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**Author**

MULLER, Johan (YOUNG, Michael)

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**Abstract**

Several authors have suggested that the contract between the university and society formulated in the nineteenth century is breaking down, and a new relation between knowledge and society is being installed. This paper investigates what is at stake in this shift by re-visiting the roots of disciplinary knowledge, examining Durkheim's social theory of knowledge to display the evolution of basic and professional disciplines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Two contemporary challenges to disciplinary knowledge are then examined and evaluated. The paper concludes that it is time to transcend the standoff between disciplinary knowledge and practice-based accounts of knowledge.

(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Muller, Johan, E-Mail: johan.muller@uct.ac.za