (Dr Elba). However, Prof Mathosa also defended academics, saying that doing less community engagement does not negate the public good contribution they make through on-campus work.

> People think that for you to be seen as engaged or as doing social good, as you're putting it, you need to go out there and service the community and work with NGOs, but we are doing a lot of that through our teaching. We are doing a lot of work through our supervision, mentorship and all the kind of work that we do in the university. (Prof Mathosa).

The findings above suggest that participants perceive universities in South Africa, and individual academics within these institutions, as not having a firm commitment to community engagement or social responsiveness. It echoes an argument made by Shawa (2020, p. 105), who argued that in South African universities, community engagement "is most often viewed as voluntary and perhaps even peripheral." The notion of community engagement that emerged from participants' views appears to be a bit problematic, mainly because it is centred around the notion of help. Furthermore, it emphasises community engagement targeted at black working-class communities and seems to exclude white and middle-class communities. There are several possible reasons for this.

Firstly, it could have been a performance they were doing to give me something they thought I could relate to as a black student. Secondly, it could also be a manifestation of the social desirability bias, where participants, as members of the middle class, say things to be seen as pro-black and pro-poor, in a moment where the #FeesMustFall Movement had shone a spotlight on the struggles of mainly black students from working-class backgrounds. Thirdly, it could have been a performance they were putting up for me as a researcher and a black student who may relate to the struggles of black people and therefore perceive participants in a good light if they demonstrate concern for and interest in the wellbeing of black working-class communities. Lastly, it could be based on the historical disadvantage and marginalisation of black communities and the resulting need to address these issues as part of the transformation imperative of the post-apartheid dispensation.

However, in my view, there are many community engagement initiatives that universities can do with these communities to address the issues facing South Africa, even though these initiatives would be different from the ones done in black working-class communities. These could be oriented toward changing cultures of racism and inequalities that persist in South Africa. These issues highlight that the multifaceted nature of what working as a public good academic comprises is not a readily accessible narrative. Participants' focus on black working-class communities is a placeholder for a deeper engagement with these issues.

Knowledge Production

Participants perceive knowledge as a public good and producing it through research as an aspect of higher education's contribution to the public good. They believe higher education has an instrumental role as a "generator of knowledge" through research, which "needs to have as

its core focus, social justice and public good" (Prof Logan). It must be "principled knowledge production" (Prof Smith) that can "improve lives" of people, "starting with the most marginalised" (Dr Gibbs), which "makes our world a better place and knowledge…for those that suffer" (Prof Logan). Ms Randera captured the essence of most participants' views about knowledge as a public good.

> We have to understand knowledge as a public good, knowledge itself, the production of knowledge as a public good for the public. In other words, socially relevant, not just tenure, getting permanency, not publishing something so you can get a subsidy so that your department can in the blank and not have a bad balance sheet. That knowledge is about dealing with the questions of inequality, poverty, joblessness, racism, sexism and violence. The idea of technology and innovation should be about making the world a better place for everyone. (Ms Randera).

In the above quote, Ms Randera foregrounds the need to produce knowledge that addresses social problems and make the world a better place. This echoes the views expressed by other participants in the study. Dr Gibbs, for example, argued that the knowledge that higher education produces must "necessarily enhance the kind of understanding of the world so that we can improve the world, and that means improving the lives of everybody on the planet." Prof Logan concurs. "My personal understanding of the university has always been that it's providing a level of knowledge that empowers us to both think about society but also think about how do we contribute to making the changes in the world", he said. In Prof Smith words, knowledge production only serves the public good when it engages "with the key, pressing problems of our time and the problems both specific to South African as well as more international or global kinds of problems." Like Ms Randera and Prof Smith from Yellowwood University, most participants from Protea University (Dr Swan, Mr Martin, Prof Mathosa, Prof Hartman), emphasised the need for higher education to produce "locally relevant" research. By this, they are referring to researching local problems and producing knowledge that can provide a better understanding of and help address those problems.

Dr Swan and Mr Dan suggested that knowledge and its production are sometimes used for individual self-advancement and profit-making, which they deemed to be contrary to the public good agenda. However, like all the other participants, their views about graduates imply that their individual career advancement is a form of the public good of higher education. Dr Swan said: "I see the research more as a selfish thing." Putting it differently, Mr Dan claimed that "People are doing things for themselves, not for the greater population." This is a contradiction

because academics are graduates themselves, with families and career aspirations like all graduates that the university produces. It seems to be a double standard that academics' career advancement is seen as selfish, whereas graduates who work outside of the university are seen as contributing to the public good.

Dr Swan's view suggests that academics' their work only serves the public good when it does not produce any individual benefits for them, which presents a very simplistic notion of the public good and treats the notion of public and private as static. However, the public good is more complex than that. We also know from the literature (Kaul & Mendoza, 2003; Marginson, 2007) that this conception of the public good does not help because activities such as education often oscillate between private and public and vice versa. In other words, the private externalities, in the form of individual career advancement, resulting from academics' research work does not negate the public good contribution they make through knowledge production. Rather, it could be seen as more multifaceted.

In summary, participants' emphasis on the role that knowledge plays in addressing local and global social problems, improving lives of the marginalised, and making the world a better place, connects knowledge for the public good, in the instrumental sense, to the notion of transformation beyond the borders of the university, which I argue is at the heart of participants' conception of the public good of higher education. Moreover, this emphasis on the instrumental role of knowledge associates public good with useful knowledge, often produced through applied research, rather than knowledge for its own sake, which is often produced through blue skies research. Therefore, for participants of this study, knowledge for the public good is more valuable than knowledge as a public good. Knowledge for the public good refers to knowledge that can be used for economic, social, and other purposes, which participants of this study advocate. This is also evident in their views about the role they believe knowledge plays in economic growth and development, as explained in the following section.

Economic Growth and Development

According to participants of this study, higher education plays an instrumental public good role in economic growth and development by producing a skilled workforce, capitalisation of knowledge, expanding technology and innovation, and keeping up with the fourth industrial revolution. Two participants from Protea University spoke about higher education for economic growth, whereas three from Yellowwood University spoke about higher education

for economic development. Even though economic growth and economic development are sometimes used interchangeably, there is a distinction between the two, as discussed in chapter three (Brinkman, 1995). Participants' perceptions on this issue echo literature about higher education contributing to economic growth and development (Altbach, 2013; Cloete & Maassen, 2015; Valero & Van Reenen, 2016).

Prof Aeron and Prof Hartman argued that higher education should be instrumental in South Africa's economic growth. They suggested that higher education should serve the public good through capitalisation of knowledge, innovation in the manufacturing sector, and joining in and keeping up with the fourth industrial revolution – extraordinary technological advancement such as artificial intelligence, automation, digitization and hyperconnectivity. For example, Prof Hartman said, "In South Africa, I think there is no doubt that we have to still grow." When I asked him what he meant by growth, he responded, "Economically, I don't know what to say. The GDP must go up necessarily. We have to still grow." His reference to the growth in GDP is evidence that he is speaking about economic growth rather than economic development. His view also suggests that the economy is not growing, at least not fast enough, and he believes higher education has the potential to change that.

Prof Aeron shared a similar view. He believes that the country's economy is not growing fast enough because higher education is not doing enough to meet the skills needs of the forever-changing market. "I think the market moves quickly, and education moves at a much slower pace because of bureaucracy. It's just the nature of the business, I think, which is education", he said. He also argued that higher education's failure to keep up with the demands of the changing markets makes it unlikely for it to "serve the economy the way we want it to." By 'serving the economy', he refers to producing knowledge and graduates that meet the demands of the markets. The emphasis that Prof Aeron and Prof Hartman make on the need for higher education to contribute to economic growth is based on the assumption that the benefits of economic growth will result in better lives for all. Prof Hartman, for example, believes that "if we can solve the economic problems" by growing the GDP of this country, "we can solve a lot of the other social issues we have as well." This assumes that there will be a trickle-down effect of the benefits when the GDP grows. However, as discussed in chapter three, the literature shows that the benefits of economic growth do not always trickle down to all members of the public (Bloom et al., 2006; Jerven, 2011; Midgley, 1995, 1997; Pauw et al., 2006). Moreover, given that I collected the data for this study prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic,

participants' confidence in the potential of economic growth to address poverty, unemployment, and inequality does not take into account the economic impact of the lockdown implemented in 2020 and 2021 in attempt to curb the spread of the coronavirus (Azubuike et al., 2021; Khambule, 2021; Mhlanga & Moloi, 2020; Posel et al., 2021).

Dr Gibbs also pointed out some of the issues that arise when the focus is on economic growth. He suggested that this often benefits the elite minority. "If higher education's task is simply to generate profit for multinationals, or to produce publications so that your career flourishes, if it is seen in those narrow dimensions, then we are nothing more than an education factory", he said. He associates this with the idea of the knowledge economy, which dominates some debates about the capitalisation of knowledge (Altbach, 2013; Peters, 2007). In this way, he critiques how knowledge is used to benefit the elite instead of benefiting the greater society.

> It's like a knowledge economy. I don't believe in something called a knowledge economy. I think the two are contradictions in terms. You can't have a knowledge economy. You have knowledge for the greater benefit of society. Some of it is economic in terms of output, but a lot of it is social. (Dr Gibbs).

Dr Gibbs' view was echoed by Ms Randera in her comment about innovation and technology. She believes that "The idea of technology and innovation should be about making the world a better place for everyone. I don't think that that's the orientation of what the university is doing." She argued that it mostly serves "the private interests" of those that are providing "funding." These may include the multinational companies that Dr Gibbs referred to.

Unlike Prof Hartman and Prof Aeron, Prof Jones spoke about economic development rather than economic growth. "So, I know there are UK colleagues who say you shouldn't talk about higher education for economic development. I think in this context, it's critical. You can't separate those things out. People need jobs; they need good jobs", said Prof Jones. Here, she foregrounds the contextual differences between the UK, a first-world developed county, and South Africa, a third-world developing country. She suggests that these contextual differences determine whether higher education for economic development is a public good or not, and she believes that in the South African context, it is. This echoes the emphasis of some scholars of higher education and the public good place on contextual differences (Letizia, 2017; Nixon, 2011). These suggest that a public good in one context may not be seen as such in another context.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed participants' conception of the public good, which included access with success, student development, social mobility, student conscientisation, community engagement, knowledge production, and economic growth and development. In discussing these conceptions, I have also argued that the notion of transformation is at the heart of participants' conceptions of the public good of higher education. In my view, these conceptions of the public good are strongly influenced by the transformation imperative of post-1994 South Africa, a topical issue in public debates sparked by the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests at the time of data collection for this study. This influence of the transformation imperative makes the history of South Africa, as mapped out in chapter two, particularly salient in how participants understand the relationship between higher education and the public good. Even though, because of the limitations of my sampling procedure, the participants I interviewed were academics who have a strong connection to transformation issues, their perceptions illuminate more detailed and interconnected understandings of the relationships of higher ed and the public good than is often set out in the literature. To further this analysis, in the following chapter, I zoom into the micro-level of the relationship between higher education and the public good through participants' understanding of academics' role in higher educations' contribution to the public good.

CHAPTER SIX

Academics' Role in Higher Education's Contribution to the Public Good of Higher Education.

In this chapter, I discuss participants' perceptions of the roles that academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good. I discuss these according to seven themes that emerged from the data:1. Advocating change within the university and in communities beyond the borders of the university. 2. Conscientisation, in the Freirean sense (Freire, 2000a), of both students and academics such that they may become agents of change in the university and beyond. 3. Providing support particularly to the underprivileged and historically marginalised students and academics of colour to achieve access with success for students and to address the underrepresentation of academics of colour in the academy. 4. Role modelling for students what it means to be a public good professional. 5. Producing knowledge as a public good. 6. Producing, disseminating, and teaching instrumental knowledge for the public good. 7. Conflicting roles. These themes, in the main, support my main argument about the transformation imperative of post-1994 South Africa being at the heart of participants' conceptualisation of the public good of higher education. In discussing these different themes, I argue that academics play multiple roles that are either overlapping, complementary or conflicting and are engaged in a range of forms of enactment. These roles include teaching, research and supervision, community engagement, activism, public intellectualism, mentoring and role modelling.

Advocating Change

The theme of advocating change emerged strongly in association with activism, which participants described as contributing to the public good in the form of transformation, social responsiveness, or community engagement. Six participants (Ms Randera, Dr Gibbs, Prof May and Prof Smith from Yellowwood University, and Mr Martin and Dr Getz from Protea University) spoke about academic activism as advocating change within and beyond the borders of the university. This was best captured in the description of an activists' work provided by Ms Randera: "My understanding of activists' work is being critical of the status quo and speaking against injustices when I see it", she said. The only thing Ms Randera did not capture is that activists' work also involves acting against injustices. As it is in Freire's (2000) notion of conscientisation and praxis, speaking against injustices must be accompanied by

actions aimed at addressing these injustices. As Dr Getz aptly stated, an activist academic is an "academic that can see that structure and be willing to act on it when the possibility of struggle around it exist." In Freire's (2000) terms, seeing the structure results from conscientisation or consciousness-raising, but acting against it is practice, and the two cannot be separated. This is evident in the examples of the advocacy work that some participants claimed to do and have done as activist academics.

One example came from those who spoke about their active involvement in and solidarity with the struggle of the #FeesMustFall movement that emerged in 2015 as part of their activism (Ms Randera, Mr Martin, and Dr Getz). Dr Getz believes that some academics got involved "because they understood the student's struggle to be about retaining the public character of the university, requiring the state to invest in universities such that they don't slowly privatise." The #FeesMustFall movement emerged when Ms Randera was in the early stages of her PhD journey and had a huge influence on her PhD research project. "I will always be an activist", Ms Randera asserted, "my mind and my mouth were opened more by what happened in the student movement." The #FeesMustFall movement primarily fought for access through free education and the transformation of higher education, including decolonisation (Langa, 2017). However, as stated in chapter 5, participants did not seem to hold the view that free education, which was one of the primary demands of the #FeesMustFall movement, was to achieve widened access. None of them mentioned free education in talking about their solidarity with the #FeesMustFall movement.

Another example that associates the role of academics with advocating change within the university came from Dr Getz. She argued that when she was the head of the politics department in one of the Historically white universities in South Africa, she made it her mission to advocate for the transformation of the academic staff in her department.[14] When she started working at this university, "there were no black people in the department", but she left it as "a majority black department." She believes "it's important that historically white universities have many more black staff." "Historically white universities, I think, should be 'blackening.' They should be hiring blacks. There shouldn't be places for elite white people. I guess this goes somewhat to the question of the public good," she said emphatically. This suggests that her view is that academics in managerial positions must advocate and facilitate this transformation of the academic staff. This view links the role of academics and the notion of the public good

[14] This was a department white dominated department at a historically white university in South Africa.

to the transformation imperative. The under-representation of academics of colour in the academy is one of the issues that have necessitated transformation in higher education in South Africa and other countries with similar histories, such as the USA (Coe et al., 2020; Guzmán, 2019; Naicker, 2016).

The last example of academics advocating change within the university came from Mr Martin. He spoke about how he and other academics have been involved in advocacy work and "discussions around issues like curriculum, around issues like student hunger", which resulted in significant initiatives put in place by Protea University to transform the curriculum and fight student hunger on campus. These examples associate the role of academics in higher education's contribution to the public good with advocating change within the university, which positions the transformation imperative at the heart of participants' conceptualisation of the public good as it relates to higher education.

The theme of advocating change also emerged in relation to the public intellectual role of academics, which was also described as somewhat intertwined with the activist role. According to participants of this study, this serves the public good in the form of social responsiveness, as discussed in the previous chapter, where academics collaborate with stakeholders from outside the university to bring about change in communities and society at large (Dr Gibbs, Dr Getz, Prof Smith, and Ms Randera). For example, Dr Gibbs works with different "trade unions" and "reading clubs" grappling with different social issues, and he sees this as part of his "political volition." Prof Smith and her colleagues are "working as advocates for different perspectives in language literacy" engaging with different stakeholders, including "government departments, schools, curriculum advisors" about changing "attitudes" and "practices" towards language and literacy. Finally, Ms Randera works with a network of "academics, high school students, university students, NGOs, social movements people", and "with people who are in communities who are organising shut down movements and land movements, social movement staff." She acknowledged that the university recognises this as social responsiveness, which is one of the key performance areas for academics. However, she argued that this is not the reason she is involved in activism beyond the university: "I do it because I see that as my function to the public good." she said. This statement sounded like a performance and manifestation of the social desirability bias, a way in which she tried to distinguish herself from those she deems not to be committed to serving the public good.

Prof Aeron and Mr Dan spoke about advocating for social change through public intellectualism as something academics should be doing rather than something they are already doing. For example, Prof Aeron argued that when the country has to "deal with issues", we often "see politicians in the news talking emotionally about stuff" instead of academics. He believes academics "have a role to play there" because they are "independent and have academic freedom", and they can provide informed and objective commentary on the social issues that the country is facing. Mr Dan concurs, arguing that "academics should be more vocal with public policies … I don't see a lot of academics voicing their opinions on these kinds of issues unless they're asked to." In my view, what is implicit in Prof Aron's and Mr Dan's comments is an assumption that academics are unlimited in their capacity. They present an expectation that academics should do more, which they do not seem to meet. They also do not acknowledge that: firstly, not all academics can be public intellectuals; secondly, many academics are already overloaded by the work they do in teaching, research, leadership and administration on campus, for which they are often not sufficiently remunerated (Chan et al., 2021; Ntshoe et al., 2008; Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001).

Lastly, the theme of advocating change also emerged from examples that Dr Getz made of how she has brought together her research interests, political activism, public intellectualism, and social responsiveness in an attempt to bring about change in communities. She argued that after realising that as academics, they "have an obligation beyond [their] own research projects to a much broader polity", she started doing more work outside of the university with "social movements" and "organisation…working in different communities in the city.' She said this was inspired by the need she felt to reconceptualise her research work "as not simply a diagnostic exercise" of writing about issues, "but research as invested and involved in producing the kind of world that I want." "So, part of it is speaking to media about my particular research projects," she said. This is a form of public intellectualism. Dr Getz does participatory action research with different social movements and community organisations. She argued that doing this allows her to "change the world in the process of understanding it." She made an example of a project she was working on at the time of the interview:

> I'm now there starting a research project, which is partly a research project but also partly a way of working with a new group of activists that are wanting to rethink and reboot street committees and think about how to take back the streets of [the neighbourhood] without using the police but by actually by using community, organising and community projects. (Dr Getz).

In this project, she was working with community activists, "tracking their progress", "bringing mediators to do training with them", "linking them up with other movements", and providing "support and training work on political education." This exemplifies how different academic roles can complement each other to advance the public good agenda, which is strongly associated with the transformation imperative, as discussed in the previous chapter.

In this section, I have discussed the theme of advocating change within and beyond the borders of the university in relation to multiple roles that, according to participants of this study, academics play in higher educations' contribution to the public good. These roles include activism, public intellectualism, and research. I have highlighted how these roles can complement each other in advancing the public good agenda. Moreover, I alluded to the significance of considering the limited capacity of academics, the realities of work overload and insufficient remunerations in a discussion of what more they should be doing for the public good. We ought to acknowledge that academics cannot play every public good role there is. Different academics play different roles, based on their position in the academy, their interests and expertise, which contributes to the public good in one way or another. It must also be noted that advocating for change, whether within or beyond the borders of the university, needs to be underpinned by critical consciousness of the status quo, injustices, inequalities, and social structures that necessitate the social change one is advocating. This is well articulated in Paulo Freire's discussion of critical consciousness and praxis in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which I also discussed in the literature review chapter (Freire, 2000). This leads to the theme of conscientisation, which also emerged in relation to the multiple roles that academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good.

Conscientisation

In the data collected at both universities, the theme of conscientisation emerged quite strongly in relation to teaching as a public good role of academics. According to participants of this study, it is the role of academics as teachers to conscientize the students they teach. They understand part of this as helping them become "critical thinkers" (Pro Jones). According to Prof Smith, to conscientise students as a lecturer, "you expose your students to different perspectives", in so doing, "get them to think more deeply about their own practices", thus, producing "critically thinking students and graduates." According to Prof Mathosa, conscientizing students as a lecturer involves "confront[ing] them with material that makes them see their own realities immediately." He argued that to do this in practice, he ensures that

in his modules, “there is a lot more African-oriented scholarship.” His view is that African scholarship speaks directly to realities in Africa and Western scholarship speaks to realities in the west. This view is consistent with the call for decolonisation of higher education that resurfaced in the past few years following the emergence of the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movements, as discussed in the literature review (Langa, 2017; Suelleen & Mkhize, 2018).

Another example of how academics’ role as lecturers can contribute to the conscientisation of students came from Prof May. She suggested that she conscientizes her engineering students through the course she teaches, which is about “citizenship and citizen knowledge.” As part of this course, she takes her students out on a “city walk” to see “different historical sites of memory and what their meanings are for social justice and issues of inequality.” She believes this allows for the production of what she calls a “new professional”—engineers who will go into the “community” and the “workplace” not only with their “technical expertise” but with “the knowledge of navigating the public” as well. Her idea of a new professional invokes the notion of the Public Good Professional, which I discussed in the literature review (East et al., 2014; McLean & Walker, 2012; Walker & McLean, 2010). This view was also echoed by Prof Logan, Dr Swan, and Mr Dan.

According to Prof Logan, being a lecturer is about more than just “teaching students about the knowledge that they need for jobs.” He argued that it is about “contributing, in some way to a form of learning that makes the world a better place” by providing students with knowledge that “empowers” them to “think about society” and how they can make “changes in the world.” Dr Swam claims to be doing the same in her teaching:

> I’m trying also to let my students be aware [that], ‘yes, we want you to get a good job, but you must also think of your community because you’re probably one of the very few people in your community who are embarking on tertiary studies.’ (Dr Swan).

Dr Swan believes that this communicates a “sense of involvement”, and it helps “students understand their situation and have a greater commitment to wanting to do something about the situation and not only for themselves but for the broader community.” Like Dr Swan, Mr Dan argued that he tries his best to conscientise his first-year students. “I try to get the students to be more aware of the things that they’re actually doing at university”, he said. He believes that this is important for the public good because “they’re doing science, but science is not in a box…it’s attached to all other things like the environment, socio-economic circumstances.

There are also ethical issues involved in science." He hopes that this will make them graduates who look at their communities "differently" to see "that they could be part of the solution and not depend on some other people to bring the solution to them." The emphasis on the idea that critically conscious graduates will contribute to bringing about change in their communities and society at large signals the transformation imperative, which is at the heart of participants' conceptualisation of the public good of higher education, as I argued in the previous chapter.

Dr Gibbs and Ms Randera also spoke about how they conscientise the students they teach. For them, conscientisation involves taking a radical approach to teaching. Though Ms Randera had been a lecturer for a little over a year at the time of the interview, she argued that she and other lecturers in her department take a "radical" approach to education, which makes their adult students "conscious about everything." For her, this is an approach that sees "education as not neutral" and as "having the possibility for liberation, emancipation, freedom, [and] social justice." This echoes Freire's notion of critical consciousness-raising (Freire, 2000). Moreover, Ms Randera also suggested that conscientizing students involve creating a classroom environment that allows for critical engagement about issues, ideas and concepts such as "racism", "white heteropatriarchy", "matrices of power", and "structural discrimination":

> The classroom becomes a space where people are more willing to speak up because there is also a language that puts the question of racism back on the table. And obviously, with racism and with the black student movements having black radical feminism as part of the canon of what they are looking to for ideas and meaning-making and concepts … So, for me, teaching in that kind of classroom and having come out myself from an experience of being woken up and being given the confidence to say, 'No, it's not only me who has this feeling.' (Ms. Randera).

She claims that the "criticality that emerges at the historically white institutions around the black-led student movements [such as the] RhodesMustFall" has foregrounded the necessity of this kind of classroom environment.

There was also a sense that conscientisation is not only for students, as I have discussed it so far, but also for academics. For example, Prof Mathosa found that the academic profession exposes one to the reality of one's society, which is a form of conscientisation. "It's a profession that humbles you in many ways", he said. "It gets you to confront the realities of society. You get to see what kind of society we live in when you teach." His view is that this confrontation with realities in society should inform academics' practice in class. In the next

chapter, I discuss this issue of academics' critical and political consciousness as one of the qualities that participants see as crucial for an academic who contributes to the public good in the ways that I have described in this section.

However, in concluding this section, I want to flag that it is important to acknowledge that not all academics are critically conscious, in the Freirean sense of the term, whereby taking transformative actions against injustice and oppression is an inseparable part of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000). If this was not the case, there would be no resistance from academics towards transformation initiatives that seek to make universities inclusive and non-discriminatory spaces that accommodates the diversity in the public they serve. As I will show in the next chapter, the data from the present study suggest that some academics resist transformation initiatives that seek to address injustices and inequalities inherited from the past, particularly at historically white universities.

I acknowledge that the sample of academics I interviewed was not representative, and therefore, it was unable to provide an insight into the reasons behind the resistance of some academics towards certain transformation initiatives. It is possible that their resistance is not towards transformation per se but towards the approach taken to achieve it. It could be that they are not satisfied with the merits of the proposed approaches to achieving transformation in these institutions. Nevertheless, the views shared by participants of this study are sufficient in giving us an in-depth insight into how this group of academics think about the public good of higher education and the ties it has to the transformation imperative.

Providing Support

Providing support was another theme that emerged from the data concerning the multiple roles that academics play in contributing to the public good. The data suggested that the primary beneficiaries of the support that academics provide were the underprivileged and the historically marginalised members of the university public. In participants' view, supporting underprivileged students is academics' way of ensuring "equity" in access and success, which they see as crucial aspects of higher education as a public good, as discussed in the previous chapter. In other words, the theme of providing support is still connected to the transformation imperative, which I argue is at the heart of participants' conception of the public good. For Ms Randera, ensuring equity of access and success requires that lecturers "develop methodologies and pedagogies" that do not only respond to the "best students in the class" but also the

struggling ones. She argued that failing to do this will "create an academic role that is not in the interest of the public good." Similarly, Prof Jones argued that "the way that you teach either contributes, it's ether reproducing or disrupting inequality." She believes that there is a distinction between "brilliant lecturers" and "good teachers."

Prof Jones argued that brilliant lecturers are only "interested in the subject and how they can get that across to a student so that obviously they can write an exam." However, good teachers, whom she believes contribute more to the public good, consider the type of students in the class and think about how to cater to all of them. Good teachers ask themselves, "Who is sitting in front of me? What do they bring with them? What languages do they speak? How can I use those resources in this classroom?" They ask themselves, "why do the first five rows look the way they do and the last twenty rows … why are all the questions coming from the first five rows? Why are these guys at the back quiet?" This, she believes, enables good teachers to teach in a way that benefits "their public"- all the students in the class. In a similar line of argument, Dr Getz acknowledged the disadvantages experienced by many of the students at historically black institutions like Protea University. She argued that she has seen that some academics at these universities "work twice as hard … because they understand that they are working with students who are generally the first in their families to come to university." "They've got to teach them twice as hard. They've got to weigh more support work", she said. This support can also be financial.

Three participants claimed that some academics provide financial support to students in financial crisis as their contribution to the public good (Dr Getz, Prof Mathosa, Mr Martin). This came out of the data from Protea University, and this may have to do with the fact that this university, which is not as well-resourced as its historically white counterparts, mainly serves students from working-class backgrounds who may not always have the financial means to meet all their needs. However, this does not necessarily mean that students from historically white universities do not experience the same financial problems and issues of student hunger. Literature shows that student hunger is a common issue in many universities in South Africa (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2018; Van den Berg, 2015) and that it is not uncommon for academics in South Africa to dig deep into their pockets in attempts to help alleviate this problem (Jeranji, 2019).

According to Dr Getz, due to the problem of student hunger at Protea University, "there are students who are having panic attacks and really stressing, having to choose whether to eat or

to come to campus". As a result, academics have been "routinely giving their personal money to students" to ensure that they have something to eat when they come to class. "That's the kind of comrade academic that I've seen at [Protea University] which has been quite impressive to me, that kind of commitment to students and seeing academic labour as part of political work", Dr Getz added. Prof Mathosa is one of the academics who has had to spend his own money to meet the basic needs of some of the students he teaches and mentors. "Students see me more as a father figure. They come here, '*Tata andinamali. Ndicela imali*.[15] My parents are struggling. *Nd'celund'ncede*[16] with my schoolwork.' So, you end up being this daddy", he said. Dr Getz sees academics like Prof Mathosa, who spend their own money serving students, as "comrade academics" who have a "commitment to students and seeing academic labour as part of political work." This suggests that she sees these academics' generosity as part of political activism. This was also echoed in her claims about her activist work, as discussed in the next paragraph.

The provision of financial support was also associated with academics' political activism on campus and off-campus. For example, during the time of the #FeesMustFall protests (2015-2018), Mr Martin and Dr Getz were among activist academics who stood in solidarity with the students and took steps to fight against police brutality and violation of students' rights on campus. "There were a whole lot of students that got arrested. So, myself and a small number of others got involved in initially trying to respond to what we saw as the securitisation of the university" and "criminalisation of student protest", Mr Martin remembered. They had to "go to court when there is a court case" to ensure that "students were actually getting access to legal defence and things like that, which often they weren't." They then set up a more organised structure to ensure that students were provided with the legal defence they needed and "to collect money for bail because it was about R3000 per student", and some students could not afford it. Another example of financial support came from Dr Getz's description of the activist work she does off-campus. Part of it "is about learning to change my research practice so that my salary and the resources of the university can be used to sustain, augment and support the work of really interesting activists in South Africa", she said.

The other form of support that was evident in the data was instrumental support. For example, Dr Getz spoke about the instrumental support that a group of academics, which she was part

[15] An isiXhosa phrase meaning "Daddy, I don't have money. May I have some money".
[16] An isiXhosa phase meanin "May you please help me."

of, provided to protesting students during the #FessMustFall protests at a historically white university she worked for before moving to Protea University:

> I was part of a group of academics at [a Historically White University] that was trying to prevent police brutalities, standing between the police and the students, writing letters to management and to the press and the state and everyone that we could to prevent the kind of violence that we saw on campus. (Dr Getz).

The data also pointed to the instructional support that academics provide to students and other academics through mentorship. This kind of support was strongly associated with the transformation of the academy in the sense that it aims to address the underrepresentation of black academics in the academy. For example, Prof Mathosa is a mentor to some students who are part of an Undergraduate Fellowship funded by a donor organisation from the USA. This fellowship aims to address the underrepresentation of academics of colour in the academy by supporting black students who aspire to become academics. He also runs a mentorship program funded by one of South Africa's independent statutory bodies, which provides social science research funding for public universities. This program serves students at PhD and Post-doctoral levels who aspire to become academics. Prof Mathosa emphasised that this program only serves "young South African scholars, South African black scholars." He explained why this is important to him:

> It's important because, in scholarship, black scholars don't feature much. Scholarship is still dominated by whites. They are the ones, well interestingly, this is how the scenario normally works out, is that black people will be the ones who do most of the empirical research. When they finish it, then white people will be the ones who do the write-up and publication.… Black people are still diggers, you know, underground. You dig, you bring it up, then the whites will refine the product and publish it or whatever. Well, I am trying to address that somehow, you know, through this project. I am working with these young people … But I've also mentored a lot of students for [The Undergraduate Fellowship]. I've mentored a number of students who qualified. Some of them were voted the best students in those programmes. Some of them are now doing PhDs.

The role of mentorship in the transformation of the academy was also evident in the experiences of Dr Zoziwa and Dr Elba. They spoke about the role mentors played and continue to play in helping them, as black academics, to navigate their way in the academy: "You've got to have that person who will show you the rules of the game because the rules of the game…are not explicit", said Dr Zoziwa. Speaking of her early career experience, she said her mentor was

"very instrumental" in her teaching, publishing, and exposure to big research projects: "So we worked together, but she also mentored me into teaching. So, research and teaching. She supervised my PhD", she said. The fact that her mentor was, at the same time, her PhD research supervisor shows how the different roles of academics can overlap such that they complement each other. Like Dr Zoziwa, Dr Elba also had a mentor who has been very instrumental in his academic career. He met his mentor in his first year of study at Yellowwood University. In his third year, his mentor introduced him to tutoring, which was the debut of his academic career:

> He knew the fact that I was a teacher, and he asked me if I wanted to tutor. He said what they were looking for, at the time, were people with teaching experience because the whole context of tutoring and teaching was changing at [Yellowwood University]. They were looking for people who could actually teach as opposed to just graduate students whom you plunk in a class and say, 'teach'. That was the start of my journey because I could then use my teaching experience and plough it into my tutoring. (Dr Elba).

Interestingly, the data suggest that mentoring can have a ripple effect. Having had a mentor from his first year at university, Dr Elba is now mentoring some students in the same undergraduate fellowship program that Prof Mathosa referred to earlier. As Dr Zoziwa said, students that academics mentor can "then go on to mentor other students." Her PhD research supervisor mentored her early in her academic career, and now she is mentoring others. She believes this is her public good contribution that stands out in her academic career, which is the impact she has "made at that level of mentorship and taking students from that very raw stage at undergrad, and also in a way mirroring the rules of the game for them." The phrase "mirroring the rules of the game to them" suggests some form of role modelling. Therefore, here Dr Zoziwa indicates that she has also been a role model to her mentees. This also shows how teaching roles can overlap in a complementary way. Mentors can, at the same time, be role models. I discuss the theme of role modelling in the next section.

Providing support was also associated with the research supervision role of academics. Prof Logan suggested that being a research supervisor involves creating an enabling and empowering environment for your students to grow and thrive as intellectuals and knowledge producers regardless of their backgrounds. This came out when he spoke about his experience of working in another historically white university in South Africa, where black students were a minority:

> So, what we then did was, myself and a colleague of mine, we thought about how do we create research environments for black students. How do we connect to them not only at the affective level of bonding with our students as a family but empowering them with the knowledge that they had not been provided with because they came in from all sorts of weird spaces? (Prof Logan).

Dr Getz shared a similar view. She argued that one thing she loves the most about this role is that "it feels more like making space where there isn't for working-class students to feel that they can articulate their needs and their desires, and their lives and it feels like that's how I'm now conceptualising my work as a public servant."

In this section, I have shown that academics role in higher educations' contribution to the public good is associated with providing support, particularly to the underprivileged and "historically" marginalised. This support can be financial, instrumental, or instructional, and it was strongly associated with the transformation imperative, which I argue is at the heart of participants' conception of the public good. However, I must say that, though participants believe that providing support in the ways I discussed in this section is academics' contribution to the public good, some of these actions are outside of the core of what it means to be an academic. Therefore, while it plays a role in addressing student hunger and financial crisis, providing financial support should not be an expectation that is put on academics. In the way that academics described it, it is something that academics do out of their own volition, and it only serves to demonstrate the extent to which some academics go to serve the public good. It also demonstrates the extent to which inequalities manifest in higher education. Therefore, I argued that it should not be considered a standard of serving the public good as an academic. In the next section, I discuss the theme of role modelling, which is also related to mentorship, as I stated in this section.

Role Modelling

Only two participants from each university mentioned role modelling as another public good role, Prof Mathosa, Mr Martin, Prof Smith, and Ms Randera. All of them only made one mention of role-modelling during the interviews. They suggested that, through role modelling, academics contribute to the public good by inspiring students in different ways and demonstrating what it means to be a public good professional. For Mr Martin and Prof Smith, a role model is someone others can look up to. Mr Martin argued that academics "can be a resource to society as a whole and because, if you look, the majority of our society has never

encountered a scientist, okay and they have never imagined like, 'I could be a scientist'." Prof Smith had a similar view to Mr Martin's:

> I quite firmly believe that your senior academics should also teach at the initial levels because I think they are inspiring our young students. I mean, I certainly remember my students at [Protea University] in the second year. We were talking about future aspirations, and they'd say, "I want to be just like Prof so and so". So, it was hugely powerful for them that they had role models at that stage. (Prof Smith).

Ms Randera, who teaches students in a program for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at Yellowwood University, made an example of how she and her colleagues model to their students the kind of teachers they should be. They have "200 PGCE Students", which they "team teach" using what she called "more non-formal radical pedagogy." She acknowledges that it is "difficult to get them to do group work." However, "we insist that we're not just gonna give them an essay to write and we're not just gonna lecture at them. We gonna try and role model to them", she said. This point echoes what Prof Mathosa argued when he said, as an academic, "you are more than a lecturer …You are seen by students as a role model." Ms Randera believes it is crucial for them, as team-teaching lecturers, to model to their students how to be team players. She argued that they insist on doing this because they have to "work against how the system has been set up", given that they do not agree with "some of the pedagogical stuff" done in the university.

In this section, participants presented role modelling, not as a role that is independent of others. Instead, they talked about it as linked to the others, particularly the role of a lecturer. This echoes some scholars' arguments about lecturers being role models to their students (Azer, 2005; Makondo, 2012; Mclean, 2004). Moreover, it is essential to note that academics may not choose to be role models, but students can decide to see them as role models even though academics themselves may not want to be seen as such. This, however, suggests that it is important for academics to be conscious of and intentional about the example they are setting for their students, especially they intend to produce public good professionals in the students they teach.

Producing Knowledge as a Public Good

It also emerged from the data that academics, in their capacity as researchers and research supervisors, serve the public good by producing knowledge that is codified in publications such

as reports, books, journal articles, patents etc. These research outputs were seen as participants as public goods in Marginson's (2011, 2012) plural sense of the word, as discussed in the introduction chapter. For example, Dr Zoziwa asserted that the book she wrote based on her research contributes to the public good. She added that her contribution to knowledge production has also been through her involvement in various research projects that have produced "findings" that other "scholars can also build on." Prof Jones made a similar point about a paper that she was writing based on data about the student-success crisis in mathematics at Yellowwood University: "I'm trying to say what of this is also important here, which speaks to people who are interested in the same problem and have a completely different set of contextual variables", she said. Here, both Dr Zoziwa and Prof Jones make the interesting point that the knowledge researchers produce may not always have immediate application; it could be something that others can build on, and therefore, it serves the public good in the long run. The same point has been made in literature in arguments for the role of blue skies research for the public good (Braben, 2002).

The theme of producing knowledge also emerged in relation to academics' role as research supervisors of postgraduate students. Six participants spoke about supervision as contributing to producing knowledge. These are Prof Hartman, Prof Mathosa, Dr Getz, Prof Logan, Prof Smith, and Dr Zoziwa. They all shared a similar understanding, though they presented it in different ways, of what this supervision entails, which is to guide and support postgraduate students in carrying out their research projects, thus contributing to knowledge production. This was best articulated by Prof Smith, who described supervision as exposing students to "different perspectives" and "ways of thinking" to "help them further knowledge through their own postgraduate projects."

Prof Hartman asserted that, in recent years, he has "put more efforts into helping postgraduate students and people doing Master's and PhD degrees" in the physics department. 'Helping' in this case means teaching students "how the equipment works and how does research work, how do you publish a paper." To do this, he has "to be in the lab with a student" most of the time. Dr Getz also described supervision as working "with honours students and masters' students" in "developing research projects that are based on their experiences, their reading of the world and their estimation of what is important."

Some participants suggested that academics claim a monopoly of knowledge production, whereas students are also knowledge producers in their own right and should be seen as such.

Ms Randera said: “What about students as intellectuals. Let’s argue for them as also producing knowledge.” Prof Mathosa concurs with Ms Randera. He believes that, instead of claiming the monopoly of intellectualism and knowledge production, academics should help their students “realise their potential as thinkers and begin to invest in that… to think of themselves as thinkers, as producers of knowledge.” There was also the view that academics claim the monopoly of knowledge production when there are others who produce knowledge in institutions that are outside of the university, such as NGOs, Social Movements, and communities themselves. Ms Randera, for example, argued that it must be acknowledged that “there are people, outside of the university, that are producing knowledge all the time that many people have no sense of and don’t value at all.” Similarly, Dr Gibbs also argued that “there are other intellectuals who are not part of the academy.” These views suggest that academics are only one group of knowledge producer but not the only ones. As the activist academics I interviewed suggested, knowledge production for the public good is connected beyond the university.

Instrumental Knowledge for the Public Good

In the previous section, I discussed the theme of knowledge production, which speaks of an obvious core function of academics as researchers and supervisors of postgraduate students in higher education. As I discussed in the previous chapter, all participants of this study acknowledge that knowledge itself is a public good. However, most participants emphasised instrumental knowledge over knowledge for its own sake. Therefore, in this section, I discuss the theme of instrumental knowledge produced by academics, taught to students, and disseminated to the public. Only a few argued for equal appreciation of both instrumental knowledge and knowledge for its own sake. Interestingly, contrasting views about applied and blue skies research also came from participants from the same university.

Both Dr Gibbs and Prof Smith work in the same department, but they expressed two opposing views of what is valued with regards to research at Yellowwood University. On the one hand, Dr Gibbs believes that “there isn’t a sense of knowledge production for the sake of knowledge production” at Yellowwood University. On the other hand, Prof Smith suggested that there is a need for more applied research, arguing that Yellowwood University “has tended to put stress on really the sort of high levels of research, what they often call blue-skies research,” instead of applied research. This shows how one institution can be perceived and experienced

differently by different academics. Like Prof Smith, most participants of this study that research bests serve the public when they produce instrumental knowledge through applied research.

Prof Logan argued that researchers should produce "knowledge that serves the public good", the kind of knowledge "that makes our world a better place … knowledge for those that suffer." Putting the same view differently, Dr Elba argued that researchers need to be "generating a knowledge base that won't only sit in the library" but "will be of some use to the actual people." Similarly, Prof Hartman argued that research that sits on the shelf "doesn't seem very valuable to society", but "if you publish it somewhere, at least somebody else can read it and build on that and not do the same thing or make the same mistakes."

Most participants understood the usefulness of knowledge to be demonstrated in how it can be applied in addressing social issues. They believe that academics contribute better to the public good when they are researching and producing knowledge that can help solve local problems such as the basic education crisis, land redistribution issue, gangsterism, chronic diseases (Mr Martin, Dr Swan, Prof Aeron, Dr Elba, Dr Zoziwa, Prof Logan). Dr Zoziwa made an example of research projects on cancer and TB conducted by some of her colleagues in the Health Faculty of Yellowwood University. She believes these kinds of projects make a significant "impact" in terms of the public good because "they operate at the community level, where community members get to participate." "They are super important because they are making a difference, not just higher up, but really at the level where communities can also say, 'Wow! We've actually benefited from this'." Community-based research projects like these also link the research role with community engagement, which participants deemed to be part of higher education's contribution to the public good, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Dr Zoziwa and Prof Aeron also believe that researchers can help governments make informed decisions on particular issues. For example, this could be research that shows "the implications of the kind of schooling in South Africa and how they affect the pipeline to the job sector" (Dr Zoziwa). Prof Aeron gave the same example of the role that researchers can play in guiding government on the education issues and also the land question. Regarding the land issue, he suggested that academics could research "alternative methods" of land redistribution and their "implications", "repercussions", and "knock-on effects." Some participants from Protea University provided examples, which they produce instrumental knowledge for the public good. Prof Hartman was working, together with his Master's and PhD students, on a research project focusing on finding better ways to measure radioactivity in mine dumps, which he

believes would help in "radiation protection issues" in South Africa. He believes this contributes to the public good "because if there are good methods, we can regulate it." Speaking about his team's research, Mr Martin spoke about the TB research he is doing with his colleagues: "We are working on topics that are hopefully of some general public utility." His team "works on mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes TB", and they are "trying to build up the capacity to understand it better and, therefore, understand the mechanism of the disease better." He believes this could help in the treatment of the disease.

The theme of instrumental knowledge also emerged from the data in relation to the knowledge that lecturers teach their students. Participants suggested that teaching students is about empowering them with the knowledge and skills they need to enter the labour market and make the world a better place. Prof Aeron suggested that their role as lecturers in a "teaching-intensive" economics department is to "train CAs." For him, this means "trying to best teach towards the SAICA exam and develop students professionally." This is an exam administered by the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA), which assesses the professional competence of candidates after completing their Certificate in the Theory of Accounting Programme at university. It is not about knowledge for its own sake but as a means to an end. This view corresponds to participants' argument about the instrumental role of higher education in students' social mobility, as discussed in the previous chapter. However, this view does not consider the ability of the job market to absorb the graduates who come out of the university. As discussed in chapter three, graduate unemployment is increasing (Adesola et al., 2017; Mahmudah, 2017; Pauw et al., 2006), and the coronavirus pandemic has also not helped the situation (Posel et al., 2021; World Bank Group, 2021).

The theme of instrumental knowledge also emerged in relation to public intellectualism. Six participants spoke about academics as public intellectuals who can use their voice, knowledge and expertise to drive change in society. These are Prof Mathosa, Prof Aeron, Dr Getz, and Mr Dan from Protea University, and Ms Randera and Prof May from Yellowwood University. They believe academics can contribute to the public good as public intellectuals by sharing their informed opinions, knowledge and research findings with the public beyond the confines of the university through the media and other public platforms. As Prof May said, being a public intellectual is partly about finding "creative" and "unconventional ways" to disseminate the knowledge you have and produce as an academic, such as writing "a piece in *The Conversation"*, "contribute to the *Daily Maverick"* or "an editorial in the newspaper." All

participants believe that many academics in South Africa are not very active in this role, despite its enormous potential to contribute to the public good.

According to Prof Mathosa, there are many academics in South Africa "who are doing good work for the human society through their research, but you hardly get to hear about it" because they "don't occupy the spaces where [they] can have an influence on society." He made an example saying the general public only learned about the brilliance of Prof Manyosi's work when the media reported on his death.[17] Prof Mathosa emphasised his view that academics in South Africa are not capitalising on the media as a platform they can use to advance the public good.

> My sense is that a lot of academics are very good in theorising and problematising social issues from an intellectual perspective. But part of what we are not good at is in getting our hands dirty, so to speak. But perhaps we need to do a little bit more through the media. We don't make good use of the media in South Africa. (Prof Mathosa).

Prof May also suggested that many academics in South Africa are not active in the public intellectual role. However, she acknowledged that some are doing a brilliant job in this area. She made an example of a professor she knows who writes a blog on legal issues. She argued that, through this blog, "he takes his law[18], and he puts it directly in the public domain." The university he works for honoured him with the "social responsiveness award for actually contributing to the public directly through his role."

Ms Randera and Prof Smith spoke about producing instrumental knowledge in a way that indicates a complementary overlap between knowledge production in the university and academic activism beyond the borders of the university. Ms Randera, for example, participated in women's initiative protesting with comrades outside of South Africa. Unfortunately, they got "arrested and detained." At the time of the interview, she was writing "a feminist piece" she believed allowed her to "write differently about solidarity" and think about the idea of "violence" through her "personal experience." To her, writing about this experience is "like an activist exercise." Prof Smith, who started as an "activist working in NGOs in the anti-apartheid struggle", continued seeing herself as an activist even when she joined the academy. As such, she asserted her commitment to the "struggle for social justice and the struggle to try to strive

[17] Prof Bongani Manyosi was the Dean of the Faculty of Health at the University of Cape Town. He committed suicide after battling with depression for some time.
[18] By 'his law', Prof May is referring to his knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of law.

for a society which tries to meet the need of the poor, and which tries to build a more egalitarian inclusive kind of society." "I saw myself as an activist working within the university environment", she said. For this reason, she wrote a paper about academics as activists and the need for universities to "become more responsive to the community." Both these examples suggest that the autoethnographic writing of activist academics creates a complementary link between the activist and researcher roles, which positions activist academics as producers of knowledge that serves to advance their activist agendas.

In this section, I have discussed participants' views of the role of academics in producing, disseminating and teaching instrumental knowledge. What is notable in participants' views is that their emphasis on instrumental knowledge over knowledge for its own sake is consistent with the argument I made in the previous chapter about the transformation imperative being at the heart of participants' understanding of the relationship between higher education and the public good. This is evident in how participants spoke about knowledge that makes a difference; knowledge that serves those who are marginalised and suffering; knowledge that can inform government decisions of social issues such as land redistribution; and teaching for employability in a society that is faced with the triple threat of poverty, unemployment, and unemployment. However, there was also a sense that academics need to do more, which is a view that does not take into consideration that academics are already overworked while they are underpaid, as the literature shows (Chan et al., 2021; Ntshoe et al., 2008; Webster & Mosoetsa, 2001).

Role conflict and Role Congruence

In the previous sections, I discussed various themes on participants' perceptions of the roles that academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good. I have also shown the ways in which different roles can overlap in a complementary way. However, evidence from the data suggests that sometimes these roles are in conflict with each other, which may create a dilemma for academics, given that the roles they play are not equally valued and incentivised in their institutions. For example, most academics suggested that conducting research that produces publications is the most valued and incentivised in the academy. The data suggests that the value ascribed to being a productive researcher and the incentives that come with it fuel the conflict between research and teaching. This view was aptly captured in the words of Prof Aeron: "You only get acknowledged at the university when you publish, you know that. And you don't get acknowledged for the good you do as a teacher."

Dr Gibs and Dr Zoziwa suggested that conducting research has become a way for academics to demonstrate their "worth" to the university and the academy at large. "You've got to justify at any level that you are worth a place at the university in relation to products", said Dr Gibbs. These products include "patents" or "publications" that will then "produce rankings for your university." Talking about the National Research Foundation (NRF) rating of academics, Dr Zoziwa argued that "when it comes to showing your worth, they are looking for your individual voice." In other words, they are looking for "single-authored publications," which she believes is counterproductive to NRF's promotion of collaboration between researchers by putting it as a precondition for research funding. As I will show in the next chapter, collaboration was perceived by many participants as one of the conditions of possibility for academics to contribute to the public good.

They suggest that the value ascribed to this role is not based on its contribution to the public good, but on the status and financial gains it brings to institutions and academics themselves, it brings in money for the institution" (Dr Zoziwa) and "international recognition" (Prof Smith). Participants from Protea University also provided similar reasons for the increased pressure that the university is putting on them to do more research. This was best captured in the words of Prof Aeron, an Economics Professor at Protea University: "The pressure for us to do PhDs, Master's, publish papers, etc., is growing … funny enough. Now we are moving totally towards research. So, we also have the same rules now for promotion." As a result of this pressure to publish or perish, the research component of academic's work tends to flourish at the expense of teaching and community engagement.

According to Mr Dan, "the students suffer in the long run" because academics tend to "spend less time on thinking about how they teach and focus more on their research" since "this is what the system is demanding" of them. In a similar line of argument, Dr Getz argued that "those who just want to publish and don't really care about teaching" tend to "just go into the university, and it's enough to work according to the internal terms of the university and get promoted and follow a career in the academy." Prof Aeron made a similar point. "People just go through the actions of teaching, you know, and that kinds of stuff, do the same old same old, not really thinking about it and focus more on research and what gets them promoted."

For Dr Getz, this suggests that they care less about the public good and more about their career mobility because she firmly believes that "those that are about teaching have more of the sense of the public good." Dr Swan put it bluntly: "I see the research more as a selfish thing." On the

contrary, Mr Dan argued that it makes sense for academics to "focus on stuff that can get you promoted because there is a reason why you want to do that. You want obviously to be able to provide for other people as well, your family." This brings an important point, which considers academics as employees who also have families that they need to provide for.

The research-teaching dilemma was also well articulated by Prof Logan, which also explained how the incentive of promotion associated with research could influence the choice that academics make.

> When an academic like myself has to decide between, "Do I teach a PGCE class or do I write my article that I need for my performance appraisal at the end of the year?" Then I say, "I need to get out of my PGCE class." When I've written my article, and the possibility raises its head that I can do, if I do three articles, I may get promoted if I do it for two years in a row. Then staying out of PGCE is even more cute. (Prof Logan).

Prof Aeron concurs with the views shared above. "If I've got fifty things to do, incentivise the ones you want me to do, and I'm gonna do it. But right now, they are incentivising me to do the opposite, which is, go sit in your corner and do research", he said. He also argued that this is what he has seen many of his colleagues do at Protea University:

> The way I see people on campus is that they're all stuck with their heads in their little silos, in "what am I doing today, and I want to get promoted. I need to go research on stuff that I don't even think is relevant, but I need to get promoted", and that's what the university values. (Prof Aeron).

Even though most participants argued that the research role often flourishes at the expense of teaching, as discussed above, there is also evidence in the data suggesting that there can be congruence between the research role and other academic roles such as teaching, activist, and public intellectual roles. Prof Hartman suggested that research complements the teaching role because it produces the knowledge academics teach in the classroom. Therefore, new research may necessitate changes in what they teach in class. He made an example of changes brought by the "DNA revolution" in the biological sciences, which "means that even in first-year life science course you would now do it [the DNA Subject] differently than what you did 30 years ago". Therefore, he believes it is "important to be up to date with the latest research trends" as a lecturer. About lecturers who are teaching the same subject they are researching on, he said: "it's useful to be doing research because it makes whatever you teach more relevant."

Prof Smith spoke about how her research complemented her role as an activist. After she adopted ethnography as a research method, she found that it helped her to become "quite critical of some of [her] own assumptions" as an activist. "I could see how developing theoretical knowledge helps you and looking at other empirical work helps you be able to step back a little bit from, you know, the frame of politics", she said. Responding to how conducting ethnographic research impacted her political assumptions as an activist, she said:

> Taking into account the sort of ethnographic perspectives after that has been a huge privilege for me, particularly as a white person in South Africa, to be able to gain insight into the struggles of ordinary people and the struggles of people who are trying to make ends meet and who have experienced the kind of terrible, you know, the harshness of apartheid and so on…it's very easy to live, particularly as a white person here without knowing really what conditions are like for the poor living in vast areas of South Africa. I think it has given me a huge perspective, I suppose, on my own privilege and on my own responsibilities and, you know, that I have been given certain kinds of privileges in life through the path that I've chosen. That gives me certain kinds of responsibilities to give back to the community.

This is a kind of reflexivity that activist academics may engage in when their research findings challenge their political assumptions and ideologies. This demonstrates that playing the researcher role may complement the activist role. Being critical of your own political assumptions as an activist because of your findings as a researcher "doesn't necessarily make you any less of an activist." As Prof Smith asserted in light of critiquing her own political assumptions, "I still would see myself, you know, powerfully as an activist."

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have thematically discussed participants' perceptions of academics' role in higher education's contribution to the public good. I have shown that the value that universities ascribe to different roles, and the incentives that come with it, has an impact on academics' decisions about which role they prioritise. Ascribing more value to one role may be to the detriment of other roles, as participants have suggested in the case of the research-teaching dilemma. The issues around conflicting roles, ascribed value, and incentives point to the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good, which I argue is missing in available in the higher education and the public good literature. It also suggests a need for universities committed to the public good agenda to ensure that these roles are

structured in ways that make them more complementary than contradictory, especially research and teaching.

When roles clash with each other, it becomes unclear for academics how to manage and fulfil the obligations of the different roles, especially if they are KPAs. Part of ensuring that these roles do not contradict each other would be to acknowledge them as equally important and promote and incentivise them. This would ensure that no one form of the public good flourishes at the expense of the other. There were also many instances in the data presented above that suggest an expectation for academics to do more. However, this expectation does not consider that many academics are already overworked, as the literature demonstrates. This raises questions of cost. If academics are to do more, at what cost? In the next chapter on conditions of possibilities, I discuss some of the costs associated with different public good roles of academics as perceived by participants of this study. Nevertheless, I believe that debates about the role of academics in higher education's contribution to the public good must acknowledge that academics are limited in their capacity and, therefore, cannot play all the public good roles. However, there must be an emphasis on the need to ensure that, as public servants, they prioritise the public good agenda in whatever role they choose.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conditions of Possibility for Higher Education's Contribution to the Public Good

In the last two chapters, I discussed participants' understanding of the public good and their perceptions of academics' role in higher education's contribution to it. I argued that participants' understanding of the public good of higher education is strongly influenced by the transformation imperative. In this chapter, I argued that some conditions must be in place for higher education to be a public good and to contribute to the public good. According to participants of this study, these conditions include the transformation of higher education, academics' personal attributes that favour their contribution to the public good, collaboration, and funding for higher education. I discuss these as conditions of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good and as conditions that allow academics to effectively play the public roles that I discussed in chapter six.

I begin with discussing the theme of higher education transformation, in which I argued that the continuing legacy of apartheid and colonialism, which shapes the South African higher education landscape, makes transformation a necessary condition for the realisation of higher education as a public good and for the public good (Akoojee et al., 2008; Lewin et al., 2014; Naicker, 2016; Wangenge-Ouma, 2012). This is followed by a discussion of the theme about academics' personal attributes. According to participants' perceptions, academics who are progressive, reflexive, critically and politically conscious, and socially competent are in a better position to contribute to the public good of higher education, which is mainly understood in terms of the transformation imperative of post-1994 South Africa.

I acknowledge that these attributes are debatable, and I do not claim that the list offered by participants of this study is correct. However, I argue that it gives us an insight into what attributes may be crucial for academics' advancement of the public good agenda in the South African higher education context, which is characterised by the continuing legacy of apartheid and colonialism. This has implications for how we think about and understand the public good role of academics. Firstly, it implies that academics' personal attributes matter and cannot be ignored in our thinking about this role. Secondly, it suggests that debates, policies, and practices concerned with transforming the academic staff of universities in South Africa, as part of the higher education transformation agenda, need to look beyond academics' social identities, particularly race and gender.

Then I move on to discussing collaboration as another condition of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good. In this theme, I argue that when academics collaborate, they contribute more significantly to the public good than when they work in silos. According to participants of this study, collaboration in its different forms allows for sharing resources and the exchange of knowledge, skills, and expertise, all of which feeds into higher education's contribution to the public good. I then conclude the chapter with a somewhat obvious condition of possibility, funding. According to participants of this study, funding, which universities need to operate, is increasingly becoming scarce due to issues like austerity. I argued that this scarcity has negative consequences for higher education and the public good, including poorly funded massification, the adoption of private funding models at universities, inadequate student living allowances, and resource constraints. Therefore, without adequate funding, higher education's contribution to the public good is severely limited.

Transformation

In this chapter, I argue that the public good of higher education is not produced in a vacuum. In the previous chapters (five and six), I argued that the notion of transformation is at the heart of participants' conception of the public good as it relates to higher education. However, participants also see transformation as a condition of possibility for higher educations' contribution to the public good in South Africa. According to participants of this study, the legacy of apartheid and colonialism continues to shape the context of higher education in South Africa, and this adversely affects higher education and its public good role. This echoes a widely documented argument in the literature on higher education in South Africa, as discussed in chapter two (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; Dlamini, 2019; Khunou et al., 2019; Langa, 2017; le Grange, 2018; Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014; Naicker, 2016, 2016; Wangenge-Ouma, 2012). Although all participants of this study shared this view, some key examples of it came from comments made by Prof May and Prof Smith from Yellowwood University and Prof Mathosa, Dr Getz, and Mr Martin from Protea University.

According to Prof May, "all our institutions are linked to the apartheid past." In other words, historically white and historically black universities in South Africa were shaped in different ways by their link to the country's apartheid past. The implications of this were aptly captured by Prof Smith, who argued that our higher education institutions "have been stifled and stunted by the long-standing legacies of apartheid." However, unlike Prof May and Prof Smith, who focused only on the negative impact of the apartheid legacy, Prof Mathosa and Dr Getz

foregrounded the impact of the colonial legacy. Prof Mathosa argued that universities in South Africa are "are still embedded in western scholarship, and that makes it difficult for them to respond in a constructive and intellectual manner to our own situations." Dr Getz echoed the same view, arguing that universities in South Africa operate in a "deep colonial fashion." This suggests that they are unable to adequately respond to local realities, whereas according to participants of this study, local relevance (as discussed in chapter five) is a key aspect of higher education's contribution to the public good.

Transformation as a Condition of Possibility

Having said that, I now turn to participants' perceptions of the negative impact of the ongoing colonial and apartheid legacies in South Africa's higher education. These perceptions provide evidence for why participants of this study see the transformation of higher education as a crucial condition of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good. Some of these perceptions are related to South African higher education in general, and some are based on what participants see happening in their respective institutions: Yellowwood University, which is a historically white university, and Protea University, which is a historically black university. Participants suggested that the negative impact of the colonial and apartheid legacies manifests in the form of racial identity contingencies (alienation, discrimination, and stereotyping) and intellectual imperialism.

About Yellowwood University, participants pointed out that there is still evidence of racial alienation and discrimination of both academics and students of colour. Seven participants described Yellowwood University as a "racialised" and "white space" in which academics and students of colour feel like they do not belong. For example, Dr Zoziwa, who is a black woman academic at Yellowwood University, argued that "[Yellowwood University] will always remind you that you're black." Talking about his experience as a Coloured academic at Yellowwood University, Dr Gibbs shared a similar sentiment: "The space is alien. I do not feel at home at [Yellowwood University]." He recounted various examples related to his experience of how racism exists in very subtle ways at Yellowwood University. He argued that some of his white colleagues who were in contract positions like him were promoted to permanent positions even though they did not meet the requirements. "I taught here, for now, ten years in a contract position … seeing colleagues who were fairer than me employed without PhDs and not even master's degrees, being put into permanent positions", he said. In his view, this was

a manifestation of subtle racial discrimination. He also spoke about the racial stereotypes that exist at Yellowwood University:

> *De facto*, people who self-identify as white, they are taken by the majority of our students, especially students who are not white, it appears to me that they take those lecturers to be of higher quality than persons of black origin … It's that thing I was speaking about. Once you've been inducted into a system that says black is necessarily not good enough or not as good as your white counterparts … (Dr Gibbs).

This is an example of the stereotypes that academics must deal with in fulfilling their roles. It also suggests that this kind of racial stereotyping can also become embedded in the institutional culture of the university, a system into which new students get assimilated. This example also affirms Claude Steele's (2011) notion of identity contingencies. In this case, academics at Yellowwood University face racial identity contingencies that they must first deal with to adequately perform their different public roles, as discussed in chapter six.

These examples suggest that academics of colour do not feel a sense of belonging at Yellowwood University. This was also confirmed by Dr Getz, who is a white academic at Protea University. Although she does not work at Yellowwood University, she argued that Yellowwood University is a "different world" for black academics: "There is a clear understanding that they are guests there … the university still feels like a white space." However, as discussed in chapter two, the literature suggests that this is not unique to Yellowwood University, but it is a common experience of academics of colour in many of South Africa's historically white universities (Khunou et al., 2019).

Some participants suggested that students of colour also undergo similar experiences of racial discrimination and alienation at historically white universities. Prof Jones spoke about the experiences of Black students, arguing that they feel "a sense of not belonging." This adversely affects the quality of their university experience, which participants deemed to be a part of the idea of the university as a public good, as discussed in chapter five. In a similar line of thought, Dr Getz argued that even though black students have access to historically white universities, they are "still being expected to assimilate." In other words, these universities have not transformed themselves in a way that caters for a more racially and culturally diverse student body. This echoes an argument I discussed in the literature review about a call for universities to adopt an adaptive approach, in which they transform to accommodate a diverse student body, rather than an integrative one that assimilates students to the dominant culture of the university

(Smit, 2012a). This limits the broader social value of the university, discussed by Walker (2015) cited in the literature review, as a public sphere and space for students to encounter difference and learn tolerance.

While most participants suggested that racial issues mainly affect people of colour, Dr Elba argued that "there is a stigma attached to whiteness as there are stigmas attached to blackness and I think that staff in themselves should be proactive in debunking those stigmas and I think we don't do that often enough." This view suggests that both black and white people are affected by racialisation and racial stigma, though in different ways. All these racial issues and the examples that participants pointed out resemble racial identity contingencies in Steele's (2011) terms. These racial identity contingencies may interfere with academic work and students' learning, which are essential aspects of higher education's contribution to the public good. Therefore, in a context like South Africa with a history of racial division and discrimination, transformation is necessary for higher education as a public good and for the public good.

Participants suggested that, unlike Yellowwood University, Protea University, as a historically black university with a strong history of involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle, is more accommodating of racial diversity. For example, Prof Mathosa expressed a strong sense of belonging at Protea University: "As a black scholar, academic, here I don't feel like I don't belong in this place. I've never once felt like I don't belong". "It has always been that place for me where I feel like I am appreciated, and I am contributing." (Prof Mathosa). Other participants from Protea University did not express any concerns around the issues of race in their comments about their experience at Protea University. This, together with Prof Mathosa's comment, suggests that Protea University is more accommodating to racial diversity than Yellowwood University. This contrasting contextual difference between Yellowwood and Protea University suggests that the institution's history, as either a historically black or historically white university, impacts the experiences of those who work and learn in them. It also suggests a greater need for transformation at historically white universities in South Africa to make them more inclusive and accommodating to diversity, thus increasing the extent to which they contribute to the public good.

In terms of the colonial legacy in the academy, Mr Martin pointed out the exploitation of researchers in South Africa by their European partners in international collaborative research projects. He argued that in collaborative projects, "you technically find that even our

researchers, they will provide samples from South Africa to like Europe and then they will be analysed there, published there." This view echoes Alatas' (2000) arguments about intellectual imperialism. Moreover, it also indicates that even though collaboration, as I argue later in this chapter, contributes to the production of knowledge as a global public good (Marginson, 2011, 2014), there is still a need for transformation in terms of power imbalances to ensure that these collaborations are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

Discussed above are participants' perceptions about the continuing legacy of apartheid in South Africa's higher education systems. These views and the examples participants made express the various ways in which the legacy of apartheid and colonialism may limit higher education's contribution to the public good, which makes transformation a necessary condition for higher education *as* a public good and *for* the public good. However, this does not necessarily mean that participants do not acknowledge the transformation that has taken place in South Africa's higher education since the advent of democracy. Prof Logan, Prof Jones, and Prof Smith from Yellowwood University acknowledged that some notable transformation has taken place and that institutions continue to transform even though they do so at a snail's pace. For example, speaking about Yellowwood University as a historically white university, Prof Logan said: "We're changing as we're transforming, and we're transforming very slowly." Prof Jones argued that this slow pace of transformation is frustrating: "What's frustrating? I think just the pace of change at the university, it's so slow" (Prof Jones).

According to Prof Logan, Prof Smith, and Prof Jones, one of the reasons for the slow pace of transformation at Yellowwood University is the resistance from those who seek to maintain the status quo. Their view is that those who call for transformation are "silenced" and "shut down" by those who are "resistant" to transformation. Prof Jones made an example of the experiences of lecturers that she referred to as "progressive" academics who find themselves being silenced by their colleagues: "I'd say the public good camp, they don't sit on the senate. In departmental meetings, they feel silenced." This friction is not experienced only by those who do not sit in the senate. Prof Logan suggested that it is also experienced by those progressive academics who sit in the senate. Speaking of his experience as a professor who is part of the senate and a number of committees in the university, he said: "You struggle with bringing change. It's extremely hard", "You fight. I must admit every senate I speak, and I get shut down."

Speaking about resistance to transformation in the Engineering Department at Yellowwood University, Prof Jones argued that "the most powerful members of that department would be resistant as is often the case." These are mainly "senior members of staff that simply don't think that this should change." These are resistant to the call for the department to transform to better cater to the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are struggling with one of the courses in the department. Prof Jones argued that they believe "that if a student cannot pass [the course], they shouldn't be there." This echoes Smit's (2012) argument that historically white universities in South Africa have a tendency to assimilate students rather than to transform themselves to accommodate their diverse student body. However, Prof Jones and Prof Smith argued that the student's protests that took place from 2015 to 2018 have made a difference in the pace of transformation, particularly at Yellowwood University. Prof Jones argued that "the student protest in a sense kind of shook things up a bit" because "the old senior guard is a little bit less confident of their position in life than they would have been." In other words, they are not as resistant as they were before. Prof Smith argued that the protests opened huge possibilities for us to think differently about our own locatedness in South Africa.

Transformation as Rebranding at Protea University.

In the previous sections, I have argued that transformation is necessary for higher education's contribution to the public good, mainly because the South African higher education context is characterised by the ongoing legacy of apartheid and colonialism. I have also argued that this legacy has effects that limit the extent to which higher education contributes to the public good. This was mainly focused on what emerged from the data in relation to transformation issues at Yellowwood University. I now turn to what emerged from the data about transformation at Protea University. In this section, I argue that not all transformation at university is seen as advancing the public good. What emerged from the data at Protea University suggests that its transformation is not primarily about addressing the injustices of the past but rebranding and about becoming more like historically white universities. Participants of this study perceived this form of transformation as not in line with the public good agenda.

Six participants from Protea University suggested that this historically black university is transforming, although in a different way from historically white universities. They described its transformation as rebranding and repositioning itself as an internationally competitive research-intensive university. For example, Dr Getz argued that "it's still constituting itself as a university project and certainly post-apartheid, trying to find a post-apartheid identity for

itself." According to Prof Aeron, "the university has taken a decision to be a leading research-intensive university." Prof Hartman argued that transforming into a research-intensive university is not something unique to Protea University, but it's a common phenomenon in South Africa: "In South Africa, you've got to be a research university, or you're not really gonna count, or it's gonna be hard for you to count. So, [Protea University] has embraced that."

As demonstrated in the next paragraphs, this form of transformation was strongly criticised as not representing higher education transformation for the public good. Participants presented a sense that this rebranding is moving Protea University away from its historical position as an institution known as the university of the left that was teaching-intensive and played a very strong role in the anti-apartheid struggle and was more aligned with the public good agenda. For example, Dr Getz asserted that this rebranding is "sometimes a total ignoring of that history, sometimes a rejection of that history, and sometimes a strong connection to that history." She also argued that part of this rebranding is about "overcoming the history of being the poor university, an attempt to state itself as a proper fully-fledged university." However, she acknowledged that "there are people that remain part of what was called the university of the left, very much committed to a left project, sort of taking teaching seriously, academics and comrades involved in social struggles." However, she believes that the university is moving away from this position, and "it pays lip service to it."

Dr Swan shared a similar view as Dr Getz. She argued that Protea University used to be known as "a home for those with very much socially orientated ideas", a place where "ideas of the social good were sort of abounding", but "[Protea University] doesn't seem to emphasise that so much any longer." She said, "They want to be known as a university that excels in research and in teaching. But I feel they're leaving that part behind a bit. At a surface level, these criticisms of the rebranding of Protea University and its aspirations of becoming an internationally competitive research-intensive university appears to contradict participants' argument about the importance of research and production of knowledge as a global public good. However, at a deeper level, this is not the case. Their concern is that becoming internationally competitive and research-intensive is happening at the expense of taking teaching and social responsiveness seriously, which are things they believe Protea University was admired for, and they believe are key aspects of the public good.

In this section, I have argued that the South African context, characterised by the legacy of apartheid and colonialism, makes higher education transformation a necessary condition for the public good contribution of higher education. I also highlighted some of the effects of this legacy of apartheid and colonialism as evidence for the need for transformation. These contextual issues have also been raised in the literature, as discussed in the literature review (Alatas, 2000; Pennington et al., 2017; Smit, 2012a). I have also highlighted that both Yellowwood University and Protea University are transforming in different ways and with a complex dynamic, positioning respondents and their colleagues in complex relationships. From this we learn that, while higher education transformation may be easily seen as self-explanatory, it is a complex process, especially when the focus is on transformation for the public good. The next theme in which I discuss academics' personal attributes, which participants' see as necessary for contributing to the public good of higher education, adds another layer of complexity as to how we understand higher education transformation for the public good.

Qualities of a Public Good Academic

Participants of this study identified several qualities that they believe individual academics should have to serve the public good as participants define it for the South African context, as discussed in chapters five and six. These qualities include being progressive, reflexive, critically conscious, socially competent, and having an understating of and commitment to your civic responsibility as an academic working in a public university. Participants used various terms to refer to academics who demonstrated some of these qualities at Yellowwood and Protea University. For example, Prof Jones referred to them as "the public good camp." Dr Getz called them "comrade scholars" and "comrade academics." Prof Mathosa referred to them as "socially responsible." This act of labelling divides academics into two categories: Those who, according to participants of this study, are committed to advancing the public good agenda and those who are not, even though because of the nature of academic work, in some way they contribute to the public good. Interestingly, all participants of this study claimed to be part of committed to the public good agenda. They distanced themselves from those they see as not committed to the public good, particularly those who are resistant to transformation and those who support the rebranding of Protea University.

In my view, this could be participant's social-desirability bias, the tendency of research participants to respond in a way that projects a favourable image of themselves to avoid

negative impressions (Lavrakas, 2008). It could also have been inspired by their desire to impress me as a researcher who favours and seeks to advance the public good agenda. I believe that even if I interviewed the group of academics that participants believe are not committed to the public good as they define it, those academics would also see themselves as among those who are committed to the public good and could give examples of their public good contributions from their academic work. However, the attributes I discuss in this section help us understand, from participants' perspective, what it takes to serve the public good as an academic in the South African context, which is useful for understanding the conditions of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good. The following sub-sections dive into these attributes, beginning with progressiveness.

Progressiveness

Progressiveness, in this case, was used to refer to academics who are committed to and are in support of the higher education transformation agenda and related initiatives. In other words, progressive academics are those who advocate transformation within and beyond the university, which – as I argued in chapters five and six – is at the core of participants' notion of the public good. Three participants identified progressiveness as a crucial quality for academics' role in higher educations contribution to the public good: Prof Jones and Dr Gibbs from Yellowwood University, and Dr Getz from Protea University. Dr Getz, for example, spoke about progressive academics as taking up the responsibility "to dig into historically black universities and commit skills and resources to historically black universities" as a way of redressing the institutional inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime. She argued that this was the reason she left a historically white university for Protea University, thus, positioning herself as one of the academics she described as progressive.

Prof Jones also spoke about progressive academics as "shakers and movers" in relation to their role in transformation issues at Yellowwood University, as a historically white institution. "I mean, I would like to think that some of the more progressive socially conscious academic voices are being heard", she said. In this quote, she suggests that "progressive socially conscious" academics are at the forefront of the struggle for transformation at Yellowwood University. Dr Gibbs identified himself as a progressive academic with "a long-term vision" for transformation at Yellowwood University. "I do call myself progressive. I am not a reactionary explicitly. I try to be revolutionary, and I try to be progressive." The idea of having a "long term vision" for an alternative future is one of the professional capabilities associated

with being a public good professional, as discussed in the literature review (Walker & McLean, 2010).

Reflexivity

Participants identified reflectivity as another important attribute for academics to have (Prof May, Prof Smith, Dr Gibbs, Dr Zoziwa, and Ms Randera from Yellowwood University, and Mr Dan from Protea University). They spoke about reflexivity as relating to thinking critically about and questioning one's own work and practices, particularly in teaching and research, as a means to improve and make sure that it serves the interests of the public. According to Mr Dan, a Physics Lecturer at Protea University, reflexivity generally leads to "self-improvement." He believes that "[i]t is only through reflections that you can learn from mistakes or even from successes as well." The idea of self-improvement and learning through reflexivity also emerged from the perceptions of the other participants from Yellowwood University.

Even though Dr Gibbs and Prof May from Yellowwood University identified reflexivity as one of the necessary attributes for academics to serve the public good, they did not say much about the role it plays in higher education for the public good. The other participants spoke about reflexivity in teaching and research, both of which, in participants' view, are key roles that academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good, as discussed in chapter six. For example, Prof Smith suggested that reflexivity ensures that academics produce knowledge "in principled ways." She added that it also helps them to be "mindful" of how their research may be "influenced" by their "own perspectives." This is an argument that has also been made in the research literature (Guest et al., 2012).

Dr Zoziwa and Ms Randera suggested that reflexivity helps academics to understand how their teaching (both content and pedagogies) impact their students and society at large. Dr Zoziwa described an academic who serves the public good as "someone whose teaching is reflexive, in a way that they are always thinking, what does this mean for other people outside of this lecturer hall?" She believes this is an important quality "because we [as academics] get to be so comfortable in our positions and we tend to get all caught up in the everyday work" without being aware of the impact of their teaching. For her, reflexivity is about constantly asking oneself, "how does this work impact on people outside of this space?" to not continue doing work that negatively impacts society. Evaluating the impact of one's work may be more

complex than what Dr Zoziwa makes it to be. However, her point emphasises the significance of reflexive practice in teaching for the public good.

Ms Randera argued that reflexivity is something "that should not be taken for granted in Education." For her own reflexivity, she writes "reflective pieces" to "theorise" her practice and "be critical about what [she is] doing." She believes that through being reflexive as a lecturer, she learns in the process of teaching: "I've had to look deeply into my own processes of thinking about myself and my students and what that means ... It's rewarding because I am also learning as I'm in the process of teaching." Her point about learning echoes Mr Dan's point about self-improvement. Improving as a lecturer can have a positive impact on the public good, particularly students learning.

In this section, I have discussed reflexivity as one of the personal attributes that participants of this study argued are important for academics who seek to contribute to the public good of higher education. Their perceptions of reflexivity echo the assertions of numerous scholars who stress the significance of reflexivity in academic work, even though it is mainly associated with research and not with the general purpose of advancing the public good agenda (Alley et al., 2015; Haynes, 2011; Knaggård et al., 2018; Maxey, 1999). The key point in their views presented above is that reflexive practice enables academics to draw lessons from their experiences in different public good roles. These lessons have the potential to help them limit the influence of their personal biases in their work, improve their practice, and ultimately, better contribute to advancing the public good agenda in higher education.

Critical and Political Consciousness

In this section, I discuss participants' perceptions of critical and political consciousness as academics' personal attributes that are crucial for higher education's contribution to the public good. These attributes were mainly associated with teaching, community engagement, activism, and interaction with students. Views about these attributes were prevalent among Protea University academics. Six out of the seven mentioned critical consciousness as an important quality that better positions academics to serve the public good (Prof Mathosa, Mr Dan, Dr Getz, Prof Hartman). Only two participants from Yellowwood University mentioned it (Dr Zoziwa and Dr Gibbs). Prof Mathosa, Dr Zoziwa and Mr Dan spoke about critical consciousness in relation to being aware of students' realities and needs and acting in ways that consider those needs. Prof Hartman and Dr Getz spoke about it in relation to their privileged

position as white academics, which they associated with the legacy of apartheid in South Africa. In their view, being conscious of this privileged position is what pushed them to invest their skills and expertise in advancing the public good of higher education as their way of giving back to society and contributing to correcting the wrongs of the past.

All these views about consciousness echoed Paolo Freire's (2000) idea of critical consciousness, which stresses awareness of oppressive conditions and actions that lead to emancipation. For example, Dr Getz described critically conscious academics as those "that can see [the] structure and be willing to act on it when the possibility of struggle around it exist." Similarly, Prof Mathosa suggested that "being that person who understands what is going on in the social lives of students or of the community that you are serving … is a very important sign of being socially responsible." He argued that for academics to adequately serve the public good, they "have to be aware of the reality of students and where they come from," and "have to be conscious of the societal issues." He suggested that this guides them into acting in ways that benefit students, which is what sometimes makes him bend the rules of the university when reviewing students' "requests for late submissions":

> So you've got to be aware that in this particular environment, I would be doing totally social destruction if I'm not going to be conscious of the fact that there are people, there are students who are sick but can't afford to go to a medical doctor, and I cannot be blind in applying the rule and say, "if you don't have a medical certificate, then it means you must repeat the module." (Prof Mathosa).

Moreover, he also argued that academics at Protea University "are aware of the social conditions that students come from. So, they are ready to help when a need arises." This is contrary to what Dr Zoziwa said about academics at Yellowwood University.

Dr Zoziwa argued that there is a need to "conscientise academics to say: Look! this is the kind of student who comes in, this is the kind of support they need", she said. She argued that most academics at Yellowwood University are not well conscientised about the realities of their students. As a result, they employ a "deficit model" in their interactions with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Therefore, she suggests that being conscious of students' realities helps academics to not use a deficit approach in their interactions with students but provide students with the support they need to succeed, thus contributing to the public good, as defined in previous chapters. This issue of a deficit perspective in South Africa's higher education has

also been articulated by scholars, as discussed in the literature review (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; Collins & Millard, 2013; Kessi, 2013; McMillan & Barrie, 2012; Smit, 2012).

Prof Hartman and Dr Getz from Protea University explained how being conscious of their privileged positions as white people and the racial inequalities in South Africa influenced their decisions about where to invest their academic skills and expertise. Prof Hartman argued that the reason he chose to work at Protea University instead of a historically white university was that he "didn't want to go and become part of that white system again." After completing his post-doctoral studies abroad, he returned to South Africa in the early day of democracy. "I wanted to be somewhere where I felt I could do something, play a role," he added. This is a similar reason that Dr Getz gave for her choice to come back to South Africa upon completing her doctoral studies in the United States of America:

> I did that because I wanted to be part of building a South African pedagogical space where the skills and the education that I'd accrued because of my racist history or my opportunities because of a racist history were to be given back where they were accrued.

Upon her return to South Africa, she worked at a historically white university where she facilitated the transformation of the academic staff in the department she was heading: "I was responsible as head of the department in hiring a number of black academics into the department", she said. This suggests that critical consciousness leads to actions that contribute to changing the reality for the public good, which is how Freire (2000) defines it.

Some participants spoke about political consciousness, particularly in relation to academics' community engagement and political activism (Dr Elba, Dr Swan and Dr Getz). Dr Elba from Yellowwood University argued to serve the public good through community engagement, academics should have "a political consciousness because people in the communities are extremely politicised." According to Dr Swan, this is about being "informed and involved" in different kinds of activist work. Dr Getz gave an example of this, arguing that politically conscious academics are "those who stood with students [in #FessMustFall protests] because they understood the student's struggle to be about retaining the public character of the university, requiring the state to invest in universities such that they don't slowly privatise." She also argued that most of these academics develop this political consciousness through their involvement "in struggles outside of the university." They come to the university having "been politicised already through other formations" such as "union work" and "movement work."

In this section, I presented participants' perceptions of critical and political consciousness and the role that these play in their contribution to the public good of higher education. I have also indicated that participants' view echo Freire (2000) notion of critical consciousness. In my view, if one of the public good roles of academics is to conscientise their students, as I argued in the previous chapter, it makes sense that academics should be conscientised. Moreover, given the country's colonial and apartheid pasts and the transformation imperative of post-1994, Freirean critical consciousness is crucial among academics if the vision of a transformed higher education is to be realised. Therefore, it is a quality that should now be ignored in thinking about the transformation of the academic staff. I now turn to social competence, which also emerged as an important attribute for academics to have in serving the public good.

Social Competence

Social competence is a set of characteristics that participants of this study believe are important for academics who serve the public good, particularly in how they interact with students and the communities they serve. It includes caring, patience, empathy, compassion, humility, and willingness to learn.

Some participants of this study described an academic who serves the public good as someone who cares, especially about students. This attribute of caring was mainly associated with the teaching roles of academics, and participants spoke about it as one of the attributes that demonstrates one's commitment to the public good agenda. For example, Prof Jones from Yellowwood University suggested that caring is demonstrated "in teaching" in "the way that you [as a lecturer] recognise the students in front of you, and you value them." Three participants from Protea University overtly mentioned caring as one of the distinguishing qualities of public good academics (Prof Mathosa, Prof Aeron, and Dr Swan). Prof Mathosa argued that an academic who serves the public good "has to be, first of all, a caring person." Similarly, Prof Aeron argued that to serve the public good as an academic, "you should care about people. Otherwise, you shouldn't be in this game."

Dr Swan's point was echoed even by other participants who did not directly comment about caring as one of the important qualities of academics who serve the public good (Dr Getz, Mr Dan). For Example, Dr Getz, an Anthropology Senior Lecturer at Protea University, spoke about academics spending digging into their pockets to help financially struggling students. In my view, this demonstrates how much these academics care about their students. It also

demonstrates empathy and compassion, which I will discuss in the next section. Prof Mathosa calls it "going beyond the call of duty to help." However, this does not mean that all academics at Protea University are as caring as Prof Mathosa and Dr Getz suggest. As Prof Aeron said, "some people don't care." Dr Swan suggested that "[Protea University] has slightly changed that orientation now because they want to compete." This suggests that, because of the rebranding and repositioning of the university, as discussed earlier in this chapter, the culture of caring is slowly diminishing.

Interestingly views about caring about students mainly emerged from the data collected at Protea University. As it is evident in the data presented in this section, most participants from protea university placed a strong emphasis on caring about people, whereas of the 8 participants I interviewed at Yellowwood University, only Prof Jones spoke about caring. This may be due to cultural differences between these institutions. As Dr Swan suggested, caring about students is part of the culture of Protea University, which she described as a university that "was known for its lecturers that cared" and "a place that cared, and where lecturers went the extra mile for students." This echoes the findings of the study on Higher Education, Inequality and the Public Good in Four African Countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, which found that informants associated relationships of care with a university that serves the public good and is a decent place to work and study (Allais et al., 2020; Unterhalter et al., 2019). Related to caring are the attributes of empathy and compassion, which I discuss in the next section.

Empathy and compassion are different but closely related aspects of social competence, and they were both identified by participants from both universities as necessary qualities for academics to serve the public good. However, this was not a common view because only two participants spoke about empathy and compassion, one from each university. Dr Swan from Protea University suggested that "being able to empathise with local communities that are, you know, in disarray" is what drives some academics to get involved in helping those communities. Prof May from Yellowwood University suggested that empathy and compassion enable academics to address problems that people face. "I think the person side of staff is critical because, you know, problems and the public don't sit in disciplines, right. They sit across disciplines. They sit in spaces. They sit in issues. So, I think the compassion and empathy." However, what emerged from these quotations about empathy and compassion is that these drive academics into taking actions that help to solve or reduce people's suffering, which ultimately serves the public good.

There was also a view that to serve the public good, an academic has to be patient. (Prof Mathosa, Dr Swan, and Mr Martin). However, the role of patience in academics' contribution to the public good was aptly captured in Prof Mathosa's comment about teaching as a public good role of academics. He argued that a public good academic must "have an eye for a talent" and "potential" but also have the "patience to be able to deal with the ones [students] that are struggling because there is quite a lot of them who are not at that same level." This is important in light of inequalities and student under-preparedness in South Africa (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2008; Fiske & Ladd, 2004; Lewin & Mawoyo, 2014). Being patient with struggling students promotes the public good in the form of access with success, as discussed in the previous chapters. Participants from Yellowwood university did not say anything about patience; however, the point Ms Randera shared suggested that it is necessary in the same way that Prof Mathosa described it. Ms Randera argued that "in terms of the teaching project," it is important for academics to "develop methodologies and pedagogies that respond not only to our best students in the class." In other words, they must also respond to those who, in Prof Mathosa's words, "are struggling."

Participants of this study argued that individual academics do not have the monopoly of knowledge, and therefore, humility and willingness to learn from others are crucial qualities for academics to have in serving the public good. This was particularly articulated by four participants from Yellowwood University (Prof Logan, Prof May, Dr Gibbs, and Dr Elba), in relation to teaching, research, community engagement, and academics' general interaction with their students and other stakeholders beyond the university. However, as I will show later, it also relates to some views shared by participants from Protea University who did not particularly cite humility.

According to Prof Logan, humility is crucial when academics "deal with students", "workers in the university", or "anyone" they work with. It makes them "see everyone as equal" and themselves as merely "fulfil[ing] a different role." "It opens up being able to connect to people" and "to know that, in a religious way, they serve God," he added. Although other academics may not share his religious views, the point is that humility is a crucial attribute in serving the public. As Dr Gibbs stated, to serve the public good, "you've got to be humble." He perceives this as a value that "has to be inculcated" and "a movement towards gaining more deeper insight into the fact that you serve rather than anything else." However, he did not specify how it could be inculcated in academics.

From participants' point of view, humility can also be understood in terms of academics' willingness to learn and the curiosity developed in accepting that they, as an academic, you do not have the monopoly of knowledge. Participants suggested that this grows one as a lecturer. For example, Prof Logan spoke about his post-doctoral teaching experience abroad and said, "I was teaching not as a teacher, I was teaching as a learner of how to teach in this particular field. Because I was, all the time, absorbing this and saying: How do I take this back to South Africa?" This example relates to the notion of reflexivity discussed earlier, which Mr Dan argued contributes to the self-improvement of academics as lecturers. However, Dr Gibbs put it differently. He suggested that his willingness to learn is why he is often keen to "have a meaningful discussion in the class" and in "student lead seminars" where he "allow[s] them to generate knowledge." In this way, he learns from his students and then cites them in his future lectures.

Other participants related 'willingness to learn' to being "a good listener" (Dr Elba) or "active, engaged listening" (Prof May), particularly in the context of community engagement. As Dr Elba said, part of it is "being cognizant of the fact that the communities that you go into also have something to offer, also have a contribution to make and allowing them to voice what it is they can contribute." Others associated it with being "open to other ideas" (Dr Gibbs) and not being married to a particular "paradigm" (Prof May). This is more relevant to learning from colleagues with different ideas and worldviews, particularly in collaborative spaces. Prof Logan spoke about 'willingness to learn' in relation to research. He argued that academics who serve the public good must have a "deep yearning for knowledge, an interest in knowledge production." Prof May referred to this as "curiosity about your discipline" and "curiosity about the world beyond the university." These points suggest that the "deep yeaning", "interest", and "curiosity" should drive academics' role as researchers.

In concluding this section, I acknowledge that the personal attributes of academics that I discuss here are debatable, and this is not an exhaustive list of personal attributes that are crucial for academics' role in higher education's contribution to the public good. It may not even be a correct list. Moreover, participants of this study do not help understand how these attributes can be inculcated among those who are already in academia and those who are yet to enter the academy. Nevertheless, this list of attributes that participants provided does two things that are important for this study, both of which help us to better understand the micro-dynamics of the

complex relationship between higher education and the public good in the South African context.

Firstly, it gives us an insight into what participants believe it takes for an academic to serve the public good in the South African context, which they define in terms of the transformation imperative. This reveals another aspect of the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good that, as I argued in the introduction chapter, we miss when we study it at a macro level. Secondly, and most importantly, it tells us that academics personal attributes do matter and should not be ignored in how we think about the role of academics in higher education's contribution to the public good and in our thinking about higher education transformation for the public good. This implies that debates, policies and initiatives aimed at transforming the academic staff of universities in South Africa, as per the demands of the transformation imperative, need to look beyond academics' social identities, particularly race and gender. As shown in chapter two, debates about the transformation of the academic staff mainly focus on the under-representation of academics of colour and gender minorities (DHET, 2019, 2021; Naicker, 2016; Weber & Vandeyar, 2004). There should be a consideration of whether academics personal attributes are in line with the vision of a transformed higher education for the public good. In the following sections, I discuss each of the attributes identified by participants of this study.

Collaboration

Participants of this study conceptualised the public good of higher education as a function of the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders, and they see personal relationships as a breeding ground for collaboration. Their views suggest that collaboration is a necessary condition of possibility for higher education as a public good and for the public good. According to participants, there is not a strong enough commitment to collaboration and civic engagement at both Protea University and Yellowwood University, and South African universities generally. In their view, this limits the extent to which higher education contributes to the public good, thus weakening the connection that academics and universities have to the public good. This suggests that to expand their contribution to the public good, universities in South Africa need to adopt a more engaged and collaborative approach to scholarship.

Participants generally believe that collaboration between different stakeholders (universities, academics, government agencies, businesses, and civic society) in higher education plays an

important role in bringing about the public good (Prof Mathosa, Prof Aeron, Prof Hartman, Dr Getz, Dr Swan, Mr Martin, and Mr Dan from Protea university; and Prof Jones, Prof May, Dr Gibbs, Dr Zoziwa and Ms Randera from Yellowwood University). They understand collaboration as the act of working together involving collegiality among academics, fostering partnerships within and between universities, and working with stakeholders beyond the university to ensure coordinated efforts towards higher education for the public good.

Four participants expressly stated, though in different ways, that when academics or universities collaborate, they have a more significant contribution to the public good than when they work individually. For example, Mr Dan said that when there is "a collegial spirit, there is a more combined effort." Prof Aeron shared a similar view saying, "when we [higher education stakeholders] combine our efforts, collectively, we can move forward." In a similar line of thought, Prof May argued that when academics "build more relationships with colleagues," they "feel more supported and able to play that kind of a [public good] role." Mr Martin argued that "interventions that are useful for making a positive impact in society often require multiple skills", and they, therefore, require "inter-disciplinary" collaborations. These views present the idea that collaborative relationships enable academics to bring their different skills and expertise together and to support each other as they play their role in higher education's contribution to the public good.

According to data from both Yellowwood and Protea Universities, collaboration in higher education can take different forms, i.e., collaboration within departments, within universities, between universities and beyond the borders of the university. In the following sections, I discuss participants' views of these different forms of collaboration and how they contribute to advancing the public good agenda in higher education. Finally, I conclude these sections by analysing participants' views of what limits collaboration in the South African higher education context. This gives an insight into the conditions that must be fulfilled for collaboration to take place, which is a snippet of the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good that I argue is not adequately represented in the literature.

Intra-departmental Collaborations

The first form is collaboration between academics who work for the same department in a university. Three participants spoke about this form of collaboration: Prof Mathosa, Mr Dan, and Ms Randera. They all spoke about intradepartmental collaboration in relation to enhancing

teaching for the public good. For example, Prof Mathosa argued that conscientizing students, which is part of teaching for the public good as discussed in the previous chapters, "requires that the departmental colleagues work together. All of them realise that that is the most important thing to do." However, his observation is that there is not a coherent philosophy in his department to facilitate collaborative work. "In this department", he said, "we have each person run his own show basically." He believes this is because of "academic freedom" and that it prevents them, as a department, from agreeing on "principles that govern what we teach." According to Mr Dan, "a coherent philosophy" that ushers departments to collaborative work emerges when the department is collegial, which is about having healthy working relationships in the department.

Ms Randera used co-teaching as an example of how collaboration can happen within departments to enhance teaching and learning. She said in her department, they "do things collectively"; they "do a lot of our teaching together." She suggested that co-teaching enables them to give students more than what a single lecturer could give them. It enables them to compensate for each other's shortcomings. "When we team-teach … we spend a lot of time planning what we do more than any lecturer who just walks in there and read their slides from last year", she said. For this reason, she believes her "experience of the academic project is very different" from that of academics in other departments. In her view, this kind of collaboration is something "academics don't want to do." It is not necessarily true that academics do not collaborate in this way. There are numerous examples from the previous chapter which suggest that academics do work together within their departments. The extent to which this happens is debatable. Nevertheless, the view that Mr Randera, Prof Mathosa and Mr Dan shared about intradepartmental collaboration suggests that this form of collaboration enhances higher education's contribution to the public good by enabling academics to channel their work towards the same objective, such as student conscientisation and compensating for each other's shortcomings. Even though participants of this study spoke of intradepartmental collaborations in terms of teaching and learning, academics may collaborate in this manner for knowledge production and other processes of the public good.

Intra-university collaboration

The second form is intra-university collaboration which takes place between academics from different departments of the same university. For example, Mr Dan's view is that "more combined efforts" would bring the desired solutions for challenges that exist across

departments. This is evident in the example he made about what would happen when academics who teach courses that require their students to have a good understanding of mathematics would work together: “Mathematics has always been an issue at university, and this university has the same problem. But if we could all work together, perhaps we could come to some kind of a solution to how we address mathematics in various aspects.” This speaks of the way collaboration can enhance teaching and learning. Other participants mentioned different ways intra-university collaboration promotes higher education for the public good.

Dr Getz and Mr Martin from Protea University spoke about solidarity between academic staff and students at different campuses in South Africa in the struggle for free and decolonised education during the #FeesMustFall protests that started in 2015. Mr Martin asserted that a group of academics at Protea University organised themselves to support student activists who were arrested during the protests by assisting them to get legal representation and bail money. Both Dr Getz and Mr Martin indicated that there were groups of academics standing in solidarity with students, fighting police brutality in their campus. These two examples demonstrate collaboration between academics and between academics and students for a course that, as discussed in the previous chapters, aimed to ensure accessibility of higher education as a public good. Even though these examples speak about intra-university collaboration in the context of the #FeesMustFall protests, this form of collaboration can also take place in the context of teaching, research, and community engagement.

Inter-university Collaborations

Inter-university collaboration is when academics from different universities (local and international) work together in activities that contribute to the public good. Examples that emerged from the data included inter-university collaboration around teaching and research, both of which were perceived by participants as contributing to the public good. Prof Hartman, the Head of the Physics department at Protea University, spoke about inter-university collaboration concerning teaching. He spoke about a joint physics master’s program between Protea University and another historically black university in South Africa: “We have a joint program where we work with [another historically black university]. And in that program, we’ve trained at least about more than a hundred people over the last several years”, he said. This example shows how inter-university collaborations can enable universities to share their resources and compensate for each other’s limitations. This was also evident when Prof Hartman said: “[the other historically black university] had a lot of undergraduate students, but

they didn't have enough lecturers to have a really good postgraduate program. We had the staff to teach a postgraduate program, but we didn't have many students doing physics."

Ms Randera also spoke about inter-university collaboration in relation to teaching. Before her move to Yellowwood university, she worked at another historically white university, where they were "running, for ten years, a critical theory winter school", where they "invited all the big theorists from around the world … to come and teach a PhD cohort." This program contributed to PhD students and Academic Staff development. It is also an example of inter-university collaborations at an international level, contributing to the public good through teaching. Mr Randera also spoke about this form of collaboration in relation to research. Her example was about writing collaboratively: "I've written two pieces with my partner who happens to be at [Protea University]. We have written two pieces on the student movement together. So, I try to write with other people", she said.

Dr Zoziwa and Mr Martin spoke about inter-university collaboration only for research. At the time of the interview, Dr Zoziwa was working on a research project about reading "with colleagues from Australia" and another historically black university of technology in South Africa. She was the Principal Investigator for the South African component of the project. Mr Martin was working with a PhD student from a historically white university at the time of the interview. He was helping her create a database that other people could use for research. This database came from her PhD research project. Mr Martin highlighted that a project like this could bring together different disciplines with "skills of computing", "skills of social enquiry", "skills of design", which has the potential to create "more effective tools" to solve social problems. He believes that "interventions that are useful for like making a positive impact in society often require multiple skills." This suggests that collaborations can also be multidisciplinary in nature.

All the examples provided in this subsection suggest that inter-university collaboration allows for mutual support, exchanges of knowledge and sharing of resources between academics from different universities. This advanced the public good by making full use of the resources and expertise across different universities. However, what these examples do not point out is that in a higher education system like the one in South Africa, these collaborations may be negatively affected by power imbalances. This is because of institutional inequalities associated with the country's apartheid past, which disadvantaged some universities,

particularly historically black universities, and privileged others, historically white universities (Bunting, 2006; Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

Collaboration Beyond the University

It also emerged from the data that academics can collaborate with stakeholders beyond the university for research, teaching, service learning, and community engagement or social responsiveness. Examples from the data include collaboration with schools, state institutions, businesses, and civil society. Six participants mentioned the role of collaboration between academics and stakeholders beyond the university in higher education's contribution to the public good. These include Prof Aeron, Prof Hartman and Dr Swan from Protea University, and Prof May, Dr Zoziwa, Dr Elba, and Ms Randera from Yellowwood University. Prof Aeron argued that if public universities are to serve the public good, they need to work together with the government, "guided by the national development plan[19]." "I think public good for us is not working on our own objectives because we're all going in different directions. But now the government has given us two objectives to work towards, and that's to eliminate poverty and inequality." This is just one way in which universities can work together with the government.

Prof Hartman indicated that his department also worked with companies such as "NEXA", "MINTEX", "CSIR", and "NEMISA" to get research supervisors for their postgraduate students. "The one year, we had 30 students. We hadn't really planned on 30, and we couldn't get supervisors for all of these students. So, we then had to go out and talk to other people", he said. He added that some of their students ended up getting jobs in these companies because of this collaboration, "one of the students is now a middle manager at [one of the companies]." Interestingly, this collaboration was not an official partnership between these companies and the university, but it came out of personal relationships that Prof Hartman had with people in these companies. When asked how this collaboration was initiated, he said, "it was more of an individual initiative". "We contacted people that we knew at these institutions, and they were then very keen because most places like that also have some sort of a mission to also train students", he added. This demonstrates the significance of personal relationships as a breeding ground for collaborations. As I will show later, other participants also emphasised the importance of personal relationships as the common starting point for collaborations.

[19] The National Development plan is a national policy document of the government of South Africa that is aimed at addressing issues poverty, inequality and unemployment in the country.

Dr Zoziwa, Dr Elba, and Dr Swan emphasised the need for academics to work with schools as well. As Dr Zoziwa said, academics "need to form collaborations with schools, more partnerships" to help them better prepare students for university because universities are "getting the product of schools." This forms part of community engagement or what others refer to as social responsiveness. As discussed in the previous chapters, it forms part of higher education's contribution to the public good. Dr Swan provided an example of a collaboration between schools and the university aimed at preparing students better for university. As Mr Dan said, many students at Protea University struggle with mathematics. To try and address this challenge, the Mathematics and the Physics departments at Protea University collaborated on a community engagement project to help schools with mathematics. This came out from an interview I conducted with Dr Swan, who said, "We've just been asked by physics to collaborate with them where we gonna look at schools where students are gonna be bussed in from their schools to here where we gonna be providing some assistance in maths …" This program is an example of both inter-departmental collaboration and collaboration beyond the borders of the university.

Dr Getz, Prof May, Ms Randera, Mr Martin, and Prof Logan spoke about collaborating with civil society. This includes academics serving as board members in NGOs (Prof Logan), working with activist organisations in both activism and research (Mr Martin, Dr Getz, and Ms Randera), and working with Community Based Organisations for community-engaged learning (Prof May). I will not discuss the details of all the examples participants made about collaborating with civil society, but only those that stood out in terms of their contribution to the public good.

At the time of the interview, Dr Getz was starting a participatory action research project in one of the neighbourhoods around Protea University. This was:

> … partly a research project but also partly a way of working with a new group of activists that are wanting to rethink and reboot street committees and civics and think about how to take back the streets of [the neighbourhood] without using the police but by actually by using community, organising and community projects. (Dr Getz).

Her role as a researcher was "tracking their progress" and "bringing mediators to do training with them, linking them up with other movements similar to the movements in the city." Over and above this project, she also does "support and training work on political education schools" for social movements. These examples demonstrate the role of collaboration in advancing

knowledge production, teaching, learning, and social transformation beyond the university. This, as discussed in the previous chapters, is part of a notion of the public good that emerges clearly from my participants.

Prof May's words on community-engaged learning also stood out. She runs "a community-engaged learning course" which is about "engaging communities" with "off-campus classes" organised with different community-based organisations. She argued that in this course, students "learn about citizenship", "the constitution", and the different kinds of social injustices that took place and continue to take place in the city. She teaches this course collaboratively with some members of a community-based organisation. This suggests that universities can also enhance the learning of students by leveraging on the knowledge that sits outside of the university, in community organisations that are doing transformation work in society. This sharing of knowledge is seen as contributing to the public good, in terms of conscientizing students and helping them become active and critical citizens. In the next subsection, which concludes this section on collaboration, I discuss some factors that participants see as limiting collaboration. This gives us an insight into what facilitates collaborative work and what can be done to strengthen the public good contribution of higher education through collaboration in all its different forms.

What Limits Collaboration?

Even though, as discussed above, participants generally agree that collaboration is a necessary condition for higher education's contribution to the public good, there was also a sense that academics and universities in South Africa do not collaborate enough. For example, according to Prof Jones, universities in South Africa operate as "island universities and [Yellowwood University] is a particular island." Prof Hartman also argues that "generally universities in South Africa don't work together very much", and he described that as a tendency "to be very insular." Numerous issues emerged from the data, which were understood by participants of this study as factors that limit collaboration, and consequently, the extent to which higher education contributes to the public good.

Participants from Protea University focused on issues that limit intra-university collaborations. They asserted that the structure of the timetable at Protea University does not make available a common time for academics to interact with each other and build relationships, which they believe are a necessary foundation for collaborations (Mr Martin, Mr Dan, Prof Aeron). "We

have no lunch period here at the university … That means if you try to even gather people together at lunchtime, you will not find one lunchtime where everybody is available because the schedule is just setup like that", said Mr Martin. Mr Dan expressed the same point, "We do try to collaborate, but it is tenuous. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work. But the problem we have is that we don't have time where we can all just sit together." Even though they believe that the university management can change the structure of the timetable and "create spaces for collaboration" (Mr Martin).

Some feel that without a willingness from academics, this will not make a difference, which is one of the reasons in the previous section I argued that academics' personal attributes matter and should not be ignored. Mr Dan, for example, argued that collaboration "shouldn't be a forced thing. It should be something that people feel they want to do. And unfortunately, that's not what most people feel like they can do at times." Prof Hartman expressed the same views, saying, "if you don't have people down on the ground who want to collaborate, it's very hard for the top management to say you must work with [a particular company]." Therefore, the ability and willingness to work with others are important in strengthening collaborative work among academics. This has to do with individual academics' personal attitudes towards collaborative work.

Participants from Yellowwood University focused mainly on what can be termed academic tribalism (Becher & Trowler, 2001) and competitiveness as some of the issues they perceive as limiting collaboration in its different forms. Professor Jones, for example, argued that academic tribalism, as described by Becher and Trowler (2001), is also another limiting factor for collaboration among academics. "In an institution like [Yellowwood University], tribes are still alive and well", she said. This relates to the points made by Mr Martin and Ms Randera about specialist academics. Mr Martin argued that "are specialists in particular techniques within their discipline" limit themselves to their speciality and discipline. Ms Randera asserted that academics:

> Have to be willing to accept that even as they are specialists in a particular thing, they have a small part of the picture, and that part of getting a more complex and therefore critical picture is about collaboration with people in your department, with people across disciplines, with people between here and [Protea University].

According to Prof May, being "competitive" is one of the factors that limit collaboration among academics. She argued that her "immediate [Yellowwood University] working environment

very supportive, very team-oriented. However, I think the bigger institution, people are still really in silos." Her views relate to the points made by Mr Martin and Dr Zoziwa about incentives. Mr Martin argued that "incentives are individualised" and "that means that people get a particular rating as individuals as opposed to being part of a team rating system." According to Dr Zoziwa, the National Research Fund, which rates academics, contradicts itself when it comes to collaboration. "They are constantly pushing you to collaboration", but they are also expecting academics to produce "single-authored publications." (Dr Zoziwa). In other words, individualised incentives and ratings of academics encourage them to work in "silos", which makes the academy more competitive than collaborative.

In summary, participants of this study generally agree that collaboration, in its different forms, is a necessary condition that promotes higher education's contribution to the public good. Although the notion of collaboration is not new in relation to the public good of higher education, the issues I discussed in this section bring to the discussion about collaboration the significance of the role played by personal relationships in processes of forging collaborative initiatives. Almost all the participants' examples demonstrate how collaborations come out of the personal relationships that academics have with others. Despite these examples, which show that there are collaborations taking place, participants suggested that universities and academics in South Africa generally work in silos, they do not collaborate enough. The factors they identified as limiting collaboration gives us an insight into what can be strengthened to increase levels of collaboration. Firstly, over and above shortening personal relationships, there need to be attractive incentives for collaborative, inter and cross-disciplinary work. Moreover, to enhance the contribution of South Africa's higher education to the public good, universities need to adopt a more engaged and collaborative approach.

Higher Education Funding

The last condition of possibility that emerged from the date is somewhat obvious. As stated in the literature review, the issue of funding remains a subject of ongoing debate in both the local (Hodes, 2017; Pennington et al., 2017; Wangenge-Ouma, 2012, 2018; Wangenge-Ouma et al., 2009) and international literature (Marginson, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2016; Oketch, 2016; G. Williams, 2016) on higher education and the public. What emerged from the data of this study is that academics in South Africa support three arguments in this literature on higher education funding. The first is the argument that funding for higher education is scarce due to austerity, among other things. The second is the argument that if higher education is a public good and

for the public good, it must be funded from the public purse. Lastly, the argument that adopting private funding models opens higher education to commodification and the risk of being captured and used as an instrument of advancing private interests at the expense of the public good.

The general view among the participants of this study was that universities need money to fulfil their public good roles, and funding is limited and hard to find in South Africa. This view came from three participants from Protea University (Prof Aeron, Prof Hartman, and Mr Martin) and six participants from Yellowwood University (Prof Jones, Prof Smith, Prof Logan, Dr Gibbs, Dr Zoziwa and Ms Randera). The words of Prof Logan aptly captured this view: "Universities just don't have the money", whereas "everything innovative, anything that is tied to knowledge production, needs money." As indicated in the literature review, the view that funding for higher education is scarce is a common one in both local and international higher education literature (Marginson, 2018; Wangenge-Ouma, 2018). There are a few issues that participants of this study pointed out as contributing factors to the challenges related to higher education funding.

One is the issue of austerity, which Prof Smith sees as "part of the sort of neoliberal economics." Four participants argued that higher education is "under the shackles of austerity, fiscal austerity." (Dr Gibbs). They argued that government funding for higher education has decreased over the years amid increasing demand for higher education (Dr Gibbs and Prof Aeron). For example, Prof Smith argued that "[t]he NRF has cut back on funding to academics." Prof Jones shared a similar view: "NRF rating money is gone. For some academics like myself, that was all we had." This argument about the decrease in state funding echoes what has been said in the literature on higher education in South Africa (GroundUp, 2015; Hodes, 2017; Naidu & Dell, 2020). However, I must say, the issue of austerity is a global problem (Marginson, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2016; Mohamedbhai, 2008). Prof Hartman and Prof Smith expressed a slightly different view from the argument about the dwindling of state funding. They argued that student numbers have increased due to massification post-1994, but there has not been a corresponding increase in funding. In the words of Prof Hartman: "Now the numbers have increased, but the funding hasn't increased all that much." This view can be supported by recent statistics on South African government expenditure on higher education (Khuluvhe & Netshifhefhe, 2021). These different views point to the complexity of the issue of higher education funding.

While most participants discussed scarcity of funding as a phenomenon experienced throughout higher education, Dr Zoziwa suggested that the scarcity of funds is worse in the humanities and social sciences than in the STEM disciplines. She argued that the allocation of available funding prioritises STEM disciplines: “The funding goes to science and technology, you know, your STEM. But it’s hardly ever in the humanities or the social sciences where, I feel, a whole lot is happening”, she said. This view suggests that the prioritisation of STEM disciplines limits the accessibility of funding for humanities and social sciences and the extent to which these disciplines contribute to the public good. It affirms the findings of the 2011 Consensus Study on the State of Humanities in South Africa, as discussed in the literature review (ASSAf, 2011, p. 15).

While acknowledging the necessity of funding, Dr Gibbs and Ms Randera suggest that the sacristy of funding should not be used as an excuse. On the one hand, Dr Gibbs argued that the challenges around funding have been used as an excuse for “opting out of the responsibility” to get things done and that academics seem to “accept this as a norm.” He added: “I do not accept as part of what I do that necessarily I have to subscribe to a taken for granted assumption that everything I do will be met with, ‘Sorry. There isn’t sufficient funding for that’.” On the other hand, Ms Randera argued that “the financial question is not the central one.” She believes that “[t]here is so much more going on than just the money part of it. And yet we get trapped in the conversation. The money is just a small part of the question of the public good.” Her view is that making the funding issue a central one overshadows other important public good issues, such as the decolonisation of the curriculum and the transformation of the professoriate: “We don’t just want no fees. We want to talk about the curriculum. We want to know why there’s no black professor, full professor, women here”, she said.

Even though funding is an obvious condition of possibility for higher education’s contribution to the public good, The following section turns to participants’ perceptions of the implication that the scarcity of funding has on the public good. The previous paragraphs suggest that participants generally agree that the availability and accessibility of funding promote and enhance higher educations’ contribution to the public good, and its scarcity limits this contribution. However, participants believe that scarcity of funding, which they strongly associate with fiscal austerity, has negative consequences for the public good of higher education, which include resource constraints, inadequate students’ allowances, and the adoption of private funding. In their view, these issues affect the quality of students’ experience

in higher education, teaching and learning, knowledge production, all of which they deemed to be key aspects of their notion of the public good, as discussed in the previous chapters. According to Mr Martin, a Bioinformatics Lecturer at Protea University, the shortage of funding has academics operating within a "resource-constrained system." In the words of Prof Jones, a Professor of Higher Education at Yellowwood University, "the staffing, the resources to teach, to tutor and to do research, that part is just shrinking", and she believes that this is "a real obstacle" to the public good. This is because universities have had to cut down on their spending due to the scarcity of funding. According to Prof Logan, an Education Policy Professor at Yellowwood University, this made universities become "far more managerial." According to Ms Randera, an Education Lecturer at Yellowwood University, one of the problems is that "student numbers have gone up, but academic numbers haven't."

According to Prof Smith, a Language Education Professor at Yellowwood University, the problem of resource constraints is evidence of the impact of "neoliberal economics" that is "very much adopted within universities." She also argued that, because of the "huge pressures" that austerity places on academics, it "is making academic work almost very difficult to do." This difficulty ultimately limits the extent to which academics contribute to the public good. According to Prof Jones, these resource constraints are an "obstacle" and an "impediment" to the advancement of the public good in higher education. For some participants, working in a resource-constrained system is "frustrating" (Mr Martin, a Bioinformatics Lecturer at Protea University and Prof Logan, an Education Policy Professor at Yellowwood University) and "irritating" (Dr Gibbs, an Education Lecturer at Yellowwood University). These views suggest that operating in a resource-constrained system limits the extent to which academics contribute to the public good.

As discussed in the previous chapter, participants perceive access and the quality of students' experience in higher education as key to the intrinsic notion of the public good. According to Ms Randera, an Education Lecturer at Yellowwood University, resource constraints in a massifying higher education system lower the quality of students' experience in higher education. She argued that the purpose of massification is to ensure that "more people who didn't have access [to higher education] have access." She believes insufficient funding "does not make it a quality experience." For this reason, she argued that for massification to serve the public good, giving students good quality experience, "it has to be well funded." Like other

participants in this study, she implied that this funding must come from the public purse. However, as I will show later, this view is not unproblematic.

Massification has increased the numbers of students from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining access to higher education in South Africa. Three participants perceive insufficient funding for students from disadvantaged backgrounds as a contributing factor to student poverty and food insecurity (Prof Mathosa, Dr Getzand Prof Jones). As discussed in the literature review, these issues are common at universities in South Africa (Dominguez-Whitehead, 2015; Rudolph et al., 2018; Van den Berg & Raubenheimer, 2015). As stated in the previous chapter, some academics have had to use their own money to help financially needy students meet their basic needs (Prof Mathosa and Dr Getz). Dr Getz highlighted the issue of food insecurity on campus and affirmed that it is not uncommon for academics at Protea University to dig into their pockets to help students meet their basic needs.

These problems were seen as affecting the quality of students' university experience and the processes of teaching and learning, which are central to participants' notion of the public good. For example, Prof Jones, a Professor of Higher Education at Yellowwood University, argued that insufficient funding for students from disadvantaged backgrounds becomes a "financial barrier" to their learning. She argued, "there's obviously financial barriers" because some students come to university with great academic potential. However, "they are sitting in their class, and they are thinking, 'How am I going to make ends meet today? Where's my lunch gonna come from if the NSFAS money has already been spent?'" This example suggests that living allowances from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, which most students from disadvantaged backgrounds depend on, do not adequately meet students' needs. It echoes the findings of McMillan and Barrie' (2012) study about student retention that I discussed in the literature review.

Participants also raised concerns about universities adopting private funding models. Mr Martin and Ms Randera suggested that the shrinking of state funding has increased universities' reliance on student fees and private donor funding, and they believe this comes with its challenges. Firstly, they suggested that donors often dictate the research agenda for the projects they fund. Mr Martin made an example with European and North American funding agencies, arguing that "their focus will tend to be on research topics that are more of interest to them." One example he made was the call for research grant applications, which was out at the time of the interview, in the field of antibiotic-resistant bacteria: "Yes, antibiotic-resistant bacteria

is an issue here [in Africa], but it's an even bigger issue in those countries with a history of high antibiotic use … the international funders will prioritise topics that make more sense for them," he said. In the same line of thought, Ms Randera argued that donors influence the radicalness of the academics' research: "Where the money comes from, whether you get money or not, how much you get. This all influences the radicalness of your project …" she said. These participants' concerns speak to the role of knowledge production as academics' contribution to the public good, which participants believe should be radical and locally relevant, as discussed in earlier chapters.

Moreover, participants' views about universities' reliance on donor funding suggest that it poses a risk to academic freedom and autonomy, a concern that has been raised in the literature on higher education (Pennington, et al., 2017). This was also demonstrated in the example made by Prof Hartman, who argued that "universities take their academic freedom very seriously", but if a funder "dangles a carrot with some money on it, then academics are quite happy to change their research interests as well." This can be problematic because it puts researchers at risk of being used to push donors' agendas, which may be at the expense of the broader public. For example, the research on antibiotic bacteria that Mr Martin referred to may be regarded as what Alatas (2000) calls intellectual imperialism because it is conducted in communities that will not necessarily benefit from its findings. This also suggests that the source of research funding may determine the public that benefits from research. As indicated in the previous chapters, participants of this study believe that local communities should benefit from the research conducted locally. However, as Mr Martin stated, it is "difficult" to get funding "that is specifically targeted around the needs of your community here." In this way, the scarcity of funding limits the extent to which higher education benefits local communities.

In summary, participants from both universities generally agree that higher education *as* a public good and *for* the public good requires funding and that the scarcity of funding is one of the challenges facing higher education in South Africa, even though a few of them do not see it as the main challenge. This affirms some of the arguments in the literature review about the dearth of funding for higher education as a global phenomenon (Marginson, 2011; Mitchell et al., 2016; Mohamedbhai, 2008; Naidu & Dell, 2020; Pennington et al., 2017). Moreover, it is evident in participants' perceptions that they see higher education funding as primarily the responsibility of the state. Two participants explicitly stated this view. One is Prof Smith, who argued that "the South African Government has not given sufficient priority to higher education

institutions." The other is Prof Aeron, who argued that universities are not receiving enough money from the state, which suggests that the state should be investing more in education. The general implication of the position is that if higher education is to remain a public good and for the public good, the state needs to dig deep into the public purse to increase higher education funding. This view is not unproblematic.

Firstly, participants adopt a simplistic view of the funding problem. As discussed in the literature review, the issue of state funding for higher education is more complex than how participants present it here. For example, incentive funding from the National Research Fund may have decreased as participants suggest (Breetzke & Hedding, 2020), but state budget allocation for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme has increased substantially since 1999, and even further increases have taken place since 2015 until it was affected by budget reallocations due to the covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (Dlamini, 2019). However, to say NSFAS funding has increased is not to say universities in South Africa are receiving enough money to fulfil their public good role in society.

Secondly, participants imply that depending on state funding, rather than private donors, exempts universities and their academics from the risk of losing their academic freedom and autonomy. This is also based on the assumption that the state always acts in the best interest of the public and that competition for state funding is disinterested. Both these assumptions are unfounded. The literature shows that this is not always the case, particularly in South Africa, where the state in general and agencies such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme are stained with corruption and other administrative problems (Cloete, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2019).

Lastly, participants' argument that the state should increase its budget for higher education assumes a bottomless public purse, and it does not consider the fact that other public goods such as health, infrastructure, welfare services, etc., also need to be funded from the same fiscus. As discussed in the literature review, arguments for increasing state funding for higher education should take into account the demands of other public goods on the fiscus (Allais, 2018). However, these three problems with participants' views do not nullify the significance they place of funding as a condition of possibility for higher education's contribution to the public good.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the conditions of possibility for higher educations' contribution to the public good (transformation, academic's personal qualities, collaboration, and funding) from the perspectives of academics from Protea University and Yellowwood University. This discussion further illuminates the transformation imperative that is at the heart of participants' understanding of the public good contribution of higher education. Even though the transformation imperative is at the heart of their notion of the public good, the personal qualities participants identified go beyond issues of race and gender that dominate the transformation discourse in the literature. In my view, this suggests that if higher education in South Africa is to transform for the public good, the transformation of the academic staff should be about more than just their social identities, which merely transforms the face of the academy, but should also consider whether their personal qualities, values and attitudes are in line with the vision of a transformed higher education that we are working towards.

There are some tensions that emerged from this discussion. Firstly, it's the promotion of collaboration in the context where there are higher incentives for individual work. Higher incentives for single-authored publications do not support the promotion of collaborative work. The other tension is the expectation on the government, the universities, and their academics to do more with less. Participants ague for an increase in state funding without considering the limitations of the public purse and the increasing and competing demands on it. Moreover, participants' views suggest that universities and academics need to do more for the public good in the presence of numerous resource constraints, which they acknowledge as a challenge for higher education in South Africa and the world over.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

This study was inspired by my engagement with the literature on higher education and the public good, through which I found numerous contestations around the notion of the public good as it relates to higher education. Amid a large amount of literature from the global north, there was very little emerging from the global south, while there was evidence to suggest that context is important in how this relationship is understood. This raised the question of how the relationship between higher education and the public good is understood by academics in the South African context of higher education, which is strongly framed by the country's colonial and apartheid histories. This question is not addressed in the literature because most of it analyses the relationship between higher education and the public good at a macro-level, which mainly provides an abstract understanding of this relationship and does not give a deep enough insight into its dynamics in practice. Therefore, in the following sections, I summarise the answers I found for the three central questions of this study, my contribution to the body of knowledge, the limitations of this study and my recommendations for future research.

Answering the Research Questions

In this study, I sought to establish academics' understanding of the public good as it relates to higher education in South Africa. To this end, I have shown that higher education is seen as a public good (an intrinsic notion of the public good) and as contributing to the public good (an instrumental notion of the public good). This public good role of higher education is mainly understood in terms of the transformation imperative of post-1994 South Africa, which emphasises addressing the injustices of the country's colonial and apartheid pasts through redress, social justice, inclusivity, reduction of inequality, and alleviating poverty and unemployment, among other things. This supports arguments for transformation made in the emerging literature on higher education and the public good in South Africa (Ashwin & Case, 2018; Bozalek & Leibowitz, 2012; Heleta, 2016; Joubert & Martins, 2013; Leibowitz, 2012; Suelleen & Mkhize, 2018; Unterhalter et al., 2019).

The second question, which is the main question for this study, investigates the roles academics play in higher education's contribution to the public good. To this effect, I have shown that academics play multiple roles that can either be in conflict or complement each other (teaching, research and supervision, community engagement, activism, public intellectualism, mentoring

and role modelling). In participants' view, their roles are not valued equally by universities. Those that are ascribed more values are better incentivised, which makes them prioritised more by academics. Moreover, there is an argument for academics to do more community engagement, activism, public intellectualism, student support, and locally relevant knowledge production. This does not consider the resource constraints and the already high workload facing academics, which raises the question: 'if academics are to do more, at what cost?'

The last question explores the conditions of possibility for higher education to be and contribute to the public good. Transformation is a condition of possibility because of the continuing colonial and apartheid legacies that interfere with the public good role of higher education. I also found that, in participants' view, personal qualities such as progressiveness, reflexiveness, critical and political consciousness, and social competence are necessary for academics to serve the public good. Though the transformation imperative is at the heart of participants' notion of the public good, these go beyond issues of race and gender that dominate the transformation discourse. I also found that collaboration, in its different forms, is seen by participants as an important condition for the public good role of higher education and that individual personal relationships play a crucial role in facilitating collaboration. The last condition of possibility was a somewhat obvious one, funding. Universities need funds to carry out their public good role in society.

Contribution to Knowledge

By answering the questions summarized above, based on perceptions and experiences of academics as one of the key role players in enacting the public good of higher education, I have drawn attention to the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good. This is my main contribution to knowledge, which helps connect what is said about higher education and the public good at a macro level to what is happening at the micro-level. In other words, our understanding of the relationship between higher education and the public good must be grounded in, reflective of, and engaged with the lived experiences of people in the higher education sector. For this to happen, researchers have to initiate a dialogue between the experiences of people on the ground and the abstract concepts in literature. In this thesis, I have illuminated the micro-level dynamics of this relationship in the following ways:

a) I have shown that academics' vision of what the public good contribution of higher education is and should be is not always in sync with how universities organise and

position themselves in the world. This is mainly evidenced by resistance to transformation initiatives in historically white universities and how historically black universities are transforming themselves in the image of historically white universities. This tension between academics and their institutions reveals the complexity of the link between higher education and the public good from a micro-level point of view.

b) I have drawn attention to the significance of the institutional context and how South Africa's locational and temporal settings play a key role in how the public good of higher education is understood and enacted. Even though both Yellowwood University and Protea University are in the same country, their histories are different, and that creates a particular institutional context that shapes the enactment of the public good of higher education in nuanced ways.

c) The connection between transformation and the participants' notion of the public good brings to light the significance of considering the context (historical, social, political, economic, geographical etc.) in understanding the public good and the idea that what is regarded as a public good in one context may not necessarily be a public good in another context. Even though the notion of transformation is at the centre of academics' conception of the public good in the South African context, this may not be the case in countries with different contextual factors from South Africa.

d) I have shown that individual personal relationships play a crucial role as the foundation on which collaborations for the public good are built. This is a crucial factor that the literature misses because it focuses on the macro-level of the relationship between higher education and the public good. It is a finding that future research can build on to further explore the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good.

e) I have also shown that the personal qualities of academics do matter in higher educations' contribution to the public good. This is particularly important in how we think about the transformation of the academic staff as not just about racial and gender identifiers. Even though the list of these qualities provided by participants of the study may not be correct, it gives us an insight into the role of individual academics' personal qualities in contributing to higher education and the public good. The key contribution

of this study is that the personal attributes of academics' matter in higher education's contribution to the public good.

These five aspects of my contribution to knowledge point to the micro-level dynamics of the relationship between higher education and the public good, which I have argued are not adequately discussed in the literature. Yet, despite this contribution to knowledge, my study is not without limitations.

Limitations

In the methodology chapter, I discussed the methodological limitations of the study. I acknowledged that it only focuses on two out of twenty-six diverse universities in South Africa and that the sample of academics from these universities was not as diverse as I would have wanted it to be because of the difficulties I experienced in accessing academics who were willing to participate in my study. Being forced to use a snowball sampling method, I ended up with a sample of participants in the same circles who have similar views on higher education issues and the public good. This did not give me a wide enough range of perceptions on how academics in South Africa understand the issues in question in this study. Moreover, all the participants from Yellowwood University teach in a field linked to education; there were no participants from a STEM background, humanities, or other areas of the social sciences. For this reason, and the nature of their work, there were not many concerns with academic excellence narrowly defined by research outputs in their discussion of the idea of public good, although this is a thread in some of the perspectives from Protea University.

There may be deferring views from academics who are outside the circles from which I drew my sample. For example, other academics may have an understanding of the public good of higher education that is not as strongly influenced by the transformation imperative as the one held by participants of this study. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be understood as representing the general view of academics in South Africa. Nevertheless, they give us an insight into the intricacies of the link between higher education and the public good at the micro-level from the vantage point of academics who work at public universities in South Africa, which serves the main purpose of this study. Nevertheless, having participants who mainly understand the public good of higher education in similar ways is also the strength of this study. This gives us detailed insights into the views of these academics, who can loosely

be termed ‘transformation academics’, although it does not give us a wider range of views from across those working in South African universities.

I also acknowledge that the personal attributes of academics that emerged from the data are limited to participants’ notion of the public good of higher education, which is strongly influenced by the transformation imperative. Different qualities would be necessary for a different notion of higher education’s contribution to the public good. This, therefore, is to say that the list of personal qualities that emerge from the data is not exhaustive. Nevertheless, the actual list is not more important than the fact that the personal attributes of academics’ matter in higher educations’ contribution to the public good. What those attributes are would always depend on how the public good of higher education is defined in context.

Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, the public good of higher education is a product of the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the fact that this thesis draws only on the voices of academics is a limitation on its own. My decision to focus only on academic’s views was solely for the purpose of ensuring a manageable scope for the study. It is not to suggest that their views are more important than the views of others, though they are important to consider for the reason I have stated. I do acknowledge that the views of other stakeholders are important, though I did not include them in this study.

Implications of the findings

There are numerous implications that I draw from the findings of this study, as summarised above:

a) Findings of this study on the role of academics in higher education’s contribution to the public good call for more focused attention on the consequences of what we do as teachers and university communities, both intentionally and inadvertently, so that higher education can be more socially just and responsive to student and societal needs amidst contemporary challenges.

b) Ascribing more value and incentives to one role may be to the detriment of other roles, as participants have suggested in the case of the research-teaching dilemma and the expectation of collaborative work, while there are higher incentives for individual work.

c) In my view, arguments about the role of academics in higher education’s contribution to the public good must acknowledge that academics are limited in their capacity and,

therefore, cannot play all the public good roles. Nevertheless, there must be an emphasis on the need to ensure that, as public servants, they prioritise the public good agenda in whatever role they choose.

Recommendations

The findings of this study draw attention to the significance of academics' personal attributes, which still need to be explored more. Research has been done on graduate attributes. In addition, research has been conducted on what is called public good professionals (McLean & Walker, 2010, 2012). However, not much is known about the attributes of academics that can produce the types of graduates that will commit themselves to serve the public good and how these attributes can be developed in practice. There is a need for further exploration of the academics' attributes. I also recommend that future research investigate how attributes relevant to the public good agenda can be developed among the academic staff.

This study has also indicated that personal relationships play a crucial role in collaboration. However, given the limitations of the sample of this study, more research is needed to establish a better understanding of this role, the factors that shape these relationships, and what makes them work effectively for establishing collaborations for the public good. Such research can produce insights that can help facilitate better collaborations between different stakeholders involved in higher education as and for the public good.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Wits Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL)

Wits School of Education, 27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, 2193, Johannesburg, South Africa,
REAL Centre, Private Bag x3, Wits 2050 • Telephone +27 (0)11 717 3076 • Fax: +27 (0)11 717 3029

TITLE OF STUDY: Academics' Perceptions of their Role in Serving 'Public Good': A Study of Academics from Two Universities in South Africa

Dear Participant,

I am Mthobisi Ndaba and I am a PhD Candidate at REAL Centre, at Wits School of Education. I am conducting a study on the role of academics in serving public good.

This study aims to explore academics' understanding of the notion of public good in relation to higher education and what they perceive as their role in serving the public good in higher education. It will also explore what they perceive as impediments and favourable conditions for them in serving the public good.

As someone who is an academic at an institution of higher learning in South Africa, I believe that your knowledge and insight will be especially valuable and I very much hope that you will be willing to undertake this interview. During the interview, we would also like to be able to record the conversation using a tape recorder. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. This is for no other purpose but that of ensuring that I would be able to more accurately capture your responses during the interview and during transcription.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you have the right to withdraw your consent and stop the interview at any time or decline to answer any question without giving reasons. There are no anticipated risks that will be encountered by your participation in this study.

I hope that the study will generate interesting and useful insights on higher education and the public good. I hope that it will contribute to making clear the role that is paid by academics in higher education's contribution to public good.

The data collected will be analyzed and documented in a thesis which I will submit to the University of the Witwatersrand. It is envisaged that the research findings may be used for academic purposes including the publication of books, journals and/or conference proceedings.

The information and insights you share in the interview will be regarded as confidential. I will attempt to ensure anonymity of participants by using pseudonyms. However, given the nature of the research, it will be important to link perspectives to participants, and therefore participants will be identified by their institution. This means that we cannot guarantee anonymity, and we request that you acknowledge that you are aware of this. All research data will be kept securely in a locked cabinet and will be completely destroyed 5 years after completion of the project.

Wits Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL)

Wits School of Education, 27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, 2193, Johannesburg, South Africa,
REAL Centre, Private Bag x3, Wits 2050 • Telephone +27 (0)11 717 3076 • Fax: +27 (0)11 717 3029

If you have any further questions before we start the interview, please feel free to raise at any point in time.

If there is anything further you would like to raise you are welcome to contact me, Mthobisi Ndaba at: sompisikandaba@gmail.com, +27 73 8472 527 or My Supervisors Professor Stephanie Allais (WITS) electronically at: matseleng.allais@wits.ac.za, Phone: +27 11 717 3076 or Professor Elaine Unterhalter (UCL) at: unterhalter@ucl.ac.uk,

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Yours Sincerely

Mthobisi Ndaba

centre for researching education and labour

Appendix B: Ethics Clearance

Wits School of Education

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3221 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

24 July 2018

Student Number: 538665

Protocol Number: 2018ECE015D

Dear Mthobisi Ndaba

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:

Academics' Perceptions of their Role in Serving the 'Public Good': A Study At Two Universities in South Africa

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 Mabetha

Wits School of Education
011 717-3416

cc Supervisor - Prof Stephanie Allais

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

I, _____ am willing to participate in Mthobisi Ndaba's research study.

- I understand that there will be no direct benefit for me in participating in this study and that there are no potential risks involved.
- I understand that participation is voluntary and that there will be no benefits for participation.
- I also understand that I do not have to answer every question and that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.
- I understand that my name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my institution will not be revealed.
- I understand that I can ask to not to be audiotaped and that all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.
- I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet. My questions about participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily.
- I give the researcher Mthobisi Ndaba the permission to audio-record the interview. I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

TITLE OF STUDY: Academics' Perceptions of their Role in Serving 'Public Good': A Study of Academics from Two Universities in South Africa

Main Question	Issues To Probe and Explore
1. May you please tell me what lead you to become an academic?	Look out, and probe more, in influences such as community participation, social and political activism. How long have you been an academic?
1. What part of your job give you the greatest satisfaction? 2. What part of your job gives you the most frustration?	
3. May you please tell me more about your experience of the university as a workplace?	This may also relate to whether universities provide conditions that are favourable for academics to serve the public good. Policies, institutional culture, employment relations, collegiality, collaborations.
4. May you please share with me how you understand • What is meant by/the notion of the public good? • What does this mean in relation to higher education? • What shapes your understanding of higher education and the public good? • Do you think other academics have the same understanding of as you, if not, what do you think is their understanding of the notion of public good?	Keep **discussion very open** so that allows for any issues that the person associates with higher education and the public good to come out. Try to unpack their input so that it speaks to what we have been characterising as instrumental or intrinsic notions of public good linked to higher education. Some key ideas they might raise would be: **Public goods (plural)-** non-rivalrous and non-excludable goods **Public good (singular)-** more normative, more collective in orientation **Instrumental** • Skills and knowledge needed for national economic development, including things like health care, education, infrastructural development • Innovation including technological development and social realignments

- Political and social stability or increases intolerance

Intrinsic (Public Sphere)

- Value of higher education as a physical and cultural space of active reflection for responsible and active citizenry, that creates ideas about social citizenship or an enhanced sphere for comment and criticism of political economy or socio-cultural arrangements
- Development of critical thinking
- Space for interrogation of social challenges and addressing of injustices, including those perpetuated in the past

Do they **connect any of these issues** (i.e. instrumental and intrinsic approaches) – so for example, do you need protected spaces for debate and intellectual engagement to ensure political and social stability?

5. What role do you think academics play in higher education's contribution to public good?
    - How does your work contribute to public good?

Responses may be related, but not limited to:

Teaching

- It would be interesting to explore what kind of teaching contributes to the public good.

Research

- What are their research interests?
- Explore "socially relevant" Research
- The impact of incentives
- Where do they publish and how do they choose the journals to publish in?

Community Service

- What could be meant by this

Activism

- What kind of activism are they involved in?

How do these relate to:

Transformation, human and community development, democratisation, Social justice

6. What would you describe as qualities of an academic who serves the public good?

Responses may vary here, It would be important here to explore how these characteristics help academics serve public good?

- How are they acquired or developed?
- Do they think that most academics in South Africa have these qualities?
- What would help new academics to develop these qualities?

7. What do you think are some of the key impediments to academics contribution to public good?

Allow person to articulate what they see as the key impediments – from macro to micro or system level to institution level

Explore what do they see as the key causes of these impediments and how they may be constraining a public good agenda/the ability of academics /themselves to contribute to the public good/give effect to their public good role

Issues of Structure and agency

Neoliberalism- Managerialism, the ethic of individual self-advancement, privatisation, academic capitalism, Globalisation and global competitiveness, Precariousness of the academic profession

Historical Legacy and inherited challenges – related to transformation, decolonisation **Funding**

Governance issues- such as policy framework, the role of the state (maybe too intrusive – maybe not doing enough).

	Look out for the costs and trade offs.
8. What do you think can be done or is being done to address these impediments?	• Whose Responsibility is it to address these impediments? • Is enough being done to address these? • what do they feel may be the reasons why not enough is being done, or they may feel that what is being done is inappropriate in addressing the real challenges that exist (e.g. inequality) • Try to get a sense of their understanding of competing demands and how these need to be managed • If they feel that enough is being done, try and explore what things/strategies/interventions are important and are having an impact
9. What conditions are favourable for academics to contribute to public good?	Are these conditions in place in South African higher education intuitions, or the institution that the participants work in?
10. Is there anything that we have not discussed that you feel is important for this research?	Keep this open so that the person can share anything that feels important to them about academics role in serving the public good.

Appendix E: Letter to Permission to Conduct Research Study

Date:_____

RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear_____

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your institution. I am currently enrolled in the PhD program) at the Centre for Researching Education and Labor, Wits School of Education. The study is entitled *Academics' Perceptions of their Role in Serving 'Public Good': A Study of Academics from Two Universities in South Africa*.

I hope that you will allow me to recruit 25 academics (15 for focus group discussions and 10 for one-on-one interviews) from the different faculties in your institution. In focus group discussions and interviews will last no longer than 90 minutes and 60 minutes respectively and they will be conducted at a place and time that is convenient for volunteering participants.

Interested academics, who volunteer to participate, will be given a consent form, for both participation and audiotaping, to be signed and returned to me at the beginning of the interview of the focus group discussion. They will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the participants and identity of the institution will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Mthobisi Ndaba

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