

CHAPTER 2

IAN BUNTING

THE HIGHER EDUCATION LANDSCAPE UNDER APARTHEID

This chapter lays out the South African higher education landscape as it was shaped by the apartheid policies of the National Party government prior to 1994. It describes how the disenfranchisement of the African majority culminated in the establishment of five separate legislative and geographic entities (the Republic of South Africa and four ‘independent republics’) and traces the process by which this policy led to the establishment of 36 higher education institutions controlled by eight different government departments. The chapter also describes the apartheid thinking which led to the differentiation of higher education in South Africa into two distinct types – universities and technikons – and shows how sharp racial divisions, as well as language and culture, skewed the profiles of the institutions in each category.

1. POLICIES OF THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT

1.1. Racial divisions in South Africa

At the beginning of 1994, South Africa’s higher education system was fragmented and unco-ordinated. This was primarily the result of the white apartheid government’s conception of race and the politics of race, which had shaped the higher education policy framework that it laid down during the 1980s.

The apartheid government, under the influence of the ruling National Party, had, by the beginning of the 1980s, divided South Africa into five entities:

- The Republic of Transkei (formed from part of the old Cape Province).
- The Republic of Bophuthatswana (formed from part of the old Transvaal Province).
- The Republic of Venda (also formed from part of the old Transvaal Province).
- The Republic of Ciskei (formed from another part of the old Cape Province).
- The Republic of South Africa (which consisted of the vast majority of the land holdings of the old South Africa).

The first four entities became known as the ‘TBVC countries’ (using the first letter of each in the acronym) and the fifth as the ‘RSA’.



The South African government at the time considered the first four entities to be legally independent countries, but they never received international recognition of their 'statehood'. The international community regarded these four 'republics' as apartheid creatures, the only purpose of which was that of disenfranchising the majority of the citizens of South Africa. In terms of the National Party's ideology, Africans (who constituted close to 80% of the population of the old South Africa) were supposed to be citizens of one of these and other potentially 'independent' republics (e.g. one for Zulus in the old Natal Province). They were presumed to be 'aliens' in the Republic of South Africa and therefore not entitled to representation in the national parliament.

The apartheid government extended the disenfranchisement of its African citizens by introducing, in 1984, a new constitution for the Republic of South Africa (RSA). This constitution divided the national parliament into three chambers (the 'tricameral' parliament): one house for representatives of white voters (the House of Assembly), one for representatives of coloured voters (the House of Representatives) and one for representatives of Indian voters (the House of Delegates). No provision was made in the 1984 constitution for any representation of Africans in the RSA parliament, even though this group constituted at least 75% of the population living in the RSA, outside the TBVC countries.

A key element in the creation of the three separate parliamentary houses in the RSA in 1984 was a distinction drawn between 'own affairs' and 'general affairs'. What were described as 'own affairs' were matters specific to the 'cultural and value frameworks' of the coloured or Indian or white communities. 'General affairs' were those which had an impact across all racial communities. Education was considered by the 1984 constitution to be an 'own affair' as far as whites, coloureds and Indians were concerned. This implied that all education for whites (primary, secondary and higher) was the responsibility of the House of Assembly, for coloureds that of the House of Representatives, and for Indians that of the House of Delegates. This constitution considered education for Africans in the RSA to be a 'general affair'. Responsibility for the education of Africans was therefore vested in a 'general affairs' government department which was termed the 'Department of Education and Training' (DET).

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER APARTHEID

The introduction of the 1984 constitution in the RSA, with its distinction between 'general' and 'own affairs', entrenched the apartheid divisions in education in South Africa. A direct consequence was that higher education institutions had to be designated as being for the exclusive use of one of the four race groups: African, coloured, Indian and white. By the beginning of 1985, a total of 19 higher education institutions had been designated as being 'for the exclusive use of whites', two as being 'for the exclusive use of coloureds', two 'for the exclusive use of Indians', and six as being 'for the exclusive use of Africans'. The six institutions for Africans did not include the seven institutions in the TBVC countries, even though it was expected that the latter would be used almost entirely by the African citizens of the four 'independent republics'.



The National Party government put in place legal constraints to prevent institutions designated for the use of one race group from enrolling students from another race group. For example, an institution designated for coloureds could register a student from one of the other three race groups only if that institution obtained a permit from the education department to which it was accountable. Permits were supposed to be granted only if it could be shown that the applicant's proposed programme of study was not available at any institution designated for the race group to which she/he belonged.

This dispensation was shaped in line with that government's view on the status of public higher education institutions. The government maintained that any public higher education institution in the RSA was essentially a legal entity, a 'creature of the state'. It was brought into existence by an action of the state, and its existence could be terminated by another action of the state. This made legitimate, the government believed, any decision to restrict institutions to serving the interests of one and only one race group.

In line with its belief that higher education institutions are creatures of the state, the government further fragmented the racially divided higher education system: higher education institutions were divided into rigid groups in terms of the functions they were and were not permitted to perform. By the beginning of the 1980s the National Party government had in fact drawn such a rigid distinction between institutions it termed 'universities' and a new set of institutions to which it gave the new and unique term 'technikons'.

The foundations of the distinction between universities and technikons lay in the important philosophical underpinning of much of the National Party ideology, including that concerned with higher education, viz. a naïve belief in the existence of 'essences'. It viewed the notion of 'essence' as a unique property, characteristic, or feature which distinguished objects (or institutions, or race groups¹) from all others. The National Party government believed that it had been able to identify the essence of each of the two types of institutions into which it divided the South African higher education system: the essence of a university was *science* and the essence of a technikon was *technology*. It used the term 'science' to designate all scholarly activities in which knowledge for the sake of knowledge is studied, and the term 'technology' to designate activities concerned with the applications of knowledge. It followed from its philosophy of 'essences' that the government at that time believed that universities *could not* become involved in technology (in the sense of the application of knowledge) and that technikons *could not* become involved in scholarly activities involving the generation of new knowledge.

As a consequence of drawing this divide between universities and technikons in terms of a distinction between science and technology, the government built specific policies about the functions of each type of institution into its higher education framework. Some of the features of its policy framework were these:

- The policy statements argued that drawing rigid distinctions between science (in the sense of any systematic or scholarly approach to the development of knowledge) and technology (in the sense of the application of knowledge), and assigning science to universities and technology to technikons, did not imply that technikons



were inferior to universities. The policies stressed that high-level and separate studies could be undertaken in science and in technology. This view was implemented by giving universities and technikons separate but equal qualification structures, which looked like this:

<i>University qualification</i>	<i>Equivalent technikon qualification</i>
Doctorate	Laureatus in technology
Masters degree	National diploma in technology
Honours degree	National higher diploma
Postgraduate diploma	Postdiploma diploma
Professional first bachelors degree	First national diploma (4 years)
General first bachelors degree	First national diploma (3 years)

- The notion of separate, but equal, qualification structures was taken to imply that technikon students could begin with a three-year diploma (equivalent to a three-year bachelors degree in a university), could eventually achieve a national diploma in technology (equivalent to a masters degree), and finally a national laureatus in technology (equivalent to a doctoral degree).
- As a consequence of these distinctions, the policies stressed that the primary function of technikons had to be that of training students who would be able to apply scientific (or scholarly) principles within the context of a specific career or vocation. The courses at technikons therefore had to concentrate on *applications* of knowledge rather than on knowledge itself, and technikon students had to be less concerned than university students with abstract thinking and scientific or scholarly approaches to knowledge.
- The policies stressed that the main function of universities had to be that of educating students in a range of fundamental scientific or scholarly disciplines to enable them to enter high-level professions. Universities were supposed to train basic scientists and basic researchers, and therefore had to be concerned with the development rather than with the application of knowledge.

3. THE INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE PRIOR TO 1994

There were two major consequences which flowed from these conceptions of race and the nature of knowledge:

- Firstly, the South African higher education system was divided into two mutually exclusive types of institutions: universities and technikons.
- Secondly, eight different government departments controlled the institutions in these categories.

If responsible government authority is taken to be the key element, then the higher education landscape, at the beginning of 1994, could be described as follows:



Table 1. Numbers of public higher education institutions in South Africa: 1990–1994

<i>Responsible authority</i>	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Technikons</i>	<i>Total institutions</i>
House of Assembly (for whites)	11	8	19
House of Representatives (for coloureds)	1	1	2
House of Delegates (for Indians)	1	1	2
Department of Education and Training (for Africans)	4	2	6
Republic of Transkei	1	1	2
Republic of Bophuthatswana	1	1	2
Republic of Venda	1	0	1
Republic of Ciskei	1	1	2
Totals	21	15	36

The classifications contained in this table do not, however, bring out sharply enough the racial divisions which existed in the South African higher education system in the years up to 1994. A better way of classifying higher education institutions in South Africa prior to 1994 would be to use the broad categories 'historically white/historically black' and 'university/technikon' within a framework of their pre-1994 government authority (RSA or TBVC).

The remaining sections deal with certain key features of the pre-1994 groupings, generated by this way of classifying institutions. An overview of the classification of individual institutions is contained in Table 2 on page 49.

3.1. Historically white universities in the RSA

In terms of South African law, historically white universities remained part of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) throughout all the years of apartheid. The group has to be divided into two distinct sub-groupings: those in which the main medium of communication and instruction was Afrikaans (which was the home language of most people in government) and those in which the main medium of communication and instruction was English.

Nevertheless, it was not the question of language that was the primary basis for the divide. The key element in making the distinction between the two sub-groupings is that some universities in the group supported the National Party government, including its apartheid higher education policies, and others did not.

3.1.1. Historically white Afrikaans-medium universities

The first sub-group comprised six universities, five of which used Afrikaans as the official medium of communication and instruction: the University of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom University, the University of Pretoria, the Rand Afrikaans University and



the University of Stellenbosch. The sixth member was the dual-medium University of Port Elizabeth, which had been set up in the early 1960s as a way of bringing conservative white English-speaking students into the government fold. This university, despite being officially both Afrikaans and English, was dominated by Afrikaans-speaking executives and governing bodies.

These six universities were run by executives and councils which gave strong support to the apartheid government. They accepted the government's ideology of universities being 'creatures of the state' and therefore took their chief function to be that of acting in the service of government. They believed that this obliged them to support the higher education policies of the apartheid government. Their implementation of the government's race-based policies is shown by the fact that the combined student enrolment of the six universities was 96% white in 1990 and 89% white in 1993. They made few attempts to use the permit system to bring black students on to their campuses. As was discussed earlier, the permit system was one which allowed a white institution to apply for government permission to enrol black students in programmes not offered by a black institution. The few black students enrolled by these institutions tended to be postgraduates who did not have to attend classes on campus.

The support given by the six historically white Afrikaans-medium universities to the government was a major aspect of their adaptive strategies. They saw their support of the apartheid government as being essential to their survival as institutions, at least up until 1990 when the national liberation movements were unbanned. Their student recruitment depended on being seen primarily as institutions involved in the training of staff required for the apartheid civil service and for various professions. But most importantly, their financial strength depended on them having good relations with the apartheid government as well as the business sectors with which it had close ties.

The high level of support which these universities gave to government had a major impact on their academic and governance cultures: by the 1990s they could be described as instrumentalist institutions which were governed in strongly authoritarian ways. An instrumentalist higher education institution can be defined, for these purposes, as one which takes its core business to be the dissemination and generation of knowledge for a purpose defined or determined by a socio-political agenda. Knowledge is not regarded as something which is good in itself and hence worth pursuing for its own sake. It follows that knowledge which could be used for a specific social, economic or political purpose would be the primary form pursued in an instrumentalist institution.

The effect which instrumentalism had on the educational culture of these universities in the years up to 1994 is summed up well by Jansen (2001). Even though he was commenting on his experiences in the period 2000–2001 in one of the larger historically white Afrikaans-medium institutions, what he said was true of all six universities in the years leading up to the ending of apartheid in South Africa:

[There is at this institution a] lack of critical discourse in the disciplines as well as in more public spheres with respect to pressing social and human problems. There is a pervasive and narrow problem-solving, applications-based pedagogy and research, but not much of a standing back and posing of critical questions in an attempt to understand, probe, disrupt official policy or standard practice. (p4)



There were two main reasons why this comment was true of the six historically white Afrikaans universities in the years before 1994. The first was that the international academic boycott against South Africa resulted in these institutions being disconnected from the international academic community. By the 1980s they had lost their close links with universities in Europe, particularly in Holland. Consequently they made few attempts to build relations with international donors, for example, and this limited the flow of private or non-governmental funding. Their only secure sources of private funds were their contracts with organisations serving the apartheid regime, and their fee-paying students, most of whom came from government-supporting white families.

The second reason was that the intellectual agendas of the six institutions were by and large determined by the perception that they had a duty to preserve the apartheid status quo. They did engage in research activities, but much of this had a local South African focus. A great deal of their research involved policy work for the government and government agencies, and technological work undertaken on contract for defence-related industries.

Their instrumentalist commitments to the agenda of the apartheid government led to these six universities being run in strongly authoritarian ways. Open protests by students or staff over government policies and actions were not countenanced, and were swiftly crushed on these campuses. Objections to institutional policies and actions, especially from those not entrenched in the central power structures, were also not accepted. Jansen (2001), in the same paper referred to earlier, gives this account of the current governance culture of an historically white Afrikaans university – an account which would have been true of all six in the years up to 1994:

The first thing that hits an outsider ... is the powerful role of centralised authority within the institution. I was thoroughly shocked when I discovered how meetings are managed on the campus. The chairperson was not a facilitator who generated the best ideas on a problem ... from the collective minds of the attendees, before seeking an appropriate set of resolutions ... No: the chairperson, in most cases, already had the solutions and, it often appeared, had decided in advance what solution would be proposed (imposed?) and accepted. Now this has two dampening effects on institutional cultures and the individuals within them: it reduces the participants to powerless observers of a centralised process, and it reinforces the notion that intellectual authority vests in seniority rather than in the mix of personal talent in attendance ...

The second thing that I observed was the relationship between staff, and especially between senior and junior academics. I observed, with some intrigue, the all-powerful role of senior academics (heads of department, deans, vice-principals, principal etc ... [There are many institutional] messages, layered on each other, that tell the junior person over and over again, that she is simply another body in the area, devoid of authority to act, inspire, lead, differ, contradict, change, initiate. She is simply a void whose intellectual and emotional life needs 'filling' by the promoter, the professor, the higher authority. (p2)

An important feature of the governance of these six institutions is that they always had the crucial mid-level management capacity to control the institution and to implement change. They had tight administrative and financial systems in place throughout these years, had adequate numbers of posts in the management tiers below the institutional executive (the principal and vice-principals); most importantly, they were able to fill these posts with competent and efficient staff.



A concluding comment which must be offered is this: by 1994, many of these historically white Afrikaans-medium universities faced serious internal concerns about their future viability as institutions. Many of those involved in their governing bodies and executives believed that a change in government, from the National Party to the African National Congress, would place at risk their flows of government subsidy funds. They believed that their financial reserves could possibly be 'confiscated' by the new government for use for redress purposes, and that the flow of private funds would diminish as the wider society was transformed in post-apartheid South Africa. These concerns set the stage for a range of developments which are described in Section 2 of this book.

3.1.2. Historically white English universities

The second sub-group consists of the four historically white English-medium universities: the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal, Rhodes University and the University of the Witwatersrand. Institutions in this group referred to themselves as the 'liberal universities' and did so partly as a way of signalling their refusal to adopt the apartheid government's view that universities are simply 'creatures of the state'. As a result, the four universities developed highly ambiguous relationships with the government during the apartheid years.

The ambiguity can be summed up in this way: the four universities accepted that they were public institutions and that they were, as a consequence, entitled to government funding. However, they argued that by their very nature as universities, they were not servants of the state and thus that they would not accept that their functions could be limited to those of serving the needs and implementing the policies of the government of the day. Indeed they believed that their commitment to the universal values of academic freedom made it impossible for them to act as the servants of the apartheid state. From time to time, therefore, they objected strongly to the policies and actions of the apartheid government, even while accepting substantial subsidy funding from that government.

The four institutions took academic freedom to imply that universities could teach whatever they deemed to be important, that they could admit all who qualified for admission to any of their programmes, and that they could select any suitable candidate as an academic teacher. Prior to the 1990s they had declared publicly that 'academic freedom in South Africa was dead' because of apartheid restrictions on teaching materials, student admissions and the selection of academics. Being, by law, institutions for whites only, these universities were not permitted to admit black students, nor to employ black academic staff members. They were also not permitted to teach any courses or to use any materials which the apartheid government deemed to be of a 'subversive nature designed to further the aims of communism'. The Communist Party was one of the organisations which was banned during the apartheid years; this implied that support for that party or for any of its aims was construed to be a criminal offence.

During the years after the introduction of the 1984 tricameral parliament, these four universities attempted to bring larger numbers of black students on to their campuses. Some exploited the ministerial permit system as fully as they could: wherever possible they interpreted applications from black students as being for programmes not offered by



black institutions, and they specifically guided black applicants towards such programmes. Some also deliberately admitted black students into formal student housing even though it was illegal in the 1980s to have blacks and whites sharing the same residential space. The effect of these efforts was that by 1990, 28% and by 1993, 38% of the students registered at these four universities were either African or coloured or Indian. Most of these black students were registered for classes offered on the main campuses of the four universities.

One reason why these four historically white English-medium universities took a strong anti-government stand during the 1980s was this: they did not believe that their existence was dependent on the patronage of the apartheid government. Their view was that any university in any country, by its very nature, had to maintain a 'distance' from government. They regarded themselves as being part of an international community of scholars which was dedicated to the advancement and propagation of all human knowledge. They therefore believed it to be essential that their academic staff maintain close relations with international disciplinary bodies as well as with major overseas universities. Their anti-apartheid stance during these years helped the four universities raise considerable funds from international donors. During the 1980s this enabled them to diversify their income flows and so to lessen their reliance on government subsidy funds.

The governance systems in these institutions were a mix of the collegial and the authoritarian. In the general management of the institution, they were collegial in levels down to those of full professor. The professoriate, the principal and the registrar, and his/her senior staff constituted a collegium of the traditional English kind. This collegium in effect ran the institution, particularly as far as its academic and political affairs were concerned. But below this level, the institutions tended to be as authoritarian as the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities. Junior staff and students had few, if any, rights as far as the management of the institution was concerned.

The four institutions shared another important governance feature with the six historically white Afrikaans-medium universities. During these years they had the mid-level management capacity necessary for controlling the institution and implementing change: tight administrative and financial systems, and sufficient numbers of posts in the tiers of management below the principal and vice-principals which, most importantly, they were able to fill with competent and efficient staff.

The intellectual agendas of the four historically white English-medium universities were set by their perception that they were international institutions engaged in the same kinds of knowledge production as universities in, for example, Britain or the USA. This knowledge was not limited to instrumental knowledge. The four universities believed that knowledge was a good in itself and hence that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was a major responsibility for any university. Nevertheless, all four played major roles in educating students for the professions. They were thus instrumentalists in the narrow sense of producing graduates who could move readily into a profession.

Because they believed both that 'blue-skies' research was fundamental to the nature of a university and that they had to distance themselves from the apartheid status quo, very little of the research undertaken by these institutions had direct links with government. None of the four permitted their academic staff members to become involved in any kind of policy



work for the government and government agencies. Specific bans were put in place forbidding staff to become involved in any contract work for defence-related industries, because of the significant role these played in apartheid conflict and oppression.

The four historically white English-medium universities faced the transition in 1994 with a great deal of confidence. They saw the demise of the apartheid government as a victory for the ideals for which they had fought throughout the 1980s. They also believed that the new government would recognise that they were 'national assets' and would therefore permit them, in a spirit of 'business as usual', to continue pursuing their academic teaching and research agendas.

It could be argued that this confidence was misplaced. Mamdani (1998) has commented that the historically white English-medium universities were never major agents for social and political change in South Africa, despite the anti-apartheid stance they had adopted. He maintains that their systems of governance and their intellectual agendas made these four institutions islands of white social privilege during the years of apartheid oppression, and maintains further that they displayed little sense of social accountability to the broader South African community during this period. Jakes Gerwel (1987), former Vice-chancellor of the University of the Western Cape, described the contradictions in this way:

In spite of our genuine commitment to free scholarly discourse and research every South African university has a dominant ideological orientation which describes the context of its operations. ... This is demonstrably true of both the subsets of historically white Afrikaans-language and English-language universities. The Afrikaans universities have always stood and still firmly stand within the operative context of Afrikaner nationalism. Networking in a complex way into its various correlative institutions ... Equally the English-language universities operate within the context of Anglophile liberalism, primarily linking and responding to its institutional expressions as in the English schools, cultural organisations and importantly big business. The one ideological formation under-represented or not at all represented in a similar way within the South African university community is that of the more radical Left. (p2-3)

3.2. Historically black universities in the RSA

The historically black universities in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) were a heterogeneous grouping which after 1984 consisted of two sub-groups:

- First, a sub-grouping of four universities 'for Africans' controlled by the RSA's Department of Education and Training. These were Medunsa University, the University of the North, Vista University and the University of Zululand.
- Second, a sub-grouping of two universities: one 'for Indians' (the University of Durban-Westville) and one 'for coloureds' (the University of the Western Cape). Both were controlled by houses in the tricameral parliament.

The establishment of these universities was overtly political and instrumental; they were not established because of an academic need for institutions of the kind they became. They



were instrumental institutions in the sense of having been set up to train black people who would be useful to the apartheid state, and political in the sense that their existence played a role in the maintenance of the overall apartheid socio-political agenda. Their 'useful graduates' were primarily the black teachers required by the black school systems and the black civil servants required by the racially divided civil service of the RSA.

The apartheid notion that the universities controlled by the Department of Education and Training must be for African students only, was maintained through the 1980s and into the 1990s. Their student enrolment was close to 100% African in 1990 and 98% African in 1993.

The University of the Western Cape and the University of Durban-Westville were different. In their early years they were, like the 'universities for Africans', institutions that supported the basic ideology of the National Party government. By 1990, however, the tight government control of these two universities had begun to slip. During the 1980s, both had rejected their founding apartheid principles with the effect that Durban-Westville (which was supposed to be an Indian 'own affairs' university) had an Indian enrolment of 59% in 1990 and only 53% in 1993, while Western Cape (which was supposed to be a coloured 'own affairs' university) had a coloured enrolment of 68% in 1990 and only 55% in 1993.

Throughout the 1980s the governance systems in these institutions tended to be highly authoritarian. The apartheid government made every effort to ensure that the councils and the executive managers of these institutions supported the basic ideology of the National Party government. In the early years of the 1980s it did this by ensuring that the leadership and most of the academic staff of these universities were white Afrikaners who had been trained at one of the six historically white Afrikaans-medium universities. Later in that decade, black vice-chancellors were appointed in all these institutions, but government control continued to be exercised through the appointment of members of council. The authoritarian structures were retained through mechanisms designed to ensure that the main administrative departments as well as the senate of each institution (i.e. the chief academic body) continued to be dominated by white Afrikaner heads of department.

The intellectual agendas of the RSA's six historically black universities were set by their apartheid origins. In their early years their academic staff members tended to come primarily from the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities which, as was said earlier, functioned with instrumentalist notions of knowledge. These academics therefore accepted readily an academic agenda with a strong training focus and, in particular, a focus which placed little emphasis on the production of new knowledge. As a consequence, few of the academics employed by the historically black universities believed it necessary to introduce research and postgraduate programmes in these universities. The intellectual agenda of the institutions often became no more than that of reproducing material taught in previous years at historically white Afrikaans-medium universities.

The turmoil of the late 1980s and early 1990s overtook even this limited intellectual agenda. The historically black universities in the RSA became sites of struggle against the apartheid regime. Political agendas came to the fore and many months of teaching and



learning were lost at these institutions as a result of students boycotting classes and authorities responding by closing institutions.

This same turmoil affected the authoritarian governance structures of these universities. New structures such as transformation forums were introduced in the early 1990s which gave substantial political powers to students and to administrative and service staff. These new powers dislodged the old governance structures and their associated administrative systems, but the levels of contestation in these institutions were so high that no new governance models and no new administrative systems were put in place. By 1994 many experienced managers and administrators had left these institutions, a development which contributed to continued battles around governance in subsequent years.

3.3. Historically black universities in the TBVC countries

A further grouping of four historically black universities was linked to the 'independent republics' of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (the TBVC countries): the University of Transkei, North West University, the University of Venda and the University of Fort Hare. Because each of these 'republics' had been established in a 'homeland for Africans' their universities enrolled mostly African students, many of whom came from the urban areas of the RSA, i.e. 'white South Africa'. In 1990, their combined enrolment was 14.000 and in 1993 it was about 20.000.

The governments of these 'republics' treated the universities as an extension of the civil service and so held them under tight control at all times. The universities were regarded by these governments primarily as the training grounds for the civil servants and school teachers whom they required. They were, as a consequence, as explicitly authoritarian and instrumental as the historically black universities in the RSA.

In a background paper written for this book, Habib (2001) describes the context of the University of Transkei (Unitra) as follows:

This institutional structural location of Unitra as a lower grade bantustan² university situated in the capital of the homeland had two significant implications for the institution in the era of apartheid. First, it had a captive student market. Apartheid restricted the educational mobility of students on the basis of racial and tribal ancestry. Moreover, with no other university in the Transkei, the homeland's middle classes, many of whom were located in Umtata, were restricted to Unitra as their only avenue to higher education. This meant that a significant proportion of Unitra students had the financial resources and were academically relatively well prepared for tertiary education. Second, as a bantustan university, Unitra was not a financially autonomous institution. In fact, it was treated as any other department within the homeland civil service, and had its finances taken care of by whichever regime was in power in the Transkei. In a very real sense, Unitra was simply another line item in the budget of the Transkei's Department of Finance. A culture of financial accountability and modern systems of financial control were thus almost non-existent in the institution even as late as the 1990s. (p9)

The turmoil of the early 1990s affected these institutions as seriously as the RSA's historically black universities. They became sites of struggle against their governments



which were viewed as being no more than pawns of the apartheid regime. As was the case with the other historically black universities, major challenges were launched against the authoritarian, undemocratic ways in which these universities operated. As a consequence, many months of teaching and learning were lost at these institutions as a result of student boycotts of classes, of staff strikes and of governments closing down institutions.

3.4. Historically white technikons

Seven institutions are clustered in this grouping: Cape Technikon, Free State Technikon, Natal Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, Vaal Triangle Technikon and Technikon Witwatersrand.

These seven institutions could not be divided into Afrikaans and English sub-groupings. All tended to be conservative institutions which, like the Afrikaans-medium universities, aligned themselves with the National Party government and its higher education policies.

In terms of governance structures they were authoritarian institutions. They made little effort to 'play the permit system' and by 1990 a very high proportion of their students, 89%, remained white. By 1993, however, their proportion of white students had dropped to 75%.

The historically white technikons were highly instrumentalist as far as knowledge was concerned. These institutions had no intellectual agenda other than that of offering vocational training programmes to young white South Africans. They took themselves to be training the future 'middle managers' and 'technologists' for business and industry. They undertook little research and offered little by way of postgraduate training.

3.5. Historically black technikons in the RSA and TBVC

These institutions fell into groupings consistent with those of the historically black universities:

- Two technikons were controlled by the national Department of Education and Training: Mangosuthu Technikon and Technikon Northern Transvaal. They were small, conservative institutions which had, in 1990, a 100% African student enrolment which totalled about 4.000. By 1993 their combined enrolment had increased to 8.000 students.
- Three technikons had been established in the TBVC countries towards the end of the 1980s: Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon and North West Technikon. They had a combined, 100% African student enrolment of less than 2.000 by 1990 and of 3.500 by 1993.
- Two technikons were controlled by departments in the tricameral parliament, but before 1990, as was also the case with the universities controlled by these departments, they had rejected their founding apartheid principles: ML Sultan



Technikon (which was supposed to be an Indian ‘own affairs’ technikon) had an Indian enrolment of 73% in 1990 and 63% in 1993, and Peninsula Technikon (which was supposed to be a coloured ‘own affairs’ technikon) had a coloured enrolment of 73% in 1990 and only 58% in 1993.

The intellectual agendas of these groupings of historically black technikons was similar to those of the historically white technikons. They took their primary function to be that of offering vocational training programmes to young black South Africans. They undertook no research and offered little by way of postgraduate training.

3.6. Dedicated distance education institutions

During the 1980s South Africa had two dedicated distance education institutions, one of which was described as a university (the University of South Africa, also known as Unisa) and one as a technikon (Technikon South Africa, also known as TSA). Both were controlled during the 1980s by the House of Assembly in the tricameral parliament, and so were in effect historically white institutions. However, since their students studied entirely off-campus, these institutions were not affected by the permit system and could enrol any black applicant who qualified for admission to one of their programmes. Both institutions were governed during the period up to 1994 by councils and executives that were supportive of the apartheid government. Consequently, the University of South Africa was more akin to historically white Afrikaans-medium than historically white English-medium universities. When conflicts arose within the university system, it tended to support the Afrikaans rather than the English universities and so became the seventh member of this Afrikaans bloc. Its intellectual agenda was also typical of that of an historically white Afrikaans-medium university. It had a very large, well-qualified academic staff complement, but engaged in little or no research and maintained few international linkages.

Technikon South Africa was typical of an historically white technikon in terms of the extent of its support for the apartheid government and in the composition of its governing council and executive. A major part of its effort went into offering vocational training and upgrading programmes for the civil service. This technikon had, for example, responsibility for police training in South Africa.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE PRE-1994

Table 2 offers an overview of the state of the South African higher educational landscape in 1994, which was the year in which the African National Congress came to power through the government of national unity. It also places institutions into the categories which are used in many of the discussions which follow in the book.



Table 2. Classification of public universities and technikons by racial origin and by historical advantage/disadvantage: 1994

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Institutions included</i>	<i>Key characteristics up to 1994</i>	<i>Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged</i>
(1) Historically black universities: RSA	University of Durban-Westville, Medunsa University, University of the North, Vista University, University of the Western Cape, University of Zululand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top management originally supportive of apartheid government • Originally authoritarian institutions, which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle during the course of the 1980s • Intellectual agenda determined by instrumentalist notion of knowledge and function being that of training 'useful black graduates'. 	Historically disadvantaged
(2) Historically black universities: TBVC	University of Fort Hare, North West University, University of Transkei, Venda University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived in 1980s as extensions of civil service of 'independent republics' • Authoritarian institutions which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle at the beginning of the 1990s • Intellectual agenda determined by instrumentalist notion of knowledge and function being that of training 'useful graduates' for 'independent republics'. 	Historically disadvantaged
(3) Historically black technikons: RSA	ML Sultan Technikon, Mangosuthu Technikon, Technikon Northern Transvaal, Peninsula Technikon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top management originally supportive of apartheid government • Authoritarian institutions, which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle in the early 1990s • Intellectual agendas determined by instrumentalist commitment to vocational training 	Historically disadvantaged



Table 2. (cont.)

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Institutions included</i>	<i>Key characteristics up to 1994</i>	<i>Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged</i>
(4) Historically black technikons: TBVC	Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon, North West Technikon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived as extensions of civil service of 'independent republics' Small institutions with primary focus on vocational training 	Historically disadvantaged
(5) Historically white (Afrikaans) universities: RSA	University of the Orange Free State, University of Port Elizabeth, University of Pretoria, Potchefstroom University, Rand Afrikaans University, University of Stellenbosch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government Good management and administrative systems in place Intellectual agenda affected by instrumentalist commitments and by the severing of contacts with international academics during the academic boycott in the 1980s. 	Historically advantaged
(6) Historically white (English) universities: RSA	University of Cape Town, University of Natal, Rhodes University, University of the Witwatersrand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not support apartheid government Collegial institutions at top levels of senate and heads of academic departments, but authoritarian at lower levels Good management and administrative systems in place Intellectual agendas set by commitments to knowledge as a good in itself, and strong international disciplinary teaching and research links. 	Historically advantaged

Table 2. (cont.)

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Institutions included</i>	<i>Key characteristics up to 1994</i>	<i>Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged</i>
(6) Historically white technikons: RSA	Cape Technikon, Free State Technikon, Natal Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, Vaal Triangle Technikon, Technikon Witwatersrand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government • Intellectual agendas determined by instrumentalist commitments to vocational training. 	Historically advantaged
(7) Distance education universities and technikons	University of South Africa (Unisa), Technikon South Africa (TSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government • Unisa: instrumentalist intellectual agenda with little outward or international focus on teaching and research • TSA: primary focus on vocational education. 	Historically advantaged



5. CONCLUSION

Under apartheid, higher education in South Africa was skewed in ways designed to entrench the power and privilege of the ruling white minority. Higher education institutions established in the early part of the century (Fort Hare, UCT, Wits) were incorporated into a system which was subsequently shaped, enlarged and fragmented with a view to serving the goals and strategies of successive apartheid governments.

By 1994, the landscape of 36 higher education institutions included ten historically disadvantaged universities and seven historically disadvantaged technikons designated for the use of black (African, coloured and Indian) South Africans, while ten historically advantaged universities and seven historically advantaged technikons were designated for the exclusive development of white South Africans. Two distance institutions catered for all races.

By 1994 there had been considerable resistance to the apartheid regime in the historically black and in some of the historically white institutions and, as was demonstrated in this chapter, the racial profile of student enrolments in some of the institutions had departed considerably from apartheid's intentions.

It was in this context that the new higher education policies of South Africa's first and second democratic governments sought to reshape the system into one that met the goals of equity, democratisation, responsiveness and efficiency. Working off the landscape described in this chapter, the chapters in Section 2 capture the developments since 1990 in respect of funding, students, staff, leadership, curriculum and research.

NOTES

- ¹ The notion of 'essential' difference informed not only the National Party's approach to knowledge, but also to race. This thinking underpinned its whole approach to apartheid with the assumption that things could be 'separate but equal'.
- ² The word 'bantustan' was used by opponents of the apartheid government to refer to the supposedly independent republics of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. In a sense it was a term of derision which had its origins in the tendency of the apartheid government to use the word 'bantú' as a generic term to refer to Africans. Its use by the apartheid government made 'bantú' an ideologically tainted term. So the use of the term 'bantustan' to refer to a TBVC 'state' would indicate that the speaker regards it as little more than a creature of the apartheid government.

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