

## **FACULTY OF COMMERCE, LAW AND MANAGEMENT**

DEAN: PROFESSOR J COHEN BCom Hons PhD (Witwatersrand)

### **Doctor of Philosophy**

**CHADAMBUKA**, Rumbidzai Ann

*Management (WSG)*

**THESIS:** Examining the coping mechanisms of Zimbabwean informal cross-border traders in response to external shocks

The thesis studies informal cross-border trade along the Harare-Johannesburg route. Using a critical political economy framework, it redefines informal cross-border trade as a form of decentralised economic governance rather than a temporary economic response. The thesis argues that traders' resilience is sustained through informal, highly transactional networks rooted in shared knowledge, and that top-down approaches to formalisation fail to recognise the embedded nature of informality and the legitimacy that traders accord to their own practices.

Supervisor: Dr H Lynge-Mangueira

**DERA**, Anesu Tavarwisa

*Law*

**THESIS:** A legal innovation or a false promise? An analysis of the proposed Business and Human Rights treaty from a Third World International Law perspective, with a specific focus on Africa

Deploying the Third World Approaches to International Law perspective as a critical tool for reconstruction, this thesis develops the concept of a tripartite structure of harm to explain corporate impunity: the harmful actions of corporations, the ongoing legacies of global apartheid and imperialism, and inequalities embedded within international law. The candidate uses this framework to critique the latest draft of the Business and Human Rights Treaty and to recommend systemic legal reform based on agency, historical redress, and epistemic justice.

Supervisor: Associate Professor T Madlingozi

**DILOTSOTLHE**, Mokaedi Emmanuel

*Marketing*

**THESIS:** Helpers and hindrances of challenger brand affection and support: Holistic model development and testing  
The marketing discipline lacks theoretical frameworks to measure the helpers and hindrances of challenger / underdog brands' affection and support. Guided by various theories, this study built and tested a framework to enrich brand management literature and brand owners' knowledge. Quantitative and semi-structured data from 1234 FlySafair, Capitec, Rain, and Yoco consumers revealed some brand/market offerings, self-oriented, and other-oriented psychological factors as helpers. Hindrances were social dominance orientation but not resistance to change, materialism, ambiguity aversion, and brand transgression. Brand forgiveness played a moderating role.

Supervisor: Professor H Duh

**DITODI**, Segabe Koos

*Law*

**THESIS:** Deciphering accountability issues in bank failures in South Africa

Through a doctrinal and comparative analysis, this thesis addresses a critical gap in legislative clarity and an enforcement vacuum as contributory factors to bank failures in South Africa. The thesis makes an original contribution to banking regulation scholarship and advances concrete proposals for legislative and supervisory reform.

Supervisor: Associate Professor H Kawadza

**JAVANI, Shingai**

*Information Systems*

**THESIS:** A knowledge and information systems capabilities framework for improved business analytics in a South African government organisation

This thesis presents a contextually grounded investigation into how knowledge sharing and information systems capabilities can improve business analytics within a South African government organisation. The study makes valuable scholarly contribution by addressing an important gap in literature concerning the socio-technical dimensions of business analytics in developing economy contexts. The findings provide meaningful insights into the role of organisational culture, knowledge-sharing practices, and IS capabilities in enhancing business analytics, offering practical implications for public sector digital transformation and policy alignment.

Supervisor: Dr J Mangundu

**KOOPMAN, Aaron Owen**

*Marketing*

**THESIS:** Examining the dimensions and outcomes of University brand personality

This thesis investigates university brand personality and its influence on supportive, emotional, and behavioural and brand-related outcomes at three South African universities. Using a quantitative approach, the study's findings demonstrate the extent to which university brand personality dimensions influence brand attitude and various student behaviours, highlighting self-brand connection's role in bridging the attitude-behaviour gap. Theoretically, the study contributes by offering a strategic framework for universities to strengthen their brand and competitive positioning, build meaningful identities, and enhance their brand equity.

Supervisors: Professor H Duh and Associate Professor N Ligaraba

**LAMOLA, Medupi John**

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** Determinants and consequences of consumer brand engagement in South Africa

This quantitative study examines the determinants and consequences of consumer brand engagement on social networking sites by comparing engagement in short-term insurance and fashion sectors of South Africa. The study confirms consumer involvement, satisfaction, and trust as key drivers of engagement, which subsequently influences self-brand connect and brand usage intent. While gender exhibited no moderating effect, sector-specific differences emerged. The study extends Social Exchange Theory to an emerging market perspective, offering theoretical and managerial insights for fostering sustained digital engagement.

Supervisors: Professor T Anning and Associate Professor Y Saini

**MAGAGULA, Sithelo**

*Law*

**THESIS:** Harmonisation of Namibian eviction law with international legal framework: Lessons from South African jurisprudence

Based on an interpretation of domestic, South African, and other comparative and international law, the candidate's PhD provides a comprehensive and original critique of Namibia's contemporary eviction law. Highlighting the failure of the Squatters Proclamation and the rei vindicatio to impose an obligation on the state to provide alternative housing when eviction would otherwise result in homelessness, Magagula finds that this deficit renders the Namibian eviction paradigm unconstitutional and incompatible with international eviction law.

Supervisor: Professor J Dugard

**MARTIN, Blake Neal**

*Law*

**THESIS:** Responding to image-based sexual abuse through the South African Criminal Law

This study offers a novel human rights centred analysis of image based sexual abuse (IBSA) in South Africa, demonstrating how IBSA uniquely violates the rights to dignity, privacy and life. It develops a novel justification for treating IBSA as a serious sexual crime and provides an original assessment of the extent to which existing crimes – including murder, culpable homicide, and newly enacted offences – can be employed to address its distinct harms. The thesis further proposes proportionate punishment guidelines tailored specifically to IBSA offenders.

Supervisor: Associate Professor E Zitzke

**MATHENTAMO**, Qaqambile

*Economics*

**THESIS:** ISiNtu-understood social norms and networks: A case study of cost minimisation of economic activities and economic outcomes in a rural South African context

The candidate's PhD opens a new and important direction in South African economics. It explores the role of culture (broadly understood) in shaping social capital in South Africa's past, and how this has affected and will affect economic patterns and possibilities amongst South Africans. This is almost uncharted territory in South African economics and opens up new ways of thinking about how to promote development and to overcome the injustices of colonialism and Apartheid.

Supervisor: Professor S Schirmer

**MAZINGI**, Aretha Enthea

*Human Resource Management*

**THESIS:** Human resource analytics adoption, human resource management practices and the operational performance of human resource professionals in the South African financial sector

The candidate investigated the extent to which the South African financial sector has adopted human resources analytics in its human resources management practices. Findings affirmed that the analytical competencies of human resources professionals play a vital role in the adoption of human resources analytics.

Supervisor: Associate Professor O Samuel

**MERINO DE LA NUEZ**, Andres

*Accountancy*

**THESIS:** Academic performance of accountancy students: The role of self-regulation

The study uses a mixed methods explanatory sequential design to assess the extent to which mindsets are related to academic achievement in the context of students completing a professionally endorsed accountancy degree. The study expands achievement motivation theory by conceptualizing mindsets as being multidimensional, rather than on a continuum from a fixed to a growth mindset. It proposes that two additional mindset profiles are required, namely, risk avoidance and perfectionist, to better describe the complexity of students' motivational profiles.

Supervisors: Professor W Maroun and Professor C Callaghan

**MOKWELE**, Tshepho Joseph

*Management (WSG)*

**THESIS:** The roles and influence of Foreign Policy Epistemic Communities on Post-Apartheid South Africa's Foreign Policy Decision-Making

This qualitative multi-case study explored the roles and influence of epistemic communities on South Africa's foreign policy decision-making, focusing on BRICS, climate change diplomacy, and peace-making in the DRC. It developed and applied an integrated framework anchored in Haas's epistemic communities concept, Allison's decision-making models, and international relations levels of analysis. The study found that epistemic communities play an important role in knowledge production, policy discourse, and interpretation. However, state actors retain decision-making authority, with knowledge uptake and institutionalisation remaining selective and politically contingent.

Supervisor: Professor A Van Nieuwkerk

**MOROLO**, Charles Morake

*Management (WSG)*

**THESIS:** Leveraging quality road infrastructure to optimize economic growth in Southern African development community

The study investigates the relationship between road quality and economic growth in selected SADC countries - namely Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe - over the period from 2006 to 2019. The research employed panel regression analysis and conducted interviews with stakeholders to evaluate the impact of road quality infrastructure on economic growth. The research findings indicate that, across the SADC region, road quality does not directly stimulate growth. Instead, it is confounding factors such as inflation, governance, funding, border efficiency, and policy harmonisation that play a significant role.

Supervisor: Associate Professor K Wotela

**MOTEULI-NDLELENI**, Limpho Elizabeth

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** The influence of corporate social responsibility on social marketing: The case of the Lesotho military  
This thesis examines the underexplored role of military corporate social responsibility in community development and social cohesion within the African context. Using a mixed-method exploratory sequential design with purposive sampling of 274 participants, the study combines qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess the developmental impact of military-led social interventions. The findings demonstrate that military responsibility programmes contribute to socio-economic resilience and behavioral change. The study advances scholarship by repositioning military CSR as a strategic development and public leadership instrument rather than a purely operational activity.

Supervisors: Associate Professor Y Saini and Professor B Moyo

**NGUBANE**, Nokuthula Pocia

*Management (WSG)*

**THESIS:** Institutional arrangements for economic growth in South Africa

This thesis makes an original and significant contribution to debates on economic governance and state capacity in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing on institutional economics, political economy and developmental state theory, it examines how fragmented mandates, weak coordination and asymmetrical power relations shape the functioning of key economic institutions. Through rich qualitative analysis and interviews with senior policymakers, the study advances new insights into institutional coherence and the conditions required for inclusive economic transformation. Supervisor: Associate Professor H Ndhlovu

**NYAMAJIWA**, Michael Tafadzwa

*Management (WSG)*

**THESIS:** The resilience of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe

The candidate did his PhD research on the resilience of smallholder irrigation schemes in Zimbabwe. He explored why smallholder irrigation schemes were failing to sustain their operations and promote rural development in Zimbabwe. The qualitative study employed a case study research design. Key findings include challenges located within technical, economic, socio-political, and environmental exigencies. The study proposed a resilience for development model, good governance at grassroot level, policy consistence, gender equity, market linkages, and farmer education on climate change.

Supervisor: Associate Professor C Blaser Mapitsa

**OLUOCH**, Wycliffe Odiwuor

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** Corporate debts and the microstructure of corporate bond markets in Africa

This study investigates the microstructure of African corporate bond markets and its effects on the development of the corporate bond markets. The study also investigates firm debt sourcing patterns under the varying quality of state and corporate governance. The findings emphasize the role of market microstructure in facilitating the development of corporate bond markets. Importantly, we develop a novel debt structure theory, which holds that the quality of state governance influences firms' debt decisions (debt structure) and the cost of debts.

Supervisor: Professor K Ojah

**OWOO**, Natalia Dowuona

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** Essays on financial stability in Ghana

This thesis examines the foundations of financial stability in Ghana in the aftermath of major banking sector reforms. It develops an early warning system for identifying vulnerable banks, investigates how macroeconomic shocks influence banking sector stability, and analyses how credit risks spread across economic sectors. By combining innovative analytical techniques with policy-relevant evidence, the study provides practical insights for strengthening financial sector resilience, improving regulatory oversight, and reducing the likelihood and costs of future financial crises.

Supervisor: Associate Professor J Odei-Mensah

**RAMORWA**, Botsang Phomolo

*Business Science*

**THESIS:** Evaluating the suitability of the traditional private equity fund structures in Africa focusing on performance and holding periods

This thesis examines the determinants of holding periods in African private equity using a dataset of 73 portfolio companies funded between 2005 and 2022. Employing ordinary least squares, logistic regression and Cox proportional hazards models, the study finds that African investments have longer holding periods than those in developed markets. Institutional quality, trade openness, demographics and firm performance significantly affect these periods. Strong institutions and profitability shorten periods, while weak governance lengthens them, suggesting adaptations to conventional private equity fund horizons in Africa.

Supervisor: Professor C Auret

**SHABANGU**, Fikile Ingrid

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** Analysing country and company factors driving private equity investments in Africa and their influence on performance

This study investigates the country and company factors that attract private equity investment in Africa and examines how these investments influence business performance. The work advances understanding of how private capital can contribute to enterprise growth and economic development across the continent. By providing evidence-based insights for policymakers, investors and industry practitioners, the research makes a significant contribution to the study of African finance and investment.

Supervisor: Associate Professor T Mokoaleli-Mokoteli

**SIBANDA, Jakubose**

*Management (WBS)*

**THESIS:** Modelling asset return linkages between South Africa and Group of Seven (G7) markets

This thesis examines the dynamic financial interconnectedness between South Africa and G7 economies across stock, bond, and foreign exchange markets. Using state-of-the-art econometric methods, including time-varying parameter models, wavelet multiscale analysis, frequency domain spillover techniques, quantile regression, and entropy-based approaches, this study provides important insights into financial contagion and systemic risk transmission. The research advances understanding of emerging market integration within global financial systems and has important implications for policymakers, investors, and financial stability.

Supervisor: Associate Professor J Odei-Mensah

**VAN DER MERWE, Timothy David**

*Law*

**THESIS:** Water (In)equality in South Africa: A case study of selected rural municipalities in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces

The candidate's thesis examines water inequality in South Africa through a case study of four rural municipalities in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. Measuring the country's constitutional and legislative promises against the lived reality of failed water provision, he interrogates what substantive and transformative equality genuinely require. His work exposes the environmental, economic, political and social drivers of inequality, offering a compelling call for the equitable, sustainable realisation of the right to water.

Supervisor: Professor T Field

**XABA, Ewell Mnelisi**

*Marketing*

**THESIS:** The future of online grocery shopping in South Africa: how can retailers influence consumer's online trust and adoption intention?

Existing research on how technology-enabled experiential, relational, and motivational factors shape consumer trust and intention to adopt online grocery shopping in South Africa remains fragmented. This study quantitatively examined the factors influencing consumer trust and intention to adopt online grocery shopping in South Africa. SmartPLS-SEM was used for data analysis. The findings revealed that consumers are likely to embrace online grocery platforms that are informative, secure, and enjoyable. The study contributes to theory and offers practical insights for food retailers.

Supervisors: Dr F Mgiba and Associate Professor M Venter De Villiers