MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

by

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CO-SUPERVISOR: DR P KHUMALO

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DEDICATION

To God be the Glory (Psalm 19 verse 1).

I humbly dedicate this academic exegesis to three special persons:

to my wife, Emily, who has divinely, endlessly, selflessly and dynamically HELPED me to focus on education throughout this postgraduate study journey (Genesis 2 verse 18),

to my mother, Yimisa for ensuring that I go to school despite the socio-economic hindrances which were at odds during my primary and high school learning seasons (Ephesians 6 verse 2), and

to my uncle, Mr Falaza Wison Mdaka who became my childhood mentor and provided me with the much-needed guidance towards a liberating future (1 Corinthians 4 verse 15).

Their gallant efforts were not in vain.
DECLARATION

I declare that MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS? is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

Signed: ______________________  Date: ____________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Professor Goonasagree Naidoo has been an outstanding supervisor. Her counsel, guidance and constructive criticism made an invaluable input to this study. This vessel is an intellectual asset and a humble contributor to knowledge generation. Keep it up Professor Naidoo!

Dr Prudence Khumalo has been a dynamic and calm as well as level-headed co-supervisor. He took over the role of co-supervision at a time when I needed that support the most. What a marvel working with you in this regard sir.

Dr Themba Mkhonto for his professional editorial services of the thesis, I was able to graduate from ‘writing as I liked’ to writing as an academic as a result of the robust editorial intervention of this humble intellectual.

All my respondents at the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) were outstanding and great in their selfless patience and frankness in sharing their respective experiences on mergers.

Members of my family, Musa, Nkateko, Manana, Mano, Mbhuri and Malwandla led by their mother, Emily as well as the moral contribution of my son-in-law, Mahla and my granddaughter, Nsuku. This team has been an invaluable inspiration for me to press on.

To God Almighty and His Son, Jesus Christ, who is my personal Lord and Saviour for the grace to learn, mercy to endure the stress associated with research and for the strength to stay focused despite the odds.
SUMMARY

This thesis examined the 2004 SA higher education merger processes in order to determine the extent to which these mergers have achieved in the context of the broader transformation goals of the post-1994 government’s policy objectives.

Mergers have become part of the South African higher education landscape and system since their implementation in 2004. The merger process induced the reduction of higher education institutions from 36 to 23 (at least until 2012 at the time of writing this report). The merger implementation process itself was not voluntary. Some South African universities did not just willingly opt for the transformation process. It took the government a range of strategies, elaborate consultations and ‘carrot and stick’ approaches to convince some of the targeted institutions. The merger was not only limited to physical reconfiguration, but also to the systemic aspects motivated by the need to open the doors of learning and culture to all South Africans without barriers of ethnicity, race and other forms of discrimination. The ‘ivory tower’ universities had to be reigned into the national transformation project as well.

Curriculum which was mainly crafted from an epistemological-ideological premise of the supremacy of Afrikaans as a language of the government of the day and the employer of choice had to be reviewed. Admission criteria, advanced access restrictions to the majority of black students to urban and more advanced universities, also warranted scrutiny.
KEYWORDS

Mergers; Policy Implementation; Voluntary Merger; Involuntary Merger; Transformation; Accountability; Sustainability; Diversity; Student Access; Student Mobility.
### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>APC</td>
<td>Areas of Programme Correspondence</td>
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<td>AUT</td>
<td>Universities &amp; Technikons Advisory Council</td>
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<td>CATE</td>
<td>Colleges of Advanced Technical Education</td>
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<td>CFO</td>
<td>Chief Financial Officer</td>
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<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council on Higher Education</td>
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<td>CTP</td>
<td>Committee of Technikon Principals</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>Durban University of Technology</td>
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<td>DVC</td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor</td>
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<td>EE</td>
<td>Employment Equity</td>
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<td>EWP3</td>
<td>Education White Paper 3</td>
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<td>FETIs</td>
<td>Further Education and Training Institution</td>
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<td>GCE</td>
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<td>HAI s</td>
<td>Historically Advantaged Institutions</td>
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<td>HAMUs</td>
<td>Historically Afrikaans Medium Universities</td>
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<td>HBI s</td>
<td>Historically Black Institutions</td>
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<td>HBTs</td>
<td>Historically Black Technikons</td>
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<td>HBUs</td>
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<td>HDIs/HDIS</td>
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<td>HEMUs</td>
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<td>HEQC</td>
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<td>HEQF</td>
<td>Higher Education Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>Higher Education South Africa</td>
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<td>HRD</td>
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<td>HWAUs</td>
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<td>HWEUs</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>HWTs</td>
<td>Historically White Technikons</td>
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<td>HWUs</td>
<td>Historically White Universities</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IF</td>
<td>Institutional Forum</td>
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<td>IOP</td>
<td>Institutional Operating Plan</td>
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<td>JTC</td>
<td>Johannesburg Teachers’ College</td>
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<td>NCHE</td>
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<td>NEHAWU</td>
<td>National Education, Health and Allied Workers’ Union</td>
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<td>NMMU</td>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</td>
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<td>NNP</td>
<td>New National Party</td>
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<td>NP</td>
<td>Nationalist Party</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>NUTESA</td>
<td>National Union of Tertiary Education in South Africa</td>
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<td>NWG</td>
<td>National Working Group</td>
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<td>PAIs</td>
<td>Previously Advantaged Institutions</td>
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<td>PAWIs</td>
<td>Previously Advantaged White Institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Previously Disadvantaged Institutions</td>
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<td>PQM</td>
<td>Programme Qualification Mix</td>
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<td>QPC</td>
<td>Quality Promotion Committee</td>
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<td>RAU</td>
<td>Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit</td>
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<td>RDP</td>
<td>Reconstruction and Development Programme</td>
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<td>RSA</td>
<td>Republic of South Africa</td>
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<td>South African College</td>
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<td>South African College for Teacher Education</td>
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<td>South African Qualification Authority</td>
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<td>SAUVCA</td>
<td>South African Universities’ Vice-Chancellors Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>SET</td>
<td>Science, Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>TBVC</td>
<td>Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda, Ciskei</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tech</td>
<td>Technikon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEFSA</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa</td>
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<td>TNG</td>
<td>Technikon Northern Gauteng</td>
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<td>Technikon Northern Gauteng</td>
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<td>TNW</td>
<td>Technikon North West</td>
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<td>TNW</td>
<td>Technikon North West</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUT</td>
<td>Tshwane University of Technology</td>
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<td>UCGH</td>
<td>University of Cape of Good Hope</td>
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<td>UJ</td>
<td>University of Johannesburg</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>University of Kwa-Zulu Natal</td>
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<td>University of South Africa</td>
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<td>University of Venda</td>
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<td>University of the Orange Free State</td>
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<td>University of Pretoria</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>University of Port Elizabeth</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor</td>
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<td>VUDEC</td>
<td>Vista University Distance Education Campus</td>
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<td>Wits Tech</td>
<td>Technikon Witwatersrand</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

- 1.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1
- 1.2 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM ........................................ 2
- 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM ........................................................ 5
- 1.4 THE RESEARCH AIM/PURPOSE, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS ................................................................................................................................. 9
  - 1.4.1 The Research Aim/Purpose .............................................................................. 10
  - 1.4.2 The Research Objectives ................................................................................. 10
  - 1.4.3 The Research Questions .................................................................................. 11
- 1.5 JUSTIFICATION/SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .................................................. 11
  - 1.5.1 Discipline-related Significance ...................................................................... 12
  - 1.5.2 Institution-related Significance ..................................................................... 13
  - 1.5.3 Practical Socio-political/economic Significance ........................................... 17
- 1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY ............................................................................... 20
- 1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY .......................................................................................... 21
- 1.8 ETHICS COMPLIANCE .......................................................................................... 21
- 1.9 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS ........................................................................... 22
- 1.10 CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 23

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

- 2.1 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 24
- 2.2 AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF HIGHER EDUCATION MERGERS .......... 24
  - 2.2.1 Some Lessons from the International Merger Perspectives .......................... 27
- 2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MERGERS ............... 28
  - 2.3.1 The Pre-merger Context of South African Higher Education: Legacy of the Past .... 29
  - 2.3.2 Identifiable Problems in the Pre-1994 Higher Education Dispensation .......... 30
  - 2.3.2.1 Structural and Conjunctural Problems .................................................... 32
  - 2.3.3 Old Forms of Institutional Differentiation ....................................................... 35
    - 2.3.3.1 The Former Historically White Universities (HWUs).................................. 37
    - 2.3.3.2 The Former Historically Black Universities (HBUs)................................... 46
    - 2.3.3.3 The Former Historically White Technikons (HWTs)................................. 49
    - 2.3.3.4 The Former Historically Black Technikons (HBTs)................................... 51
  - 2.3.4 The Post-democratic Regulatory Framework of Higher Education .................. 54
    - 2.3.4.1 The Constitutional Perspective of a Regulated Higher Education Environment ...... 55
Table 2.5: Research Output per Racially Segregated Higher Education Institution Type 47
Table 2.6: University Masters and Doctoral Degrees Awarded in 1996 per Racial Group 48
Table 2.7: Funding Base of the Racially Differentiated Higher Education Institutions: 1992 49
Table 2.8: Technikon Student Composition Between 1984 and 1998 50
Table 2.9: Disproportionate Technikon Sector Funding Mechanisms 51
Table 2.10: Distribution of Black Students Across the TBVC ‘States’ Between 1988 And 1998 52
Table 2.11: Higher Education Qualifications Descriptors: 2006 76
Table 2.12: Proportion of Earmarked and Block Funding 81
Table 3.1: Elements of a Quality Case Study 92

LIST OF FIGURES
Figure 3.1: Map of South Africa and the Neighbouring States 103
Figure 3.2: Special Merger Task Teams and Communication Flow 137

LIST OF APPENDICES
Appendix 1: UNISA PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH 199
Appendix 2A: TUT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ON-SITE RESEARCH 201
Appendix 2B: TUT APPROVAL TO CONDUCT ON-SITE RESEARCH 203
Appendix 3A: REQUEST FOR RESPONDENTS INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION 205
Appendix 3B: E-MAILED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO RESPONDENTS 207
Appendix 4: COPY OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM 208
Appendix 5: TUT VICE CHANCELLOR’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT 209
Appendix 6: TUT CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER’S INFORMED CONSENT 211
Appendix 7: FIRST PAGE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN TNG, TP & TNW 212
Appendix 8: COVER PAGE OF NUTESA ARBITRATION AGAINST TUT MANAGEMENT 213
Appendix 9: VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN TUT AND NUTESA 214
Appendix 10: PROFILE OF POST-MERGER PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA 215
Appendix 11: TUT DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY’S SIGNED CONSENT 223
Appendix 12: TUT NEHAWU REPRESENTATIVE’S SIGNED
Appendix 13: TUT DIRECTOR STRATEGIC PLANNING’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT ..........................................................225

Appendix 13: TUT DIRECTOR STRATEGIC PLANNING’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT ..........................................................227
CHAPTER ONE
OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the study to the reader in a more intelligible and logical manner (Auriacombe, 2001:30). The primary focus of this study is on the mergers and incorporation of higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa (SA), which largely took place between 2004 and 2007 after the gazetted decision of the South African parliament that eventually resulted in the reduction of the original geo-politically arranged 36 (thirty six) public universities and technikons to 23 (twenty three) (Republic of South Africa, 2003:3-4).

The educational viability and financial sustainability of the original 36 apartheid-engineered higher education institutions were the two critical factors informing the decision by the post-1994 government to formally introduce the notion of mergers as a policy issue in the realignment of the higher education ecology in the country. Fitzgerald, McLennan and Munslow (1997:5) describe ‘sustainability’ as an acknowledgement of facts at hand, and the thinking associated primarily with the processes of a particular activity for the specific purpose of minimizing costs, while also determining the durability of the particular activity. Due to the financial burden and unsustainability of the apartheid designed SA higher education landscape, the newly elected post-apartheid democratic government was resolute and unambiguous in terms of introducing the HEI mergers as a blueprint in the process of reversing the unsustainable and inefficient pre-democratic higher education landscape.

The study further interrogates whether or not the mergers have achieved both the intended broad political goals of the SA government in general and the desired educational objectives in particular. Such interrogation is not only in the public interest, it also highlights the actual trajectories undertaken in the initiation and application of an effective and efficient post-apartheid higher education system for South Africa. It is the researcher’s well considered view that the above-cited interrogation is justifiable, considering that the mergers came at a cost of R3 billion to the tax payer over a five-year period (Asmal, 2009:3). A government initiative of such gigantic financial proportions definitely warrants both an interrogation and a report on the extent of accountability and oversight mechanisms deployed in order to yield the expected political and educational outcomes of the government (CHE, 2004:141). It is on the basis of such an accountability and oversight report that the cost and sustainability of the
mergers project could be assessed and justified. To a large extent, this study is a contribution towards the development and establishment of such a report.

1.2 BACKGROUND/CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

It is common cause that one of the unique features of South Africa’s chequered past was the state-orchestrated and legalised denial of equal learning opportunities to the majority of the country’s population. Such legalised denial and segregation was officially terminated in 1994 with the demise of the Apartheid State and its erstwhile machinations. Discriminatory and racially categorised policies were subsequently developed and implemented for the purpose of redressing the intellectual and developmental trajectory of black people, while also and de-mystifying all nuances associated with white domination and supremacy. Education had previously been instrumentalised as a State institution and doorkeeper intended to exclude black people from accessing quality and equal education with their white compatriots. For instance, the apartheid State’s imposition and enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black schools (in addition to the erstwhile segregation of schools according to race) could be construed as a systematic entrenchment and mechanism to stymie not only the intellectual stimulation and development of the majority of the population, but their overall well-being as humans – the kind of well-being that is manifested in social, political, cultural, economic, and other realms of the ontological justification of human existence.

Historically it is fait accompli that the quest for a non-racial education system by blacks grew and intensified, as strategies to normalise education were conceived (ANC, 1995:1). Inordinate episodes of unrest, violence and death characterized the period between the early 1960s and the late 1980s. As the need for education reform increased within black communities, global pressure also increased correspondingly for the de-racialization of access to higher education opportunities (Cloete, Fehnel, Maassen, Moja, Perold & Gibbon, 2002:23; 29-32). To the extent that this study finds it relevant to incorporate and describe the merger processes as an integral aspect of South African society’s holistic liberation, ipso facto, the study then becomes a narrative contribution to the liberation process from a policy perspective. It is the researcher’s contention that the appropriateness of the re-organisation of the post-apartheid higher education landscape through mergers – in the context of government’s response to the inefficiency and imbalances induced by the status quo ante – should be viewed objectively as the current government’s commitment to non-racialism in all facets of South African society; following its (government’s) decision in 2003 to merge HEIs.
The actualisation and sustenance of apartheid education was created by legally enforceable means. The post-apartheid democratisation of South African society in general – and education in particular, opening ‘the doors of learning’ to all citizens, including the majority that was previously disadvantaged by the erstwhile apartheid system – was concomitantly actuated by means of a transformation oriented legal framework. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (Act 108 of 1996); the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (1997); and the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) are emblematic of some of the legal and policy instruments in this regard. Mkhonto (2007) contends that the post-apartheid democratization of the higher education superstructure in particular was characterised by:

“Forms and ways of ‘knowing’ … no longer subjected to ‘gerrymandering’ of knowledge along such nuances as ‘communist’ and/or ‘non-communist’ knowledge or thought. Access to different forms of ‘knowing’ … no longer the preserve of a privileged section of society. As being on the African continent, South African HE curriculum is most suited to reflecting and advancing democratic participation in the reconstruction and development of society as a whole. The right to learn, academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and freedom of expression are some of the elements of the new culture of the purpose of existence in a democratic society”.

The Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) is arguably the most recognisable legal instrument utilised by the post-apartheid State to strengthen the case for the reconfiguration of higher education in the country (Republic of South Africa, 1997:16; Olivier, 2001: 9). As a precursor to the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (a product of a wide-ranging and extensive consultative and investigative process dating back to 1995) laid the legal and policy parameters for higher education transformation, reconstruction and development (RDP), including the attendant challenges such as sustainability and enforceability of the envisaged re-alignment of South African HEIs.

Section 23 of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) empowered the Minister of Higher Education and Training to merge institutions of higher learning (Republic of South Africa, 1997:20; Republic of South Africa, 2003:3-34). The legal enforcement of the merger process
implies that the Higher Education Restructuring and Transformation Guidelines for Mergers and Incorporations was developed and issued to institutions (Ministry of Education, 2003:1). As a form of both institutional and social redress, the mergers were intended to introduce a new type of higher education institutional organisation and culture – manifested by programmatic/curriculum restructuring, such as the merger between a typical university and a typical technikon (such as the former Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit /RAU, Vista University, and Wits Technikon becoming the new University of Johannesburg/UJ); stand-alone HEIs for those that were not merged (such as Wits University); or incorporation/amalgamation of same-type HEIs, such as the erstwhile University of Bophuthatswana/Unibo and Potchefstroom University to become the new North-West University (NWU). Arguably, the mergers were not necessarily focused on absorbing the HBIs (historically black institutions) into HWIs (historically white institutions) for purposes of racial, funding, and other non-educational purposes – which would give credence to a misconstruement of the intended objectives of the geo-political reduction of the HEIs from 36 to 21 which was even characterized by a name-changing of the institutional/organisational types (Cloete & Maasen, 2002:453; DoE, 2001:14; Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56-57).

As much as mergers of HEIs was a non-negotiable government policy not based on institutions volunteering or non-volunteerism, a semblances of antagonism and/or polarization emanated from both predominantly English-medium and Afrikaans-medium institutions citing political, historical, linguistic, cultural, and other factors for their opposition to the mergers. The Department of Education (1997:8-9) identified that the attitude (acceptance or refutal) towards mergers by historically English- or Afrikaans-medium HEIs was closely linked with the respective institution’s relationship with, or view of the former apartheid State. Whereas the historically Afrikaans speaking higher education institutions viewed themselves as “servants/instruments of the [apartheid] State”, their English-medium counterparts remarked that:

“by their very nature as [English-medium] universities, they were not servants of the State and thus 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 servants of the Apartheid State … 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” (Bunting, 2002:70-71).

It is the researcher’s view that the force and impact of post-1994 change occurring in South African society in general – and within higher education in particular – could not be attenuated or underestimated. Decisions of the State could not be celebrated at a policy making level only, but should be followed-up to their implementation and conclusion (Anderson, 2006:200). It is therefore imperative that a determination be arrived at regarding the extent to which the mergers have cogently responded to the macro-policy intentions of the democratic State. In the event that the State’s intentions were achieved, the success factors of government policy intentions should be stated. Conversely, challenges should concomitantly also be stated volubly. A description of both success factors and challenges is critical, as it would serve as a credible descriptor of the milestone and extent of achievements of the mergers as a policy factor. Furthermore, such description would be setting a benchmark for future accountability on transformation processes that have the verisimilitude of higher education organisational restructuring. Merger descriptors could also assist the South African public to confirm whether or not higher education in South Africa has indeed shifted from an apartheid mould of functioning to a post-democratic education and training reconfiguration convincingly.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher’s conceptualisation of the research problem concerning mergers in higher education was informed by the preliminary review of literature on the subject. It is on the basis of the preliminary review that the researcher’s thinking and thoughts about mergers in higher education were enhanced. Accordingly, the researcher contends that the research problem was found to reside in three spheres with close affinity to one another, namely: the educational legacy of the past (status quo ante); the broad policy agenda and intentions of the post-apartheid government; as well as the fiscal implications of the envisaged mergers – as the merger process itself was not a short-term project, considering institutional/academic, management, programmatic/curriculum, and other organisational cultures that needed reconfiguration as well.
Following government’s pronouncement in 2003 to restructure the SA higher education system and landscape, the merger process was eventually initiated in 2004 and culminated with the reduction of HEIs from thirty six to twenty three. The merger process also entailed policy goals the government intended to achieve (Republic of South Africa, 1997:9-10). The fiscal implications of the mergers necessitate that a description should be made – outlining the extent to which the policy goals were achieved as part of ascertaining the *value-add* associated with the mergers – considering that the process was a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. To the extent that the research problem is located within the policy development and implementation domain, the study intends to describe the higher education mergers with a view to determine the extent to which the government’s policy objectives were realised (or not realised).

The Ministry of Higher Education and Training established problems and areas of concern inherent in the erstwhile discriminatory higher education system, which was found to be *limited in its ability to meet the moral, political, social and economic demands of the new South Africa*. This means that the pre-1994 higher education system was anachronistic and unsustainable in respect of the new democratic dispensation and its people as legitimate beneficiaries. That pre-1994 system was characterized by five main deficiencies (Republic of South Africa, 1997:8):

- **Unequal distribution of access to learning opportunities for students and staff along racial, gender, class, and geographic considerations.** Allocation of facilities and support for institutions to deliver on higher education and training was disproportionate to the demographics of the country;

- **Chronic mismatch between the output of higher education and the needs of a modernized economy,** with the implication that *training* would tend to focus more on over-subscribed sciences, rather than on engineering, technology, and commerce *skills*. Consequently, the broader social and economic development of the nation would be adversely impacted on, resulting in increasing unemployment levels among black graduates as well;

- **Unmatched obligation to lay the foundations of a critical civil society imbued with a culture of public debate and tolerance, in order to accommodate differences and competing interests.** The systemically inherent atmosphere of intellectual censorship (an orchestrated denial of freedom of speech) was designed to induce orthodox conformity to
‘official’ versions of ‘truth’ and ‘knowing’. HEIs were inadvertently drawn into a relationship/association with the apartheid State and its white supremacist ideology;

**Reliance on teaching and research policies which adhered to academic insularity and closed-system disciplinary programmes.** Such a programmatic and curriculum disposition promoted the canonisation of elitist and Eurocentric epistemological tendencies that resulted in displaced learning, characterised by students imagining unknown learning environments for their knowledge construction and development. Furthermore, the discriminatory funding mechanisms meant that the research output of historically white universities (HWUs) surpassed that of historically black universities (HBUs) (CHE, 2000:3); and

**Governance of the system was characterized by fragmentation, inefficiency and ineffectiveness; with inept coordination, few common, goals and negligible systemic planning.** Consequently, the exclusionary governance system engendered dogmatic institutional cultures which (overtly and/or covertly) advanced the broad goals of the apartheid government.

While the afore-cited state of affairs centripetally locates this study’s research problem within the pre-1994 higher education realm, the following aspect of the research problem is centrifugally premised within the transformation-oriented policy domain of redressing past imbalances and injustices in higher education. The Education White Paper 3 (1997) identified that the five afore-cited challenges could be eradicated by means of a single-coordinated higher education system. Accordingly so, and in order to resolve the existing higher education problems and challenges, the above-mentioned white paper advocated for the transformation (as opposed to ‘reformation’) of apartheid higher education by means of a policy framework that was broadly based on the following pillars and tenets of transformation, reconstruction and development (Republic of South Africa, 1997:9):

**Transformation of higher education was part of the broader process of South Africa’s political, social and economic transition.**

The implication here is that, without a comprehensive restructuring of the higher education system, post-apartheid transformation of South African society would remain *in status nascendi* (in a continuous state of becoming). As constitutionally mandated, the post-apartheid SA government assumed the transformation task as its own responsibility, and could not assign or delegate a task of this magnitude to organisations such as Higher Education South Africa (HESA) due to its conservative stance (Pityana, 2003:1).
• As a result of new information and communication technologies (ICT), the SA economy was confronted with the formidable challenge of integrating itself into the competitive arena of international production and finance, which was itself undergoing rapid changes.

Eggins (1998:24) presents a writ large emphasis on the salience of ICT in the post-modern era, and asserts:

“One view of our society is that a new wave of economic and social activity, associated with profound technological change, is replacing the industrial age... A number of researchers have analysed the impact that the new technologies have had on society. They find on the one hand, the potential for moving towards a more egalitarian society, in which there are hugely expanded opportunities for accessing and exchanging information. But they also find, on the other hand, evidence of new social divisions between those who hold much information and those who hold little, the ‘information rich’ and the ‘information poor’. They also find some evidence for these of these technologies as a means of introducing subtle forms of social control. (In) equality among individuals and among nations in the 21st century, therefore, becomes measured by the quality and quantity of, and access to, technology-based information/ knowledge”.

The country’s image (as projected by its governance repertoire and education system, amongst others) was on the verge of adverse local and international exposure, which was inimical to the gains already advanced by the democratic process. A single and seamlessly coordinated higher education system was more progressive than a divisive, disintegrated, and discredited one. Mergers inevitably became the most preferred means towards that progressive end (of a complete transformation of society).

• The country was confronted with the challenge of reconstructing domestic social and economic relations in order to eradicate and redress the inequitable patterns and practices shaped by racial segregation and economic disequilibrium.

A properly structured education sector would be critical in delivering on the above policy undertaking. The apartheid-induced education system of the past was inherently incapable of reforming itself, and extremely aloof of broad based socio-economic participation;
Unequal HEI access as an instrument for social stratification.

One of the underlying issues regarding a transformed higher education sector is its enhancement of access to quality education underpinned by teaching and learning in ways which respond to the plight of the masses and the demands of the economy. Access to higher learning opportunities does not only promote intellectual development and ability, it also becomes a barometer or yardstick by which one’s material well-being or lifestyle could be (pre?) determined. Apartheid higher education limited or prevented access to equal learning opportunities for all citizens. By virtue of their unfettered access to well-resourced higher education institutions, HWIs were relatively in good stead to produce graduates who were well trained and equipped to participate effectively in all sectors of the economy as employees and employers. Contrastingly, predominantly black graduates from HBIs (underprivileged by virtue of unequal funding mechanism) are most prone to both high dropout rates and unemployment. In this regard, both social and epistemological stratification had been legitimated by the instrumentation of education at its highest level.

In the broader context of access, issues of language as a medium of instruction could not be underestimated. For instance, at the Tshwane University of Technology, Afrikaans was the language of instruction at its Technikon Pretoria campus. Afrikaans speaking students were taught in their mother tongue, and therefore enjoyed a huge advantage and success rates in respect of progressing from one level of study to the other. Which of these changes have occurred after the merger? Are all students using one language so that the instruction and assessment processes are fair? Or was Afrikaans retained and African languages relegated to the periphery? These and other relevant questions are crucial, as they are the means by which empirical pre- and post-merger evidence could be determined and ascertained. This interrogative framework should also reveal a range of merger dynamics, such as the attitude of larger institutional partners over the relatively smaller institutions. Cases have emerged in which historically white or advantaged institutions dominated historically black or disadvantaged institutions in the merger process, mainly due to resource-based reasons.

1.4 THE RESEARCH AIM/PURPOSE, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim/purpose and objectives of the study were extracted and conceived on the basis of the researcher’s preliminary reading and thinking in relation to the research problem and the research process in its entirety.
1.4.1 The Research Aim/Purpose

Whereas other social scientists and scholars maintain that the two terms (concepts) ‘research aim/purpose’ and ‘research objectives’ are mutually exclusive, others contend that these two nuances are inter-related, but each has its own definitive characterization Henning (2005:1). Notwithstanding the scientific orientation or paradigmatic inclination within a particular scholarly community, there is general agreement that there exists a relationship between the purpose (general aim) and objectives of a study on the one hand; and the methods of data collection, the research problem, and the research questions on the other hand Henning (2005:1).

The research aim or purpose of the study refers to the broader or general intention(s) of the study in the context of the tasks to be accomplished, including the research methodology and ultimate realization of the research results/findings of the study (Muller 2004:37).

In this study, the aim or purpose is to examine and discuss the higher education merger processes within the ambit of government policy in a transformative and post-democratic environment.

1.4.2 The Research Objectives

Whereas the purpose/aim of the study is concerned with the more general intentions of the study, the research objectives on the other hand, refer to the very specific and narrower intentions of the study in relation to the tasks to be accomplished (Henning 2005:1; Muller 2004:37). The research objectives are intended to provide a context for the resolution of both the research problem and the research questions in the context of the entire research process. In this study, the objectives or more detailed/specific intentions are:

- To analyze and synthesize the core nuances and nomenclature in higher education mergers in the context of the research topic;
- To assess both the success factors and challenges of higher education mergers in the context of government policy development and implementation;
• To assess the post-merger higher education environment in the context of efficiency, sustainability, and accountability; and
• To provide an empirical perspective of higher education mergers in relation to the actual experiences of practitioners in the affected higher education institutions.

1.4.3 The Research Questions

The following research questions are germane to the study, and have been constructed in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the study. Furthermore, these questions are inclusive of the three essential aspects of the mergers in higher education, namely: the government policy domain; financial and programmatic sustainability of the mergers; as well as the accountability factor as an aspect of higher education governance mechanisms:

• What are the key concepts and processes that relate to the implementation of mergers in general, and higher education implementation in particular?
• What are government’s intended policy objectives and outcomes in opting for higher education mergers in a post-apartheid dispensation?
• To what measurable extent has the post-merger environment and higher education landscape been transformed?
• To what measurable extent has the grassroots (empirical) experiences of practitioners been affected by the actual merger implementation processes?

To a large extent, it is the intention of this study to interrogate the above research questions with a view to establish a context for the resolution of the research problem. It is envisaged that the research interviews will illuminate on the extent to which the intended government policy goals and outcomes were realized, or not realized.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION/SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study derives its justification, motivation, significance, or relevance from a multi-faceted terrain and a gamut of perspectives, all of which may tend to be at variance with each other or one another. However, these perspectives and terrains are all manifestly cognate from the researcher’s keen interest in Public Administration (and its political antecedents) as a political field of study with a vast array of policy and socio-economic ramifications.
At the initial stages, the researcher’s view of the broader nuances of mergers was limited. The limited view was confined to an understanding of mergers as merely a bringing together of two things. For instance, the union of a male and female into a marital relationship could arguably be regarded as another form of merger, especially considering the Biblical description of this form of union as bringing two people into one (Homan, 2012:12). Institutional or organisational mergers – public or private – necessarily became a subject for further enquiry by the researcher. A limited view of mergers would have deprived the researcher of an understanding of the nature and types of mergers, as well as their manifestation into reality; that is, whether they are voluntary (undertaken without any threats or force) or involuntary (undertaken by persuasion, threats, or force) (Martin, 1996:83). Naturally, and justifiably so, the researcher’s incipient and limited view of mergers induced further interest and ‘curiosity’ on the subject of higher education mergers in South Africa. Therefore, ‘curiosity’ justifies and explains the researcher’s involvement with the study as a method of enquiry. Sanders and Pinhey (1983:37) contend that a researcher’s curiosity about a phenomenon inspires the purposes of gaining better understanding of the occurrence of a phenomenon (mergers, in this case).

The *policy implications* in the multi-faceted domain of higher education mergers inspired the researcher to select the research topic for a more systematic and focused discussion and narrative conversation. The research topic is poignantly relevant to the researcher, considering the mammoth transformation agenda on which the post-apartheid government had to embark as part of the democratisation and complete liberation of South African society after centuries of colonial rule, imperialism, and apartheid oppression.

### 1.5.1 Discipline-related Significance

The researcher’s choice of topic was greatly influenced by the researcher’s unquantifiable interest in Public Administration as a scientific field of study (discipline) in general, and policy implementation in particular. Anderson (2006:200) describes ‘policy implementation’ as the practical actualisation of a Bill that has been promulgated into law. The above author elaborates further that ‘implementation’ encompasses means by which the *application* of the law is brought into effect; that is, applying the law to the target population in order to achieve the law’s intended goals and outcomes. This description is entirely relevant to the research topic.
The above description of ‘policy implementation’ is supported by several others in the Public Administration domain. For instance, Cloete, Wissink and de Coning (2006:183) concur with Anderson (2006), and add that ‘policy implementation’ should be regarded as the conversion of mainly physical and financial resources into concrete service delivery outputs. The HEI merger processes fit most relevantly within this definition.

From a discipline/scientific perspective, the study’s significance or justification is premised on its contribution to the field of Public Administration as an integral and indispensable sphere of government’s policy development and policy implementation framework or paradigm, such that the public or target population is pragmatically incorporated in the democratization process in its entirety. In this regard, Public Administration and political aspects are eclectically and syllogistically presented in order to derive logic and coherence from the complexity of issues accruing from the research topic and its attendant research processes.

1.5.2 Institution-related Significance

Fielden and Markham (1997:2) undertook an analysis of a survey on mergers in the UK for the period between 1987 and 1994. The analysis found that the real benefits for mergers were strategic and academic instead of economic in the sense of financial returns. Precisely the point with this South African based study, which points at the execution of the government’s well-articulated political strategy by means of the Education White Paper 3 and the Higher Education Act of 1997. While the researcher agrees with the SA mergers, it is not the intention of this thesis to translate the fiscal implications of these higher education mergers. Rather, the focus is on describing whether or not’ the doors of learning and culture’ have been opened at all. The above-cited study by Fielden and Markham (1997) placed its emphasis on broadening student access within the university sector. Therefore, the study’s significance will be assessed by the extent to which it utilises the TUT (Tshwane University of Technology) case as a determinant of whether access was broadened or narrowed by mergers in general and by the TUT merger in particular. It was also essential for the researcher to use the TUT case in order to understand whether or not the capacity level of university management has been enhanced as a result of the transformation initiatives that eventually led to the formation of TUT.
The institution-specific significance and relevance of the study is a writ large manifestation of ‘the politics of knowledge’ – inherent as a vestige of the past, on the one hand; and a manifestation of the current state of institutional affairs on the other hand. On the basis of the latter, pragmatic relevance or institutional benefit could be realized. Table 1 below is an illustration of the effect of ‘the politics of knowledge’, a form of epistemological/intellectual hegemony according to which perceived or real affinity is constructed between ‘race’ and ‘knowing’ – two critical factors in the instrumentalization of higher education as a servant of the State during pre-democratic times in South Africa. Knowledge and power are two inseparable variables, whose strategic value is contested by various political, economic, intellectual, cultural, and other interest groups.

Lagemann (1989: 4-5) asserts that the strategic value of knowledge manifests itself in three distinctive spheres. Firstly, which fields and approaches within fields of knowledge (scientific vis-à-vis non-scientific) are to be considered as “authoritative” and “expert” sources for public policy formulation? Secondly, how are communication mechanisms to be developed between the “authority” of “experts” and “non-experts”? The distribution of power and knowledge in public life has always been contentious for centuries. Lastly, how is access to the means of knowledge-production to be determined? Who has access to the professions and their elites?

The pre-democratic higher education sector was characterised by intense knowledge stratification (which was inadvertently analogous with socio-economic stratification) in accordance with the racial composition of an institution; the latter becoming a pre-determinant of the particular institution’s resourcefulness in terms of staff and student quality, funding, and availability of facilities.

The rationale for citing ‘the politics of knowledge’ metaphor is largely due to the fact that the mergers assisted in resolving specific institutional disparities. Secondly, it is necessary to make pre- and post-merger comparisons in order to determine the correctness or otherwise of this policy trajectory in order to make a case for the mergers as an accomplishment of institutional redress.
Table 1.1: A Depiction of the Erstwhile ‘Politics of Knowledge’ per Institutional Research Output (1987-1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>* Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of the Witwatersrand</td>
<td>1 003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Cape Town</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Pretoria</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Natal</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>Orange Free State University</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>Rand Afrikaans University</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Potchefstroom</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>Rhodes University</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWUs: Afrikaans/English</td>
<td>University of Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4,459</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of Durban-Westville</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of Western Cape</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of South Africa 260 333</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>Medunsa</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of the North</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>Vista University</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBUs: African/ Coloured/Indian</td>
<td>University of South Africa</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>484</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The figures indicated for each year above quantitatively reflect the numbers of published research work in the form of books, journal articles, and so on.

From the statistical information above, it is axiomatic that HWUs have had research output levels that surpass that of the HBUs by far. It is worth noting also that UNISA’s research track record between 1987 and 1990 was unsurpassed by any of the HBUs collectively, and only five HWUs surpassed UNISA’s research track record during the same period. The current study is of particular significance to UNISA in that it also contributes to the esteemed research output and profile of UNISA despite the fact that HEI mergers took place more than
a decade ago. Scholars and experts on HE mergers have determined that it takes longer than a decade for a single higher education merger to begin yielding significantly measurable results in relation to the reasons for, and objectives of the particular merger(s) (Curri, 2002:133; Harman & Meek, 2002:4).

The most salient question related to the post-apartheid higher education mergers in South Africa would be: Subsequent to the SA government’s pronouncement on the implementation of mergers by means of the promulgation of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), has there been any noticeable change in the HEI ecology? Have the mergers achieved, or not achieved the government’s intended goals?

The research topic was also inspired by the fact that the HEI mergers were not unanimously welcomed by universities and technikons. For a variety of (real or perceived?) reasons – ranging from political allegiances, cultural and linguistic hegemony, academic standards, and so on; there were significant pockets of resistance which were associated with uneasiness and/or total opposition to the mergers. While change was generally expected by many in the SA higher education sector, some senior officials in the sector expressed and acknowledged that the HE sector was experiencing a decade of ferment. Universities (which by inclination were conservative institutions) have had to contend with rapid and imposing change, challenges and real prospects of extinction or renewal (Pityana, 2003:1).

There were elements of uncertainty within the HEI sector concerning the mergers’ capacity to produce the type of HE landscape that would catapult SA’s forward transformation trajectory. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) conducted a study in 2001, whose report was published in 2004. The study’s objectives were: to develop a conceptual and contextual framework for merger governance in SA; to interrogate the state of preparedness of SA’s higher education system and institutions for the highly complex processes of mergers and incorporations; and to make proposals regarding system-wide and institutional-level governance in SA’s restructuring higher education system (CHE, 2004:1-2). The study recorded that only 26 out of about 35 higher learning institutions formally responded to the CHE investigation (CHE, 2004:6), an apparent indication that some institutions and their managers were averse to any form of higher education restructuring taking place. The fact that these forms of resistance even preceded the actual announcement of merger implementation in 2003, makes the research topic even more meaningful and worthy of discussion for institution-specific relevance.
In the isolated cases wherein the merger implementation process progressed well, the fear of the unknown was noted. For instance, university administrators and academics of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) convinced themselves to opt for a voluntary merger process; the opposite (involuntary merger process) would have been unproductive, as the government would implement the merger by itself (Makgoba & Mubangizi, 2010:17).

The University of South Africa (UNISA) was not directly affected by the mergers. In that regard, UNISA retained its acknowledged status as an internationally acclaimed, multi campus, and the only stand-alone South African long-distance HEI. However, and to the extent that new institutions (such as the former Technikon SA and VUDEC/Vista University Distance Education Campus) were added to the UNISA merger process, the institution itself had lessons of its own to learn.

1.5.3 Practical Socio-political/economic Significance

The fact that mergers were implemented in South Africa only after the attainment of the first democratically elected government, made it even more appealing and rewarding to the researcher to examine and discuss the higher education merger development and implementation processes with a view to determining their efficacy and relationship to the entire nascent democratic process as it unfolded. In a democratic country, voters hold their government accountable. As a voter, the researcher also explores and interrogates the degree of merger-related government accountability in this study. Accountability and democracy are inseparable (Bekker, 1996:6). Accountability is of particular interest to the researcher who, as a voter, has generally observed that the public tends to defer accountability to their elected leaders in the absence of any crisis, only to react or respond by questioning the causes of a crisis when the unintended effects of the crisis occur later. Citizens should continually be galvanized and mobilized to participate in the business of government from conception of policy ideas to the point of policy implementation (Bekker, 1996:41). A reactive society – one imbued with a culture of either apathy or reacting to crises only – has the potential to breed civil unrest with consequences that are deleterious to democratic gains already achieved.
The research topic was further motivated by the existing political dynamics especially that the merger was a political project, and mandated as such (CHE, 2004:141). For instance, sections of the Freedom Charter – arguably the most seminal and canonised policy document of the ANC (African National Congress) – advocated for the doors of learning and culture to be opened to all citizens (ANC, 1955:1). In addition, the draft education and training policy framework of the ANC stated that the fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system in South Africa has had profound effects on the development of the economy and society (ANC, 1994:2). These facts are cognate from the political and historical dynamics of the country, and point to the value and merit of the research topic, especially in its characterization in the Public Administration discourse.

From a financial accountability point of view, as well as a voter and taxpayer perspective, this study’s worth could not be underestimated as it interrogates the higher education mergers’ value-add, considering that these mergers were a huge financial undertaking by the government. The merger processes involved funds for massive facilities to be integrated into assets of merged entities. Under the auspices of the Department of Finance, the National Treasury had to apportion about R3 billion over a period of five years to realize the implementation of university and technikon mergers in South Africa. Accordingly, the transformation of the higher education landscape was implemented according to the following trajectory:

Twenty three (23) post-merger and post democratic institutions were formed1 (see Appendix 10). These comprised of eleven (11) traditional universities: Rhodes University; North-West University; University of Cape Town; Free State University; University of Fort Hare; Kwa-Zulu Natal University; University of Limpopo; Pretoria University; Stellenbosch University; University of the Western Cape; and the University of the Witwatersrand. In addition to the 23 traditional HEIs, six (6) comprehensive universities were formed: University of Venda; University of Johannesburg; Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University; University of Zululand; Walter Sisulu University; and the University of South Africa. Six (6) universities of technology were added: Tshwane University of Technology; Vaal University of Technology; Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Central University of Technology; Durban University of Technology; and Mangosuthu University of Technology. According to the new HEI reconfiguration programmatic/curriculum offering became a critical determinant of the type an institution would become. For instance, traditional universities

1http://www.southafrica.info/about/education/universities.htm##.U3pVu09l5s
would offer theoretically oriented or more academic and research aligned university degrees. Comprehensive universities on the other hand, would offer a combination of academic and vocational diplomas and degrees; while universities of technology would focus more on vocationally oriented (skills-based/technology) education.

It is self-evident that such a reorganisation of the higher education ecology would require massive funding. The R3 billion belonged to someone (taxpayer) to whom the SA government had to account on how the money was spent. The government (as a public employee of the voters and taxpayers) should also report to the public on tangible, credible and physical evidence brought to bear with the use of such funds. The SA public is the owner of the public money spent by the SA government (Pauw, Woods, van der Linde, Fourie and Visser, 2002:29). Therefore, the public deserves to know what has become of the higher education landscape after the 2004 merger which was announced in 2003.

The public’s right to know (especially on how their taxes are spent) is further integrated with the creation of awareness on the mergers and their implementation. This study then, is justifiable on the basis that it serves as a public awareness report on the mergers, *in order that society could be in a position to determine these as either value added (to the broader transformation, reconstruction and development project) or a mere wasteful and fruitless expenditure.* Cloete, *et al* (2006:181) illuminate that people tend to take policy implementation for granted, neglecting its special characteristics and importance. It is the researcher’s strong view that the South African public should be rescued from ignoring the importance of policy implementation. Awareness empowers citizens with information, knowledge, and power; while enabling them to hold their duly elected government accountable. Bekker (1996:6) mentions further that decision-making processes of local authorities should be kept as close as possible to the citizens. This means that the non-disclosure of information to citizens is tantamount to blindfolding them for life. They would never know the state and well-being of their nation and communities; that is, how laws are translated into policy, and how their money is spent.

In a participatory democratic dispensation, the elected public officials are mandated to execute and implement *the will of the people.* Such a state of affairs obviates oligarchic, unilateral, or factional hegemonic tendencies and practices. In terms of its political and socio-economic significance and relevance, this study interrogates the *legitimacy* of the mergers. That is to say, were they implemented arbitrarily or not? While it was a sacrosanct
requirement for the post-apartheid context of South African society to be rescued from its oppressive past, were the mergers in their current form a remedial method to redress past injustice for the empowerment of previously or historically disadvantaged sections of the population. Was the current form of the mergers, an imposition to society? The researcher was definitely astounded by the resoluteness with which the government determined to merge higher education institutions. Those that would not comply would involuntarily be merged.

The democratic government was born in 1994, and a range of changes were introduced. It was never publicly raised by the masses that universities and technikons needed to be re-organised. Were the merger processes ever going to surface, considering some of the earlier indications that forms of meaningful opposition to the restructuring of the SA higher education system had emerged? The embryonic democratic South African State resolved to radically transform the higher education sector, which would not have escaped the change era (Pityana, 2003:1). In a period of three to four years from 1994, the merger was already a preferred way forward by government. Declarations and resolutions from the Freedom Charter were immediately translated into discussion documents and found their ways into the Education White Paper 3 of 1997, which became an Act of Parliament the same year. These facts are stated in order to reflect the priority with which the government had placed on mergers as a way of changing the painful past into a desirable institution of the people. These in themselves are aspects of South African democracy which deserve to be examined, in order that a valid description constructed on what has become of the post-apartheid higher education landscape.

This thesis brings to the fore a very important account on the merger process and its implementation. The reader and the public will become the final arbiters in respect of the validity, relevance, and authenticity of the findings.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were induced by the following factors: financing of the study; allocation of time; cooperation from role players or the lack of it; as well as availability of information. This study primarily assumes the case study mode of research, with the merger of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) as a point of reference and as the product of a merger of three formerly independent technikons which were located in almost the same vicinity but divided in terms of race and language as well as geographical demarcation.
considering that TNW was formerly falling under the Bophuthatswana Homeland before 1994.

It is the researcher’s view that TUT is a miniature geo-political reflection of apartheid-engineered South Africa. TUT typifies a convergence of historically disparate communities and cultures in an involuntary search for a common identity. The predominantly black former Technikon Northern Gauteng (TNG) and Technikon North West (TNW) merged with the predominantly white former Pretoria Technikon into the current Tshwane University of Technology, with a strong emphasis on programmatic offering; rather than on the racial, linguistic, cultural, and any other superficial considerations.

The time allocated to conduct and complete the study was a challenge, in that the researcher was employed on a full-time basis as Executive Management member of a traditional contact and later a comprehensive university respectively during the period of this research. It therefore required austere time management in order to dedicate time proportionally for both the research and formal employment. Notwithstanding the study and work factors, the data collection process proved relatively manageable. The fact that the researcher has had a healthy relationship with the respondents was advantageous to the interview process.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The focal point of this thesis is the implementation of the merger processes as part of the post-apartheid, democratically elected government’s transformation agenda. The study is a descriptive study using the qualitative research approach to describe and discuss whether or not the merger process did achieve the government’s policy goals. The period under review is 2003 when the mergers were announced, and 2007 when the bulk of the pronounced mergers had been implemented. On the other hand, no attempt was made to generalize the merger processes to a larger population of ‘the universe of universities’ in South Africa. Instead, the research was confined to the TUT as a merger case study.

1.8 ETHICS COMPLIANCE

This study has satisfied all the generally acceptable ethics requirements. Appendix 1 bears testimony to the latter. However, it should be noted that the University of South Africa has also introduced a new method of issuing ethics certificate. The new approach and its policy
came into effect after 2012, some three years after this study was approved and two years after the data for this study was collected and already analyzed. The approval of the researcher’s study proposal occurred in 2009 and was immediately followed by a formal permission letter in February 2009, which was addressed to the researcher from the University’s Senior Degrees Committee for Public Administration and Management. On the letter which appears on Appendix 1 of this study, the Committee authorized the researcher to proceed with the study as per the approved study proposal. The researcher, who has been a pipeline student of the University since 2008/9, under a different set of rules and regulations, proceeded with the study. The researcher collected the data in 2009 and analyzed it accordingly. All these research activities happened prior to Unisa’s introduction of the new policy procedure on ethical clearance. Despite the latter, this study has complied fully with the generally accepted ethical standards for carrying out a study or research of this nature and magnitude. The participation of respondents in the interviews and data collection was voluntary. The participants were under no obligation to consent to participation. All respondents were asked to sign an informed consent form, copies of which are part of the appendices on this report. Furthermore, the participants were free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

The study consists of five chapters, each of which is intended to form a logical concatenation of thematically linked topics and sub-topics in relation to the research topic and its attendant research processes.

**Chapter One:** The chapter adequately introduced the study and its background; the research problem, the aim and objectives; the research questions and significance/motivation of the study; as well as the scope and limitations of the study (Mouton, 2001:114).

**Chapter Two:** This chapter focuses on the theoretical review of the study, which includes a discussion on literature relevant to the research problem under consideration. The reviewed literature concentrates on the extent to which other (local and international) scholars and experts have researched on the same problem. The researcher further provides as a critical discussion on existing literature relevant to this study. The chapter concludes with a summary highlighting existing schisms or gaps (if any do exist) in the field of study (HEI mergers) under investigation.
**Chapter Three:** The chapter discusses the research design and methodology, with emphasis on the type of research and justification of the preferred or applicable research methods. In this regard, the following aspects were discussed and described: the data collection procedures (including sampling and its sampling techniques); as well as instrumentation and data analysis.

**Chapter Four:** The chapter presents and discusses the research findings. This included a presentation of information and data arising from the findings. An illustration of pertinent arguments and emphatic demonstration of results has been ensured in this chapter.

**Chapter Five:** The chapter summarizes and concludes the study, while also providing a basis on which relevant recommendations were made. Every important aspect of the study has been summarized with a view to providing a conclusive outcome and final recommendations.

### 1.10 CONCLUSION

The main purpose of Chapter One was to present an overview of the study as a whole, addressing the main theoretical and empirical aspects – both of which are addressed in more detail in the various chapters of the thesis. The rationale for presenting such an overview is justifiable on the premise that the reader is introduced to the various aspects and components of the research process in general, while simultaneously being ‘conscientised’ of the nature of the specific research variables the researcher attended to as part of translating the abstract into meaningful or practical ‘social reality’. The post-1994 mergers of South African higher education institutions were a nascent post-democracy policy development. Accordingly, the policy dimension of both the research topic and its resultant research problem is emphasised perennially throughout this study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present and to discuss higher education mergers from the perspectives of both primary and secondary sources, in order to contextualize the topicality of the research problem, as well as on-going debates and practices associated with higher education mergers within the ambit of policy development and policy implementation. In this regard, the chapter eclectically traverses both the pre- and post-merger higher education landscape. Furthermore, the review of literature was intended to examine the level of existing scholarship on the research topic and its attendant research problem. The latter aspect assisted the researcher in the development of an understanding regarding other experts’ and scholars’ efforts and initiatives intended to broaden general and specific understanding on the research topic (Mouton, 2001:87; Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2005:160). The discussions in this chapter provide a solid base for further discussions, and create a logical juxtaposition with subsequent chapters. It is also worth mentioning that the emerging themes and concepts discussed herein are only a microcosm in the larger macrocosm of mergers as an organisational phenomenon. For that reason, only the existing literature relevant to higher education mergers was selected, assessed and synthesized.

2.2 AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF HIGHER EDUCATION MERGERS

Mergers in higher education are broadly viewed as being of private or corporate sector origin (Currie, 2001:21-21). The isolated cases of mergers in higher education broadly leaned on the commercial aspects of mergers –according to which companies or firms would voluntarily or involuntarily amalgamate their resources for a mutual competitive advantage. Merging entities ought to have a clear definition ensuring a convergent interaction of higher education institutions on a common concept.

Several of the international trends in this thesis revealed some useful traits and elements in response to the research problem under discussion in this study. In his investigation of transformation practices in the USA (United States of America) between 1960 and 1980, Kerr (1991:3) observed that transformation was not meant to bring about an elitist system of
education based on language and other perceived human factors (such as race, creed, gender, and so on), but was based on bringing about an inclusive egalitarian education landscape aimed at benefiting society in its entirety. It is therefore not inconceivable to examine merger successes and failures with a view to understanding and describing whether or not the policy goals of government were realized, in respect of the very reasons and intentions that necessitated the implementation of mergers in the first place.

The USA approach to mergers was initially intended to ensure that the market share of merging entities is increased by cutting costs and improving service delivery (Nguyen & Kleiner, 2003:447). Furthermore, Mok (2005:282) mentions that in the case of Hong Kong, the merger was meant to identify and bring smaller institutions together for the purpose of creating institutions capable of competing at the highest international levels.

Since higher education transformation is an international phenomenon (Giddens, 1990: 174-175), an international perspective of higher education mergers has afforded this study a context from which the local South African variant of mergers could be compared with trends and practices in HE mergers elsewhere in the world. On the other hand, Mathabe (2004:16) counters that it should also be noted that mergers of South African higher education institutions took place without local and international ‘best fit’, but still managed to yield remarkable success. However, assertions such as those by Mathabe and others do not imply that the South African government did not learn from other international mergers. Sehoole (2005:159) confirms that South Africa (SA) did study other international variants of mergers and drew broad principled lessons from some of the established nations such as Norway, Australia, England and the USA. Among the lessons learnt was that the forms and outcomes of mergers were dependent on interactions between governmental macro-politics and institutional micro-politics within specific merger contexts.

The international comparability and context of HEI transformation is corroborated further by Altbach et al. (1999:13), who assert:

“Universities share a common culture and reality. In many basic ways, there is a convergence of institutional models and norms. At the same time, there are significant national differences that will continue to affect the development of academic systems and institutions. It is unlikely that the basic structures of academic institutions will change dramatically…patterns will, of course, vary worldwide. Some academic
systems, especially those in the newly industrializing countries, will continue to grow. In parts of the world affected by significant political and economic change, the coming decades will be ones of reconstruction [researcher’s italics for emphasis]”.

The Western model of higher education development is arguably the most recognizable precursor to modern and post-modern HE development (Altbach, 2002:1-3). The nature, scope, and pace of Western higher education development has historically determined the kind of both internal and external change(s) taking place in higher education development; that is, whether the change is rapid/radical (revolutionary/transformational and turbulent), or incremental/developmental (evolutionary/reformatory and controlled). The historical relationship and relevance of institutions of higher learning with society have had a tremendous impact on the overall development of society. By equal measure, overall societal development has historically had an impact on HEIs’ internal and external functioning. Internal and external HE functioning includes factors such as curriculum/programmatic organisation; research quality and output; governance mechanisms/management; influence of ICT; globalization and international capital flow; funding mechanisms and higher education institutional orientation to the demands of the world of work; as well as the nature of students – whether access is open for a heterogeneous or homogenous student population only (Altbach, 2002:1-3).

Change and transformation in higher education have most notably been characterized by both epistemological and geographical factors. Considering the historical provenance of HEIs as the most pristine centres of knowledge production, dissemination, and validation in society, the particular location or ‘country of origin’ of an HEI has tended to influence the ‘weight’/value or worth of the form or type of knowledge produced. To this end, Ekong and Cloete (1997:5) caution thus:

“Institutions will in particular also need to be able critically to evaluate whether, as is often claimed in transformation debates, certain bodies of knowledge in a discipline are global (usually referring to aspects of a discipline that relate to Western society and values) while others are local and therefore presumably of lower intellectual status [authors’ parentheses]”. 
Scott (1997:13) concurs with the view (of epistemological-geographical hegemony/monopoly/ imbalances) propounded by Ekong and Cloete (1997:5) above, and states:

“…Western knowledge traditions were produced, and reproduced, by elites, socio-economic, cultural and political. As those elites have been dissolved by democratisation and their value systems have been eroded by the advances of mass culture, alternative knowledge traditions have (re?) emerged. Within the West, ‘local’ knowledge traditions – black history or women’s writing – increasingly challenge ‘metropolitan’ intellectual cultures”.

A critical message entailed writ large in Scott’s statement above is that epistemological hegemony as a factor of higher education transformation or reform is decisively determined by factors such as: what is to be taught (curriculum content); how it is to be taught (methods of delivery), and who wields the power to decide both content and its methodologies and processes.

Fielden and Markham (1997:3) analysed a survey conducted by Gillian Rowley regarding the mergers of 30 (thirty) United Kingdom (UK) institutions and found that mergers – despite the uneasiness and uncertainties they present at their conceptual and early implementation stages – have the unintended potential to yield results which are often greater than the intended and anticipated expectations. Amongst the identified unintended gains are the enhanced academic portfolios; smaller merger partners suddenly finding themselves exposed as providers of some of the essential programmes in quality ways; the university community suddenly becoming a platform from which employees draw from a dynamic hybrid of cultures; training opportunities emerging to the benefit of many; and greater transparency in the management processes becoming essential. How much of this has been the attitude and experience of the South African university sector, remains to be seen. South Africa has an opportunity to draw from its post-2004 ‘unity in diversity’ merger experiences.

2.2.1 Some Lessons from the International Merger Perspectives

d’Ambrosio and Ehrenberg (2007:1) undertook a study which also focused on transformation in society. The study found that higher education transformation could not be separated from the dictates of societal demands. The ever-increasing expansion in scope of people’s needs
and expectations from governments needed to be considered when re-thinking and/or reviewing the landscape of a nation’s education system. Clearly, the apartheid-era South African higher education system was conceived with nothing or very little to do with the aspirations and needs of black people in general or African students in particular. Conclusively, the Apartheid government had to endure diverse forms of resistance from whenever laws and policies were introduced because there was no healthy link between the State and the majority of the people in the society. The State of the time ended up resorting to undue pressure, almost leading by threat and power in order to advance its own agenda.

Li, Whalley, Zhang and Zhao (2008:28) undertook a study to document major transformation of higher education in China since 1999, evaluating its potential global impact. The transformation focused on resource commitments to tertiary education and significant changes in organisational form as opposed to the focus of other countries on primary and secondary education. Although South African higher education or the country was not part of this study then, it was argued earlier that capacity and infrastructural development was one of the evident inequalities from the apartheid system, for historically disadvantaged universities and technikons.

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION MERGERS

It should be reiterated that change was mandatory for South Africa. It should be stated that despite the phenomenal nature of mergers, there was no evidence during the period under review, of a country in the world which suffered discrimination of the kind that South Africa suffered in the hands of its own government. As a result, there was no fitting benchmark or philosophy or model for the SA merger.

Current and future university councils and vice chancellors should consciously draw lessons from the past SA higher education history and take transformation, which took place in the form of mergers, seriously and patriotically undertake to continually:

- Examine their leadership approaches and styles with a view to ensure the delivery of relevant leadership and service to the society;
- Examine the relevance of university services to the needs and aspirations of the societies they are serving.

2http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/chapter-4-fruits-freedom
• Ensure that universities appeal to ordinary citizens, inspiring them (citizens) to acknowledge universities as homes of hope, innovation, solutions, liberating truth and wisdom.
• Quest for projecting university leaders as intellectual mouth pieces for workers, the poor in particular and society in general;
• Inspire the government to envision the future of the country through the lens not of the poor and working class, as well as through research work from universities, propelling government to proudly head-hunt astute innovators from universities into the civil service;
• Lead not out of envy and rivalry, but out of goodwill for society’s advancement, inspiring greatness among staff members, unleashing talent, encouraging out-of-the ordinary thinking and innovation;
• Discern the future with boldness and humility, professing and communicating the future with action and causing many to believe in possibilities which have the capability to revive a third world or developing economy and catapult it into the terrain of first world countries; and
• Point critically and boldly at obstacles which may destroy the gains of democracy and the nation.

In this manner, the nation could somewhat be at ease that higher education is not only in the hands of academic rhetoric who will champion research that does not contribute to the broader transformation and improvement of people’s lives, but a calibre of people who are patriotic to their nation.

The SA merger process was not harmoniously received both within and without the HE sector. However, its implementation survived due to the government’s resolute determination to effect radical changes in the performance of higher education institutions in the country. Central to some of the resistance were fears of the unknown, and the thought that the very notion of merging HEIs with disparate academic and intellectual cultures was a hitherto untested and novel phenomenon in South Africa.

2.3.1 The Pre-merger Context of South African Higher Education: Legacy of the Past

The merger of South African higher education institutions was essentially a politically driven project (Makgoba & Mubangizi, 2010:1). In order to transform these erstwhile geo-politically structured HEIs, a concomitant politically driven policy and regulatory framework was
inevitable, in order to redress the educational legacy and inequalities of the past. Asmal (2002:1) argued that “the pre-1994 structure of the higher education system could be traced to the geo-political imagination of apartheid’s master planner, Hendrik Verwoerd and his reactionary ideological vision of separate development”. Verwoerd’s ideology-steeped vision was entrenched by the Nationalist Party (NP) government with the enactment of the Universities Extension Act in 1959, which, “instead of extending access to higher education on the basis of universal values intrinsic to higher education, restricted access on race and ethnic lines”. It was the explicit intention of the afore-cited Act “to ensure that the historic white institutions served the educational, ideological, political, cultural, social and economic needs of white South Africa”, and “to establish institutions that would produce a pliant and subservient class of educated black people to service the fictional homelands of apartheid’s imagination” (Asmal 2002:1). Welsh and Savage (1997: 131) provide some insight on the nexus between education, ideology, and race on the one hand; as well as power and socio-economic development on the other hand:

“The phenomenon of universities’ becoming focal points for the generation of nationalist ideas and activity is a common one, and in relatively homogenous societies this contributed to the growth of national identity and the consolidation of the nation-state. In ethnically divided societies, however, the same politicisation of the universities by nationalism may have highly divisive implications for society. Either the university is rooted in a particular segment of the population and becomes the symbol of their intellectual awakening; or the university may seek to straddle the ethnic cleavages, when it may well become the battleground for its own possession. Rarely, it would appear, is the university able to remain aloof from the powerful, and often divisive, forces of nationalism in the society in which the university is situated [researcher’s italics]”.

In order to facilitate an objective discussion of the pre-merger HE institutional ecology, it is therefore necessary to examine the actual differentiation of the pre-democratic higher education system.

2.3.2 Identifiable Problems in the Pre-1994 Higher Education Dispensation

The ensuing state of affairs projects a general pre-merger scenario in the country. South African universities were not producing enough employable graduates (Business Day,
Admission in general into some of the historically advantaged white institutions remains a discriminating exercise. The standards of particularly high school education, were deprecating in deplorable levels and that the wounds of South Africans which were caused by apartheid were deepening rather than healing. A study by Leslie (2003) indicated that some of the universities, particularly, the historically advantaged white ones were not in favour of the merger because they feared loss of their juristic standing and job losses. Just almost 10 years after the merger, some of the heads of department at UCT was reportedly facilitating staff appointments in ways which were not in keeping with the demographics of the province and country by fellow academics (Sunday Times, 2014:17). Finweek (2009:12) revealed that the dropout rate among first year students was costing SA’s Treasury a staggering R4, 5 billion a year in grants and subsidies to institutions without an adequate return on that investment. Clearly, this recorded drop-out is a reflection of the fact that the new government had inherited a curriculum and teaching and learning systems which were not programatically aligned to the needs of the students and the economy.

Based on its character as a politically driven project, the HE merger process in South Africa necessarily became a microcosmic reflection of the post-1994 democratisation of South African society. Accordingly, the mergers themselves became the primary means by which the prevalent binary divisions in society were addressed. The binary divisions manifested themselves in the legitimation of perceived racial superiority on the one hand, and epistemological hegemony on the other. That is, predominantly white universities and technikons were ontologically and functionally established to become more advanced centres of knowledge and excellence compared to those universities and technikons established for the majority of citizens in the country (Jansen, 2001:12). It is worth mentioning that the nature of the damage caused by the inherent binary divisions in the previous HE dispensation was so devastating that transformation of the higher education institutions in the country had to be both comprehensive and radical – as opposed to a reform-oriented approach, according to which HE change would be incremental and controlled. The Council on Higher Education, (CHE, 2000:9) alludes explicitly to the nature and form of the necessary steps to give effect to a post-apartheid higher education: “Given the apartheid legacy and the social and developmental challenges, the higher education transformation has to be radical and comprehensive. It also needs to be pursued with particular urgency [researcher’s italics]”.


2.3.2.1 Structural and Conjunctural Problems

The Department of Education (DoE, 1997:11) noted that structural and conjectural problems characterized and contaminated the apartheid HE system, and these had to be resolved simultaneously in order to usher-in a credibly transformed post-1994 higher education system. As opposed to the structural challenges of apartheid higher education (the type of which was manifested by the geo-political re-engineering of public institutions of higher learning during the apartheid era); the conjunctural problems associated with the vestiges of apartheid education relate mainly to those inherent HE problems that impact on the internal functionality of the HEI as an organisation. Such problems warrant immediate and protracted action, as failure to do so will inevitably result in immediately observable dire consequences. Typical examples in this category would include governance and funding mechanisms, inclement student attrition rates (notwithstanding the advent of massification), as well as the programmatic or curriculum orientation/culture of the particular higher education institution.

The structural challenges were premised on the ideological and philosophical racial parameters on which education was planned and developed (DoE, 1997:13). The structural challenges were also extant in nature – based on past racial categorization, but tended to have an influence and ramification into the present. Such challenges provided the actual base for the sustenance of apartheid education in general (DoE, 1997:13; CHE, 2000:13; Seepe; 2000:53-54). The Nationalist Party’s racial policies entrenched the inherent distortions, duplication and fragmentation of apartheid higher education (CHE, 2002:11-13; Bunting, 2002:59), which culminated in the division of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) into five ‘independent countries’; namely, ‘white South Africa’ and ‘the four TBVC states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, & Ciskei). The physical location of these five ‘independent’ countries’ was a concrete geo-political manifestation of the NP’s higher education grand plan, which entailed amongst other factors, the remote location of the ‘bush universities/colleges’ away from the mainstream or economic epicentres of ‘white South Africa’ (CHE, 2000:13).

The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 is arguably the most indelible means by which the Apartheid State implemented its division of the country into racially ‘independent’ enclaves. The physical location and geographic remoteness of the TBVC institutions of higher learning from the urban milieu contributed to their academic backwardness – compounded by other
factors such as environmental and infrastructural challenges; limited inter-institutional collaborations; as well as travel and communications retardation.

Seepe (2000:53) contends that the NP’s (mis?) conception of race-based higher education resulted in the general multiplicity of racially-separated HEIs throughout the country. Wolpe (1995:285) on the other hand, corroborates the racially motivated intentions of apartheid’s higher education, citing that the “complex dual legacy” of South Africa’s apartheid education is an unequivocal reflection of “… [the] organic outgrowth of an undemocratic political system … the artificial outgrowth of racially motivated planning [which had] … not been primarily designed to accommodate the profile or patterns of civil society or, until recently – the economy… ensuring that they [HEIs] contributed to the reproduction of the apartheid social order… [Researcher’s italics]”.

The NP’s geo-political reconfiguration (Asmal, 2001: 2) (based on the demarcation of ‘white South Africa’ and ‘the four TBVC states’) was followed-up with the proliferation of 36 (thirty six) HEIs (21 (twenty one) universities and 15 (fifteen) technikons) scattered randomly within ‘white South Africa’ and ‘the four TBVC states’, all of which were administratively controlled by eight different education departments. Such a development was a cogent manifestation of “… the apartheid thinking which led to the differentiation of higher education in South Africa into two distinct types – universities and technikons – and [it shows] how [this apartheid thinking manifested itself into] sharp racial divisions, as well as language and culture, [contributed to] the [skewed] profile of the institutions in each category” (Bunting, 2002:59). Table 2.1 depicts the number of South African HEIs under a plethora of educational authority and jurisdiction between 1990 and 1994.
Table 2.1: The Geo-political Reconfiguration of Apartheid Higher Education: 1990-1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Authority</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Technikons</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House of Assembly/Whites</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Delegates/Indians</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House of Representatives/ Coloureds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Education &amp; Training/Africans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transkei/Xhosas ‘independent’ homeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bophuthatswana/Tswana ‘independent’ homeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda/Venda ‘independent’ homeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciskei/Xhosa ‘independent’ homeland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bunting (2002: 64)

The table above represents the creation of the NP’s 1984 Constitution, which established segregated government departments for separate racial development; with ‘own affairs’ exclusively for Whites, Indians, and Coloureds in three separate ‘Houses’ within the ‘tri-cameral parliament’. Africans in ‘white South Africa’ were not represented in any ‘House’, or ‘Assembly’ within the ‘tri-cameral’ superstructure. As the NP would have it, they were merely accorded the status of ‘general affairs’ in the context of all their primary, secondary, and higher educational needs under the administrative fiat of the DoE (Department of Education).

Legislative and regulatory means such as the Extension of Universities Act of 1959 empowered the Apartheid State to establish universities as entities or instruments of the State (Walters, 1999:577). The latter view is corroborated further by Bunting (2002:61), who reported that:

“The [Nationalist Party] 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”
2.3.3 Old Forms of Institutional Differentiation

As a result of the geo-political differentiation of higher education institutions during the pre-democratic higher education dispensation, a phalanx of neologisms began to feature in the descriptive nomenclature of higher education institutional categories and sub-categories – from historically black/white universities; historically black/white technikons; historically black/white institutions; to historically advantaged/disadvantaged institutions (Cloete et al., 2002; Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Subotzky, 1997). In spite of the geographically and racially differentiated HE landscape, the problems of access and retention continued unabated, as indicated by the following statistical information, which is a stark depiction of the innate HE programmatic/curriculum distortions (DoE, 2001:5):

- a 23% decline in matriculation exemptions, from 89 000 to 68 626 between 1994 and 2000;
- first-time HE entrants constantly at around 120 000 (40 000 distributed between UNISA, while the other 80 000 is distributed among the contact HEIs;
- exclusionary financial and academic factors leading to high drop-out rates; and
- fewer postgraduates being available immediately after their first degree qualification.

The above-cited programmatic distortions also reflect the link between institutional ‘type’ and quality or ‘type’ of qualification and the requisite skills. Wolpe (1995:279) avers that the division between HBUs and HWUs on the one hand, as well as between research and teaching universities on the other, is also one of the critical determinants of the ‘type’ or quality of the student produced by the particular institution. Table 2.2 reflects the argument mooted by Wolpe (1995:279).
### Table 2.2: Programmatic and Research Orientation per HE Institutional Type: 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>*HWU: Afrikaans</th>
<th>*HWU: English</th>
<th>HBU</th>
<th>*Distance Education</th>
<th>*Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Diplomas</td>
<td>7% (15%)</td>
<td>7% (14%)</td>
<td>74% (53%)</td>
<td>12% (18%)</td>
<td>5,671 (3,515)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>36% (37%)</td>
<td>30% (31%)</td>
<td>6% (15%)</td>
<td>18% (18%)</td>
<td>16,119 (1,2240)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Bachelor’s</td>
<td>49% (47%)</td>
<td>31% (43%)</td>
<td>11% (11%)</td>
<td>9% (9%)</td>
<td>7,314 (6,351)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Bachelor’s</td>
<td>30% (38%)</td>
<td>37% (35%)</td>
<td>19% (12%)</td>
<td>14% (15%)</td>
<td>5,742 (4,775)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honours</td>
<td>48% (52%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,936 (4,371)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s and Doctorates</td>
<td>52% (1%)</td>
<td>33% (33%)</td>
<td>5% (4%)</td>
<td>11% (12%)</td>
<td>3,532 (2,824)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>16,135</td>
<td>12,151</td>
<td>9,279</td>
<td>6,746</td>
<td>44,314 (34,076)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Wolpe (1995: 279)

*The figures and/or percentages appearing in dual mode in some cells indicate the inclusivity of a technikon and a university under that particular institutional type.

An extrapolation from the data above indicates the *skewed* programmatic orientation and research culture between the hitherto racially defined institution types. The numerical strength of postgraduate students spread across the economically-strategic fields of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), and Business and Commerce, underlines the strength of the historically white universities (Subotzky, 1997:114-116; Wolpe, 1995:277-279). The DoE (2001: 22) indicates that between 1993 and 1999 there has, however, been a *shift* in the Humanities from 57% to 49%, while the Business fields increased in output from 19% to 26%.

The financial implication of *access* not being adequately achieved translates into a R1, 3 billion *loss* in public subsidy (DoE, 2001: 25). The amount accrues due to retention difficulties and high drop-out rates, 20% of all undergraduate and postgraduate students each year, therefore a net loss of 120 000 students not reaching the qualification points of exit. The HE system then suffers the moral and psychological consequences associated with *failure*. In an attempt to thwart off this trend from becoming an extant feature of the HE system in a
transformed environment, the DoE proposed the following benchmarks as part of a strategic planning initiative intended to improve HE access, quality and efficiency (Mkhonto, 2007:132). Table 2.2 emphatically and cogently illustrates both the real intentions and the outcomes of the geo-politically differentiated HEI landscape prior to the implementation of the merger process.

### 2.3.3.1 The Former Historically White Institutions (HWUs)

Mamdani (1998:131) provides an apt description of some of the most profound differences between HBUs and HWUs:

“Both the white and black institutions were products of apartheid though in different ways. The difference was not only in the institutional culture, that the former enjoyed institutional autonomy and the latter was bureaucratically driven. The difference was also in their intellectual horizons. It was the white intelligentsia that took the lead in creating apartheid-enforced identities in the knowledge they produced. Believing that this was an act of intellectual creativity unrelated to the culture of privilege, in which they were steeped, they ended defending an ingrained prejudice with a studied conviction. The irony is that the white intelligentsia came to be a greater, became a more willing, prisoner of apartheid thought than its black counterpart [researcher’s italics]”

Based on the web of apartheid higher education predating even the ascendency of the NP to political power in 1948, it is the researcher’s contention that the preservation of ideological supremacy (based on a holistic review and assessment of the vestiges of apartheid) engendered the establishment of both the Afrikaans and English HEIs and is a vivid reflection of allegiances and identities associated respectively with Afrikaner nationalism on the one hand; and British imperialism on the other (Welsh & Savage, 1977:143). The further fragmentation of the ‘homeland universities’ – which were relatively inferior by many academic standards –compromised the country’s collective academic and intellectual potential and integrity and equally reinforced an ideological function of the State; thereby limiting higher education’s nation-building capacity (Welsh & Savage, 1977:149).

The Nationalist Party’s pre-1994 HE legislative framework ensured that all white HEIs were located within the borders of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (‘white South Africa’). As
such, these HEIs were not dislocated from the urban-based epicentres of mainstream economic activity (Bunting, 2002:65). Largely due to their privileged status as recipients of more generous funding than their black and disadvantaged counterparts, the HWUs are invariably also referred to as HAIs (Historically Advantaged Institutions). Furthermore, these historically white and advantaged universities/institutions were linguistically, culturally, and programmatically/instructionally categorised into Afrikaans-medium, “…which was the home language of most people in government [researcher’s italics]” (Bunting, 2002:65). Additionally, “Afrikaans was actively developed as a language to be used in the public domain” (Desai & Van Der Merwe, 1998:248).

While Afrikaans and English could be viewed as factors of whites-only ‘ethnic apartheid’ during the NP’s reign, Cooper and Subotzky (2001:7) illuminates and asserts that “segregation within the South African higher education system preceded the National Party’s gaining power in 1948 [researcher’s italics]”. The pre-1948 terrain of discriminatory higher education practices highlighted above raises very poignant questions, while also posing a serious indictment of the HE sector in particular, and the broader South African political spectrum in general, namely that:

• Racial discrimination in the South African higher education sector has been practised by successive white governments long before 1948; and

• The magnitude and practice of pre-1948 and pre-1994 discriminatory higher education practices became the primary determinants of its (HE discrimination) impact on the Afrikaans-English helix on the one hand, and the non-white (African, Coloured, and Indian) ideological vertex on the other.

(a) The Former Historically Afrikaans-medium Universities (HAMUs)

Historically, Afrikaans-medium universities were conspicuously and distinguishably identified by their loyalty and allegiance to the Nationalist Party government – thus becoming willing instruments of the State. Bunting (2002:66-67) characterises the role and function of an instrumentalist HEI 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 … [researcher’s own italics]

The following 5 (five) chronologically listed HEI sub-types became the bedrock instruments of Afrikaner nationalism (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:536-538; Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:7):

- University of Stellenbosch (acquired full university status in 1916);
- University of Pretoria (acquired full university status in 1930);
- University of the Orange Free State (UOFS) (acquired full university status in 1950);
- Potchefstroom University (acquired full university status in 1951); and
- Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) (acquired full university status in 1967).

Contrastingly, the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) – which acquired full university status in 1964) – was a bilingual HEI using a dual mode of English and Afrikaans as instruction and communication media. Bunting (2002:65) argues that the dual mode was mere posturing as the fundamental purpose was to entice conservative white English-speaking students into the predominantly Afrikaans-speaking government sector. Notwithstanding the conciliatory posturing, UPE “… was dominated by Afrikaans-speaking executives and governing bodies … and councils which gave strong support to the apartheid government, [and its] ideology of universities being ‘creatures of the state’ and therefore took their chief function to be that of acting in the service of government (Bunting, 2002:65).

In an effort to preserve their Afrikaner nationalism and racial epistemological hegemony, the former Afrikaans-medium HEIs were the most vehemently opposed to transformation, prompting the first post-democratic Minister of Education to respond thus:

“The debate on the language policy for higher education has reached new lows in recent days. The insults hurled by those opposed to Afrikaans-medium universities becoming dual medium … have become more heavy-handed, personalised and vulgar, despite our attempts to allay fears that the Afrikaans language is not under threat. Judging by the strident comments in support of Afrikaans being retained as the only language of tuition at certain institutions, it is evident that some individuals are beginning to show their true colours and to speak through the justifications of those who created and manned the apartheid regime. In fact this is no longer a debate on language, but a contestation of power by those who want to continue to possess our
institutions of higher learning as their own, as separate or segregated spaces, not to be meddled with by the bringers of democracy and the implementers of transformation … The defence of Afrikaans in this [racist] context is not so much a defence of the language as such but of a mentality that still upholds the ideology of superiority … The real debate ought to be access to higher education… There is a serious shortage of black doctors, for instance, resulting in hundreds of students being sent for medical training in Cuba. Yet, among the so-called Afrikaans universities, there are excellent capacity and world-class facilities. These must be used to the benefit of all … Our Constitution speaks directly to the need to receive education in the official language of choice and yet links this to other basic rights such as equity and the need to redress the inequalities of the apartheid legacy [researcher’s italics]” (Asmal, 2002:4).

During the sanctions era of the 1980s (when the country’s HE funding from countries such as the Netherlands was terminated, and SA was even excommunicated from the international fraternity of academics and cultural organisations for instance), the predominantly Afrikaans-medium HEIs defiantly displayed their loyalty and allegiance to the ruling NP state – their financial benefactors and political guardians – by providing military expertise to the government. Ipso facto, the “servants of the state” overtly came to rescue of the perceived “enemies of the state” (Bunting, 2002:66-67).

Access of black students to the historically advantaged Afrikaans-medium HEIs was a cosmetic façade, as CHE (2000:14) noted that, “[a] further worrying trend is that at historically Afrikaans-medium universities, the predominant form of incorporation of African students has been through the enrolment of distance students who are seldom seen on campus”. Table 2.3 quantitatively emphasises that fact.
Table 2.3: The Total Distribution of Students Among the Spectrum of HEIs: 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>97 (1%)</td>
<td>147 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8,973 (97%)</td>
<td>9,217 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>97 (2%)</td>
<td>350 (8%)</td>
<td>31 (0%)</td>
<td>4,108 (90%)</td>
<td>4,586 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potchefstroom</td>
<td>263 (3%)</td>
<td>109 (1%)</td>
<td>13 (0%)</td>
<td>8,815 (96%)</td>
<td>9,200 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>64 (0%)</td>
<td>77 (0%)</td>
<td>24 (1%)</td>
<td>22,811 (99%)</td>
<td>22,976 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rand Afrikaans</td>
<td>130 (2%)</td>
<td>307 (4%)</td>
<td>12 (0%)</td>
<td>7,868 (96%)</td>
<td>8,317 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
<td>40 (0%)</td>
<td>507 (4%)</td>
<td>91 (0%)</td>
<td>13,269 (96%)</td>
<td>13,907 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>691 (8%)</td>
<td>1,497 (19%)</td>
<td>171 (1%)</td>
<td>65,844 (97%)</td>
<td>68,105 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cooper & Subotzky (2001:36)

As a factor of the massification process (which was intended to address past inequitable access to higher education), access by previously/historically disadvantaged students inevitably became one of the foremost concerns of the DoE in its pre-merger policy formulation strategies (DoE, 2001:5); to the point that when the mergers were eventually effected, the DoE demanded that HEIs should provide three-year “rolling plans” indicating how they planned to increase growth of, and access by black students in their campuses. It is the researcher’s contention that HE access by black students has always been a ‘perennial’ issue. On the one hand, its antagonists have cited a gamut of views for its perceived unsustainability. The opponents cite that ‘rampant’ access is a threat to (Eurocentric?) standards, based on the matriculation idiosyncrasies of black students. On the other hand, the protagonists and proponents of access view it as a justifiable mechanism to redress past injustices that legally prevented black students from studying at predominantly white higher education institutions, whose academic excellence has historically been reinforced by amongst others, their respective science related research and its concomitant funding – a factor that is acutely exemplified by Table 2.4.
Table 2.4: Science Research Contracts at Four Previously White HEIs: 1995-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretoria</td>
<td>*27</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>480%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>258%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natal</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Town</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>186%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>1,224%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bawa & Mouton (2002: 316)

It is worth noting that the table above depicts only science related research excellence and dominance at only four previously ‘whites only’ universities – notwithstanding that the dominance was even prevalent during the early years of the post-apartheid era.

(b) The Former Historically English-medium Universities (HEMUs)

While the historically Afrikaans-medium universities were known for their symbiotic intellectual linkage with Afrikaner nationalism (Welsh & Savage, 1977:143), the historically English-medium universities such as Wits University and the University of Cape Town (UCT) – both of which were also known as “open universities” (Welsh & Savage, 1977:143) as they were imbued with traditional British liberalism – admitted black students (then comprising 5% to 6% of the entire predominantly white student body in 1957) only as “… a matter of acquiescence, rather than an active concern to promote any kind of racial ‘integration’. The[se] universities were deeply conscious of powerful segregationist norms in the white community outside, and were accordingly reluctant to go any further than permitting black students to ‘academic equality’ while seeking to preserve social segregation inside each institution [researcher’s italics]” (Welsh & Savage, 1977:139).

As opposed to the Afrikaans-medium HWUs, the English-medium HWUs were distinguishable in the form of those whose medium of communication, cultural expression, and instruction was English, “… which was the home language of most people in big business and private enterprise [researcher’s italics]” (Bunting, 2002:65). The latter author contends further that political support for, or against the National Party – more than the linguistic and cultural variables – was arguably the force majeure that distinguished historically Afrikaans-medium institutions from their historically English-medium
counterparts. The following are the four historically dominant English-medium universities, and are listed in the chronological order of being awarded their full university status (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:70):

- University of Cape Town (full university status in 1916);
- University of the Witwatersrand (full university status in 1922);
- University of Natal (full university status in 1949); and
- Rhodes University (full university status in 1951)

The above-mentioned institutions were not fully accredited universities at their inception. The University of Cape Town for instance, started off as the South Africa College (SAC), established in 1829. The University of the Witwatersrand was initially the South Africa School of Mines and Technology, established in 1903. The University of Natal was initially known as Natal University College, established in 1909 as an offshoot of Maritzburg College; while Rhodes University College was established in 1904 as the predecessor to Rhodes University (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:5-6; SAUVCA, 2002:1).

Established in 1873 and legally constituted for its full university status in 1916 (the same year as UCT and Stellenbosch University), the University of Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) – UNISA’s predecessor – was the only university in South Africa (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:6). As opposed to the NP supporting Afrikaans-medium universities, the English-medium universities justified their ideological and philosophical existence by their opposition to the apartheid government’s perception of higher education institution becoming “creatures of the state”.

It is primarily their “open universities” stance that polarised the liberal historically English-medium institutions’ relationship with the NP government (Bunting, 2002: 70). Against this background, the HEMUs’ overt refusal to becoming functionaries of the state created a context in which a third HE-society political landscape emerged. Firstly, the HAMUs openly identified themselves with Afrikaner nationalism. Secondly, the HEMUs were loyal to British (imperial) liberalism. Lastly, the HBU (Historically Black Universities) – especially the African HEIs located within the TBVC ‘states’ and ‘White South Africa’ – became a ‘third (ideological) front’ in the broader South African higher education milieu. The ‘third ideological strand’ identified itself with the general liberatory political and socio-economic
aspirations of the oppressed majority of the SA population. Mamdani (1998:73) articulates the latter matter thus:

“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 universities community is that of the more radical Left”.

The very principles of access/growth/expansion, redress and equity are cognate from the very political climate that engulfed the apartheid era of HE development in the country. That very climate induced a legislative and policy framework for the post-democracy merger process and its subsequent implementation mechanisms (DoE, 1997:8-9). The specific liberal character of the English-medium universities is most succinctly encapsulated in the following statement by Bunting (2002:70-71):

“… by their very nature as universities, they [HEMUs] were not servants of the state and thus they would not accept that their functions could be limited to those of serving the needs and implementing the policies of the [NP] 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 servants of the apartheid state … 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 [researcher’s italics]”.

44
The HEMUs liberal inclination implied that academic freedom and institutional autonomy motivated them to ‘rebel’ against unjust HE policies. Accordingly, they could therefore decide to teach whatever they regarded as relevant and important and admit whoever fulfilled their academic entry requirements with no considerations to race, creed, or gender. It is this very maxim that further motivated the HEMUs to employ any suitable candidate for any academic post on the provision that the candidate(s) met the requirements. Between 1990 and 1993, 28% to 38% of the registered students at the historically English-speaking universities were respectively African or Indian (Bunting, 2002:71).

It could be mentioned that under apartheid, both academic freedom and institutional autonomy were moribund and ‘censored’ to obviate ‘cultural assimilation’ and ‘educational miscegenation’. (During the era of apartheid higher education, it was anomalous for any HEI 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 [so-called] communism” (Bunting, 2002:70)). Optimally imbued with a sense of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, the predominantly English-medium universities distanced themselves from political allegiance and pursued a policy of maintaining academic liaison with international institutions and organisations. Their anti-apartheid stance translated into huge financial benefits as they received generous donations from overseas organisations. Furthermore, the HEMUs’ research orientation ‘immunised’ them from government instrumentalization as they could not be drawn into such programmes and projects intended to accentuate the military research capacity of the state. Bunting (2002:72-73) emphasises the HEMUs anti-apartheid stance writ large: “none of the four [liberal] institutions permitted their academic staff members to become involved in any kind of policy work for the government and governmental 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 [researcher’s italics]”.

In spite of their overt anti-apartheid predisposition, Mamdani (1998: 73) contends that the four predominant English-medium institutions “… were never major agents for social political change in South Africa”. This contention is premised on their governance and management systems, as well as their research agendas, which were perceived as perpetrating aloofness towards comprehensive social accountability to the underprivileged majority of South African citizens.
2.3.3.2 The Former Historically Black Institutions (HBUs)

The preoccupation of the erstwhile government with racial differentiation in higher education resulted in a plethora of racially connotated HEIs. The proliferation of institutional types and sub-types (36 in total) for a country, whose population was less than 50 million, was a world record (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:7).

The ethnic differentiation of HBUs was distributed among the following institutions: University of the North (1960) and its QwaQwa branch (1982); University of the Western Cape (1960); and University of Zululand (1960). Two ‘special purpose’ higher education institutions were added, namely the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) (1976) and Vista University, which

“... opened in 1982 to deal with what was seen as the ‘problem’ of university education for urban Africans. Its seven urban campuses were to be strictly controlled to avoid a repetition of the student revolts of the early 1970s which began at the University of the North” (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:8).

The HBUs – which were mostly radically opposed to apartheid in general – were managed in an authoritarian manner. Their councils, executive managers, and senior academic staff “… were [predominantly] White Afrikaans-speaking who had been trained at one [or the other] of the six historically White Afrikaans-medium universities” (Bunting, 2002: 75). Black Vice-Chancellors were appointed later in the 1980’s, but the authoritarian governance system ensued, with the State appointing mainly Afrikaner council and senate members, as well as heads of departments. Wolpe (1995:286) ascertains that the appointment strategy was intended to, amongst others, pre-empt any deviation from the official curriculum, citing that:

“To the extent that the African HBUs were to be tied to the development of the Bantustans, the limited and restricted sense in which this ‘development’ was intended was to profoundly condition the academic character as well as the roles and functions of these institutions. If a major function of the early HBUs was to generate the administrative corps for the black separate development bureaucracies, the ideological task was to wean a new generations of students away from black nationalist and socialist sentiments, and win them to the separate development
project through the appropriate mix of repressive controls and the promises of economic opportunities in the Bantustans … [researcher’s italics]”.

The intellectual agenda of the historically black and disadvantaged institutions “often became no more than that of reproducing material taught in previous years at historically white Afrikaans-medium universities [researcher’s italics]” (Bunting, 2002:75). Undergraduate and diploma courses were predominant in the fields of Liberal Arts, Education, Law and the humanities. In order to maintain the state’s intentions to stymie intellectual development, there was more emphasis on teaching and training than on research. The following table illustrates the incongruent academic and intellectual roles of the HBUs vis-à-vis the HWUs.

### Table 2.5: Research Output per Racially Segregated Higher Education Institutional Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>1987</th>
<th>1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HWUs: Afrikaans/ English</strong></td>
<td>University of the Witwatersrand</td>
<td>1,003</td>
<td>1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Cape Town</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Pretoria</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Stellenbosch</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Natal</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orange Free State University</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rand Afrikaans University</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Potchefstroom</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhodes University</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Port Elizabeth</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,369</td>
<td>4,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HBUs: African/ Coloured/ Indian</strong></td>
<td>University of Durban-Westville</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Western Cape</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medunsa</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of the North</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vista University</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University of South Africa</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>422</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*The figures indicated for each year quantitatively reflect the numbers of published research work in the form of books, journal articles, and so on.*
The statistical data on Table 2.5 illustrates that the HBUs’ research output was superseded by that of the HWUs by far. The state of affairs on the Table reflects that for the period under review, the University of the Witwatersrand was the leading English-medium research university, while Pretoria University assumed the same status for Afrikaans-medium HWUs. It is also remarkable that UNISA – a distance teaching institution – out-classed all HBUs put together. Table 2.6 below further demonstrates the consequences of skewed programme funding mechanisms across fields and levels of study among the racially categorised HEIs in respect of awarded postgraduate degrees in 1996. This scenario is directly related to the respective institution’s research capabilities, as reflected in the table below.

**Table 2.6: University Master's and Doctoral Degrees Awarded in 1996 per Racial Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences and Engineering</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>1,155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences and Humanities</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>3,026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,656</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>4,680</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Seepe (2000:56) contends that the above statistical data “… clearly indicate that the current system in South Africa has been hopelessly inadequate in providing a viable skills base for a technology-driven economy. If South Africa is to meet the challenge of producing sufficient graduates for the economy, it must contend with the historical legacy of apartheid colonialism”. Ostensibly, two years into the new South Africa was hardly sufficient to redress the extant inequalities induced by apartheid higher education. Funding, which is the backbone of any meaningful research undertaking by any HEI, was disproportionately distributed between HWUs and HBUs, as depicted on Table 2.7.
Table 2.7: Funding Base of the Racially Differentiated Higher Education Institutions: 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>HBUs</th>
<th>*HWEUs</th>
<th>**HWAUs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government subsidy</td>
<td>331.6</td>
<td>552.3</td>
<td>711.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and other fees</td>
<td>125.1</td>
<td>257.3</td>
<td>257.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government grants and contracts</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private gifts, grants and contracts</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>240.2</td>
<td>147.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>124.3</td>
<td>195.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary services, etc.</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>6,192</td>
<td>1,338</td>
<td>1,541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*HWEUs: Historically White English Universities
**HWAUs: Historically White Afrikaans Universities

The non-percent figures on Table 2.7 indicate Rand amounts in millions. It is axiomatic from the self-same information above that racially preferential treatment was applied in the order: of HWAUs awarded R1,541 million; HWEUs receiving R1,338 million; and HBUs accounting for only R619.2 million. Since government subsidy is the largest source of income on the higher education landscape, it is conceivable that Afrikaans-medium HEIs – as chief ‘organs of the state’ – would be the most substantially funded of all South African universities. Bunting (2002:115) makes the point clearer:

“In the period before 1994, the South African government’s funding policies mirrored apartheid’s divisions and the different governance models which it imposed on the higher education system. As was shown … the apartheid higher education landscape in the years before 1994, control of South Africa’s 36 universities and technikons was divided amongst four government department in the ‘independent republics’ … and four government departments in the … RSA. Different funding policies and practices were applied within these eight departments [researcher’s italics].”

2.3.3.3 The Former Historically White Technikons (HWTs)

The pre-2002 South African technikon sector generally follows the same conceptual contours as the pre-merger university sector. Both the university and technikon sectors were
characterized by a labyrinth of fragmented institutional types, sub-types, as well as roles impacted on by duplicity of purposes and discriminatory funding mechanisms. As technical further education and training (FET) institutions, technikons “… originate from the Colleges of Advanced Technical Education (CATEs), which were established by an Act of parliament in 1967. In fact, the shift from CATE to technikon a decade later was simply a name change” (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:8). Their establishment resulted in the formation of a layer between matriculation and university education.

The former seven HWTs are: Cape Technikon; Free State Technikon; Natal Technikon; PE Technikon; Pretoria Technikon; Vaal Triangle Technikon; and Technikon Witwatersrand. The political affiliation and allegiance factor – as was the case with all the three HEI types (HBUs, HWEUs, and HWAUs) also featured prominently within the technikon sector, as attested to by Bunting (2002:78): “These institutions [HWTs] 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”. The racial composition of the entire student population in the entire technikon sector is illustrated in the below.

Table 2.8: Technikon Student Composition between 1984 and 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>42,856</td>
<td>97,485</td>
<td>199,197</td>
<td>275,636</td>
<td>313,590</td>
<td>308,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18%)</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
<td>(49%)</td>
<td>(56%)</td>
<td>(57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coloured</td>
<td>13,300</td>
<td>22,716</td>
<td>28,648</td>
<td>33,184</td>
<td>30,836</td>
<td>28,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>17,749</td>
<td>24,270</td>
<td>31,842</td>
<td>36,931</td>
<td>36,396</td>
<td>36,757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(6%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>164,770</td>
<td>196,204</td>
<td>223,048</td>
<td>216,623</td>
<td>180,937</td>
<td>171,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(69%)</td>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td>(46%)</td>
<td>(39%)</td>
<td>(32%)</td>
<td>(31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>238,675</td>
<td>340,675</td>
<td>482,735</td>
<td>562,374</td>
<td>561,759</td>
<td>546,165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Cooper & Subotzky (2001: 12)

Most significantly, Table 2.8 aptly demonstrates that for the period under review, white students at HWTs were by far the most enrolled of all racial grouping prior to 1995; but black student numbers exceeded those of any other racial category from 1995 – one year after
the first democratic elections in the history of South Africa. Other than factors such as affordability and student choices, this reversal in admission trends necessitates that a question be posed: In the context of equity, redress, and access, does the post-1994 HE transformation process posit ‘preferential’ treatment to black students at the expense of other racial constituencies of South African society? It is also possible that the increase in black student enrolments at the seven former HWTs is attributable to these students’ awareness of greater employment possibilities enhanced by technikon-based education, as opposed to mainly theory-steeped university education.

With regard to the funding of the entire technikon sector, the same modus operandi applied by the (NP) government of the day to the university sector was still applicable, as demonstrated on Table 2.9.

**Table 2.9: Disproportionate Technikon Sector Funding Mechanisms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HWTs</th>
<th>HBTs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>R144 million (68%)</td>
<td>R66 million (32%)</td>
<td><strong>R210 million (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>R211 million (77%)</td>
<td>R64 million (23%)</td>
<td><strong>R275 million (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>R321 million (78%)</td>
<td>R91 million (22%)</td>
<td><strong>R412 million (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>R441 million (78%)</td>
<td>R122 million (22%)</td>
<td><strong>R563 million (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>R570 million (76%)</td>
<td>R179 million (24%)</td>
<td><strong>R749 million (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>R1.687 billion</td>
<td>R522 million</td>
<td><strong>R2.209 billion (100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Department of Education (in Bunting, 2002:123)*

The monetary amounts indicated on Table 2.9 illustrate that for the years under review, there were unequal government allocations per technikon sub-type. From a massive total of R2, 209 billion, R1, 687 billion was allocated to the HWTs, and only R522 million for the HBTs – a staggering difference of R1, 165 billion! This discrepant funding mechanism was prevalent despite evidentiary proof of that access by black students at HWTs (as in the HE sector) was already beginning to increase prior to 1994.

**2.3.3.4 The Former Historically Black Technikons (HBTs)**

The anomaly of the former South African HEI parlance is further evinced by the three HBT ‘sub-types’ for Indians and for Coloureds, for Africans in the RSA, and for Africans in the TBVC ‘homelands’. The ML Sultan Technikon was established in 1969 for Indians; the Cape
Peninsula Technikon was established in 1972 for Coloureds. For Africans living in ‘white South Africa’, two technikons were established under the ‘general affairs’ Department of Education and Training; namely, Mangosuthu Technikon in Durban (1979) and Northern Transvaal (Gauteng) Technikon (1980). By 1990, the two institutions collectively had an African student population of 4,000, increasing to 8000 by 1993 (Bunting, 2002:79). In the TBVC ‘states’, three technikons had been established; namely, the Northwest Technikon (1976), the Eastern Cape Technikon (1987), and the Border Technikon (1988) (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:9-10). The tables below indicate the headcount enrolments at the TBVC and ‘white South Africa’ technikons. They are arranged in the chronological order of their accreditation to full technikon status by the NP government.

### Table 2.10: Distribution of Black Students across the TBVC ‘States’ Between 1988 and 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North-West (established 1976)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>2,167</td>
<td>3,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangosuthu (established 1979)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>32,831</td>
<td>2,190</td>
<td>3,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Gauteng (established 1980)</td>
<td>1,027</td>
<td>3,286</td>
<td>4,091</td>
<td>4,132</td>
<td>5,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape (established 1987)</td>
<td>1,822</td>
<td>5,530</td>
<td>8,589</td>
<td>8,835</td>
<td>8,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border (established 1988)</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>1,113</td>
<td>2,580</td>
<td>3,080</td>
<td>3,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3,379</td>
<td>11,738</td>
<td>50,258</td>
<td>20,404</td>
<td>25,475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Cooper & Subotzky (2001:74)*

The statistical data on Table 2.10 is construed as indicating the ‘popularity’ of technikons (i.e. broadening of student choices) irrespective of their geographic location. A similar trend of growth and ‘popularity’ was observed in the distribution of black students at the seven former HWTs in 1988. From a total of 34,867 students of all races (Coloured: 730; Indian: 433; White: 32,886), black students constituted 818 (about 2%) of that entire student population (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:79). A decade later (1998), black students totalling 43,301 constituted 53% of the entire HWT population of 81,619 (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001:79).

Griesel (2003:2) attributes the increased participation rates (access) of black matriculants in the technikon sector to barriers posed by *matriculation endorsement* as the golden standard for university and technikon entry:
“The Senior Certificate results illustrate the small proportion of school-leavers who qualify for university entry. The 2002 results show that 68.9% of learners succeeded in obtaining the Senior Certificate and, of this grouping, 24.5 % passed with “matriculation endorsement”, the current minimum entry regulation for degree study. Even though school pass rates have steadily improved in recent years … “matriculation endorsement” presents a barrier to increased participation and broadened access … the achievement of the final schooling exit qualification presents a major achievement for the majority of learners, especially from poorly resourced schools [researcher’s italics].”

The point being emphasised above is that the (former) technikon sector, while it has become the main post-secondary school ‘catchment’ pool for post-school technical education, the peculiarities of the majority of the secondary school students may blur the lines between quantitative growth and qualitative curriculum differentiation. The total matriculation pass rate does not necessarily translate into the minimum requirements for degree study.

In concluding the racial differentiation of post-school institutions of higher learning into old forms of ‘types’ and ‘sub-types’, it should be noted that such re-engineering of education was/is inimical to the establishment of any meaningful ‘system’ in the educational upliftment of society as a whole. The collective effects of structural and conjunctural problems in South African higher education – the very profound and fundamental legacy of apartheid higher education – are most conspicuous in the extent to which education was instrumentalised to entrench Afrikaner nationalism; as well as advance the hegemony of Eurocentric epistemologies through academic, intellectual, technological, and programmatic/curriculum means. The evolvement of the racially differentiated South African HE ‘system’ emphasised political-racial and ethnic-cultural differences within the broader SA society (Welsh & Savage, 1977:135-137).
2.3.4 The Post-democratic Regulatory Framework of Higher Education

The post-democratic regulatory framework of higher education refers to the reconstruction and re-organisation of South African higher education institutions in accordance with a co-ordinated system of legal protocols and policy directives on the one hand, and institutional co-operation on the other. According to De Clercq (1997:146), a policy could also be regarded as a conflict resolution mechanism intended to “restore the cohesiveness, order and functionality of society”. In the context of the research topic, it is the government’s responsibility to develop and implement such restorative mechanisms (policies) by regulating the functionality of HEIs by legal means or instruments. If developed and implemented insensitively, policies can also have the negative impact of accentuating power dynamics and tensions in society by advancing the interests of one (dominant) group against those of the other (dominated) group(s). Although different types of policies exist (e.g. substantive, procedural, material, symbolic, regulatory, and redistributive), shared attributes are to be found on more than one of these policy typologies (De Clercq, 1997:147). For instance, as a trustee of the public good, government has the substantive power to determine what it should do to rectify past educational imbalances. To the extent that it utilizes legal instruments to assert its intentions and courses of action, the state equally demonstrates the regulatory and procedural aspects of policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation.

By instituting policy initiatives such as equity, redress, and access, the state (represented by the DoE), is fulfilling both the redistributive and material functions of policy development. Both redistributive and material policy aspects apply when the allocation of resources is equitably redirected to groups such as those who were previously marginalized or excluded from such resources. The realm of symbolic policy is an extreme case, when there is more of rhetoric and promises than actual fulfilment and implementation (delivery) of those promised (educational) services. Cloete, Maasen and Muller (2005:449-450) affirm that “… symbolic policies are not designed to be implemented as proposed: they nearly always have to disguise the nature of the strategic trade-offs to win broad consensus”. In the context of the South African HE policy formulation environment, the post-1994 era has been generally characterised by competing interests, which is a reflection of “… a struggle for alignment [in which] … Higher education policy has been made within larger societal processes… The government has been unable in the post-1994 period to move far in establishing a systematically reconfigured and transformed system. The period can be characterised as
having manifested policy hesitance and inefficacy … much of the influences that contributed in shaping the policy field have come from outside higher education” (Fataar, 2003:31-32).

The post-1994 democratically elected government’s interventionist predilection towards policy formulation and implementation was informed by the need to change “… from an oligarchic racial State to an inclusive political democracy …” (Fataar, 2003:32), in order to establish an regulatory environment in tandem with the newly ushered-in democratic principles enshrined in the new Constitution of the RSA (Act 108 of 1996). This study makes a distinction between a regulated higher education environment and governance of HEIs. Whereas the latter would refer to internally-driven (microcosmic) higher education institutional administrative and operational systems deployed to sustain organisational missions, the former strictly relates to externally-driven (macrocosmic) policy parameters in terms of which the State intends to actualize its mandate within the education sector in general. In this specific context – and to the extent that the past educational system was utterly fragmented to even constitute a “system” – the post democratic State’s policy approach embraced a hybrid form of regulated intervention, which was the modus operandi for attenuating tensions between accountability and autonomy. (Universities & Technikons Advisory Council (AUT), 1996:7). In the context of this study, the parameters (determinants) of a regulated post-democratic framework of higher education are premised within the constitutional perspective; the legislative framework; the RDP (Reconstruction and Development) agenda; as well as the DoE perspective.

2.3.4.1 The Constitutional Perspective of a Regulated Higher Education Environment

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) (Act 108 of 1996) repudiates any form of deviation from the democratic principles of the country, and determines the legal parameters of state-HE-civil society engagement, as well as the repeal of laws that may be an affront to the uninhibited practice of democracy. As declared in its preamble, the intentions of the Constitution are, among others, to “heal the divisions of the past … [and to] build a united and democratic South Africa…” (RSA, 1996:1). On the other hand, Fataar (2003:32) contends that as much as the Constitution was largely based on liberal democratic values, it did not, however, guarantee socio-economic privileges such as the right to free education. Furthermore, Olivier (2001:2) declares that the notion of “co-operative governance” underpins the HE-state nexus in the RSA context. By excluding institutional autonomy as a fundamental freedom in the Constitution, the state would therefore exercise its fiduciary duty
and supervisory regulation of the higher education sector by demanding certain levels of accountability. Furthermore, “the Constitution [author’s bold] provides for higher education to be in the functional domain of the national sphere of government... the Constitution does not contain any reference to the institutional autonomy of HE institutions. In view of the fact of Higher Education institutions being public bodies, established in terms of legislation and performing public functions, ...[it] categorises them as organs of state” (Olivier, 2001:9). As being publicly funded, HEIs are therefore constitutionally bound by the principles of public administration (which include equity, transparency, and accountability) in their policy determination frameworks.

Chapter Two of the Constitution (Bill of Rights) is the one section of the supreme law which directly relates to higher education. Section 9 (1) to Section (5) of the same chapter (the Equality Clause), elaborates on the access principle in the context of a liberatory state-civil society relationship. The State may not apply discrimination of any form to any person, “... unless it is established that discrimination is fair” (RSA, 1996:8). Publicly funded HEIs therefore, are obliged to ensure that equality prevails in all aspects of the university’s functioning. Such a responsibility also applies to the State, in its fiduciary capacity, to ensure that no student is denied access to higher education opportunity, as this would constitute unfair discrimination. Sections 15 (1); 16 (c); (d); 29 (1) 29 (2) and 29 (9) respectively address the issues of “academic freedom and freedom of scientific research”, the right to basic and further education, as well as the application of equity in redressing the educational injustices of the past apartheid era. Insofar as the provision of the higher education legal framework is concerned, the relevant and applicable sections and clauses of the Constitution could be viewed in this regard, as a juris prudentially ‘negotiated settlement’ for effecting incrementalist/reformist (as opposed to radical/revolutionary) policy re-formulation for the role of higher education in the country’s nascent democratic dispensation.

2.3.4.2 The Legislative Framework of a Regulated Higher Education Environment

The Higher Education Act began to provide a philosophy or a theoretical framework upon which the future of South African higher education would reside. Imbued with the inherent democratic values of the RSA Constitution, the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) is arguably the most profound precursor to the establishment of a single and coordinated HE system (Olivier, 2001:9). The above-cited Act provided the legal framework for higher education policy development. To the extent that the 1997 Higher Education Act inclusive of
“transitional arrangements” – such as the repeal of past discriminatory laws – the Act becomes the legal embodiment of an incrementalist and reformist approach to HE policy development. The Act then assumes the role of a shift from symbolic policy developmental mode and all its attendant problems, in order to pre-empt a ‘policy vacuum’.

The Act addresses a range of issues, including the establishing of CHE (Council on Higher Education) as an advisory body to the Minister of Higher Education; quality assurance within the HE sector; as well as on the funding and governance HEIs. The Act further empowers the Minister to effect HE-related changes – the type of changes that are congruent with both the Constitution and the transformation of the higher education landscape. Furthermore, the Act empowers the Minister of Higher Education to “… attach … conditions to the granting of funding [and recognition of programmes of study]” (Olivier, 2001:10).

Cloete and Maasen (2002:423) contend that the 1997 Higher Education Act became the primary legal means to pre-empt a “policy vacuum” – a state of implementation inertia that has been conspicuously demonstrated by “… many of the key implementation instruments such as inter-linked planning and funding system, redress funding, a capacity-building plan and a research plan [which] had not been implemented by 2001”.

2.3.4.3 The RDP Perspective of a Regulated Higher Education Environment

The RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) document – with all its symbolic policy ramifications – is one of the most significant primary documents to be consulted in the conceptualisation of a philosophy of education for South Africa (Nkondo, 1998:24). Such a philosophy should lay the seminal groundwork for the formulation of commonly-shared national ideals and priorities, as well as for HE policy formulation in the context of promises and delivery on the one hand, and the roles and functions of the new HE system on the other (Subotzky, 1997:105). Kallaway (1998:23) propounds that the RDP document further intended to reconcile local demands and global techno-scientific concerns, in order that poor and rural communities also benefit from the fruits of democracy. The RDP is viewed here as a link between the articulation of higher education philosophy as far as the functions of HE are concerned – whether a “… redistributive development, premised on RDP goals and growth through redistribution [or] the global development path, premised on redistribution through … growth [of the market]” (Subotzky, 1997:105).
The RDP, however, is also castigated as a symbolic means as it did not serve as an adequate redistributive human resource conduit for the alleviation of poverty and inequality – which are the major obstacles to rectifying past injustice. The RDP’s shortcomings thus confirm the prevalence of tensions within a “… dual, but integrated structure of South African society shaped by apartheid and largely determined along racial lines: namely, the combination of a relatively advanced political, economic and social order linked to a relatively under-developed one, upon which the former has depended on the latter in many critical ways for its existence and reproduction” (Subotzky, 1997: 105).

Nkondo’s (1998:24) view of a relevant higher education philosophy is one that attempts to strike balance between the developmental university and the market university. The developmental university is rooted in addressing basic and direly-needed socio-economic opportunities by means of innovative curriculum approaches; whereas the market university addresses the neo-liberal agenda by means of which higher education has become a part of the trans-national ‘commodification’ enterprise. In a policy context then, the RDP perspective was “high on rhetoric and low on implementation…” (King, 1998:5).

2.3.4.4 The Department of Education Perspective of a Regulated Higher Education Environment

Through its higher education section, the Department of Education has embraced a participatory mode of policy formulation (Badat, 1999:1). Accordingly, HE policy has gradually shifted from symbolic policy rhetoric to an actual implementation framework. Such progress is commendable, considering the time and resources required to dislocate and transform a higher education ‘system’ that has prevailed for decades (if not centuries), into a catalyst for change in the country, recognised and respected regionally, in the African continent, and around the world.

Numerous policy documents and initiatives have been initiated by the post-democratic Department of Education. However, for purposes of this study, only those referred to here are regarded as being directly relevant to the objectives of this study. These are the 1996 National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE); the 1997 Education White Paper (EWP) 3; the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE); and the 2002 National Working Group (NWG) Report on the reconstitution of the size and shape of a reconfigured HE landscape (mergers).
The 1996 National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)

The NCHE was constituted by presidential proclamation in December 1996. Both its composition and terms of reference highlight the conceptual dynamics between the “equity” and “development” policy trajectories (Cloete & Muller: 1998:1). NCHE was “… charged with advising the government of national unity on issues concerning the restructuring of higher education by undertaking a situational analysis, formulating a vision for higher education and putting forward policy proposals designed to ensure the development of a well-planned, integrated, high quality system of education…address the inequalities and inefficiencies inherited from the apartheid era, as well as respond to the social, cultural and economic demands of a globalising world” (Cloete & Muller, 1998:1).

The NCHE was composed of both pre- and post-democratic representatives; policy experts and those who were mainly from very influential and powerful constituencies. Some of its radical members proposed the total overhauling (transformation) of the existing HE ‘system’, while the more liberal/progressive/reformist members saw the total restructuring as a threat to their powerful stakeholder interests (Cloete & Muller, 1998:1). These ideological tensions within NCHE itself are cited as they inadvertently became precursors to a policy environment characterised by compromise, trade-offs, and incremental reform – giving credence to the notion that NCHE was more of “a Commission of ‘national unity’” (Cloete & Muller, 1998:1). The latter view, therefore, posits that NCHE was dominated more by political ideological imperatives, than by educationally-driven transformation principles. Kallaway (1998:33) laments the fact that the binary (old- and new-order) membership composition of NCHE introduced “the politicisation of “stakeholder” expediency” as a factor of policy determination. According to this view, a new terminology – consisting of a phalanx of phrases such as ‘political correctness’, ‘stakeholders’, and so on – had ascended to the higher education policy formulation arena. The above author locates the provenance of such stakeholder/political correctness discourse thus:

“The dominant mode of consultation that is used to justify these processes [of policy formulation in the generation of policy documents] is that of ‘stakeholder’ consultation, a mode of operation inherited from the times of the struggle, where all parties to a discussion are seen to have a democratic right to equal say and
influence – even in areas where expertise of a high level is needed to make informed educational judgements [researcher’s italics]” (Kallaway, 1998: 33).

Meanwhile, Fataar (2003:34) proclaims that the political correctness/stakeholder discourse ( politicisation of policy formulation) became NCHE’s fundamental weakness as there is a vague conceptual clarity on the definition of “policy” and “stakeholder”. Despite some of its structural and/or functional challenges the structural weaknesses, the NCHE is credited with initiating the State’s substantive policy responsibilities. For instance, NCHE proposed the need for increased participation (access) of formally marginalized groups (which resulted in the massification of HEIs); greater responsiveness to societal demands; and co-operative governance as a sacrosanct administrative requirement within South African higher education. It had been noted that weaknesses in the higher education sector, especially among the historically disadvantaged and “crisis-ridden institutions” (Cloete & Bunting, 2000: 57), resulted in “management paralysis” (p. 53).

Adding to some of NCHE’s (real and/or perceived) structural and functional challenges and weaknesses, Nkondo (1998:26-28) cites the following:

- A disjuncture of “… a coherent philosophy of education derived from the national aspiration for liberation and justice” (p. 26). These philosophical concepts are ideologically-sensitive, and could therefore perpetrate dominance and “…form a significant part of the grammar of neo-liberal economies” (p. 27);

- Failure to link the nuances of “power” and “knowledge”. For that reason, there is inadequate analysis on NCHE’s part of ‘defining’ transformation – its agents, capacity, and (ideological) orientation. NCHE’s goals of a transformed HE landscape are therefore located in a rather broad analytic mode (pp. 26-27);

- The role of the HE curriculum as the ideological terrain – vis-à-vis the knowledge-power nexus – is still to be located in a transformational framework that links skills/expertise to the political economy. In other words, the stakeholder orientation of “knowledge” could “…be co-opted to serve counter-liberatory forces” (Nkondo, 1998:28).

In spite of the ideological posturing by some of its politically polarised members, NCHE pioneered policy initiatives directed towards the formulation of a single and integrated HE system. NCHE envisaged that the fulcrum of such a system the notion of programmatic
differentiation at institutional level (Fataar, 2003:34). In addition, its initiatives have been credited with seeking to address South African higher education’s “triple challenge” (Badat, 1999:1) of:

- confronting “social-structural inequities” created by apartheid;
- participating in reconstruction and development for HE’s responsiveness trajectory; and
- positioning the country to respond accordingly in respect of the wider context of globalisation and its attendant market competitiveness.

(b) The 1997 Education White Paper (EWP) 3

The term "white paper" is commonly understood to be a concept which originated in government, and many point to the Churchill White Paper of 1922 as the earliest well-known example under this name. White Papers are a tool of participatory democracy and not unalterable policy commitment. White Papers have tried to perform the dual role of presenting firm government policies while at the same time inviting opinions upon them. The Education White Paper 3 (EWP3) reflects “…the culmination of a wide-ranging and extensive process of investigation and consultation that was initiated with the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) in February 1995 … and the subsequent release of the Green Paper on Higher Education in December 1996 and the Draft White Paper on Higher Education in April 1997” (DoE, 1997:2).

The above document, invariably referred to as A programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, lays the seminal blueprint for the ultimate and incrementalist implementation stages of South African higher education transformation. The document itself (EWP3) “… is the culmination of a wide-ranging and extensive process of investigation and consultation that was initiated by the establishment of …NCHE” (Bengu in DoE, 1997:2). The EWP3 is regarded as adopting an HRD (human resources development) perspective as its pivotal policy parameters (King, 1998:5). As a policy formulation initiative, the EWP3 then attempts to balance the contending forces of social development and equity on the one hand (e.g. institutional and individual redress), and those of economic growth on the other (e.g. macro-economic global perspectives which emphasize market domination) (Fataar, 2003:35). The latter author further states that the (non) alignment of HE policy with the developmental/equity or the growth mode has been one of the most controversial issues in the HE policy terrain (p. 35). In the Foreword to the EWP3, the first post-apartheid SA
Minister of Education, S.M.E. Bengu, mentioned that the EWP3 is significant to the extent to which it illustrates the DoE’s determination to adopt a consultative approach in resolving issues that further enhance the public interest (DoE, 1997:2). Secondly, this is a reflection of the consultative process as on-going, hence this 1997 document being,

As a significant policy trajectory, the DoE opted for a stronger interventionist approach, with little trade-offs on critical issues. The then Minister of Education himself declared in the Foreword to the EWP3 document that:

“The transformation of the higher education system [should] reflect the changes that are taking place in our society and to strengthen the values and practises of our new democracy [which], as I have stated on many previous occasions, not negotiable. The higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities [researcher’s parenthesis and italics” (DoE, 1997:2).

The EWP 3, therefore, had three broad political objectives that were conceived and amplified in the 1997 Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of SA Higher Education (Asmal, 2002:3-4). First was that a higher education and training system would have to be developed “to meet the demands of social justice in order to address the social and structural inequalities that characterised the apartheid higher education legacy, which was evidently fragmented and distorted in nature, with some institutions better resourced than others and in which race and ethnicity continued to define and act as stumbling blocks to access into many of the institutions”. Second of the three was that that new higher education system that needed to be developed had “to address the challenges associated with the phenomenon of globalization with a focus on the central role of knowledge and information processing in driving social and economic development”. As a success indicator, such a system would have “to produce graduates with the requisite skills to and competencies to participate in the economy as citizens of a democratic society and as workers and professionals, and furthermore be able to contribute to the research and knowledge needs of South Africa”. Finally, the post-apartheid system of higher education had “to ensure that the limited resources for the delivery of education were effectively and efficiently utilized in view of competing and equal pressing priorities in other social sectors of society”. These three high-level policy positions of the State created a base for the restructuring process of
SA’s higher education and training sector, and gave rise to meaningful steps and processes leading to the 2003 merger announcements by the State and the eventual implementation in 2004.

(c) The 2001 National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE)

The 2001 NPHE document is highly regarded as having ushered in a “… lasting contribution towards building the future generation …” (DoE, 2001:2). Its broad-sweeping approach is indicated by its assertion that:

“The vision for the transformation of the higher education system was articulated in Education White Paper 3 … of 1997. Central to this vision was the establishment of a single, national co-ordinated system, which would meet the learning needs of our citizens and the reconstruction and development needs of our society and economy. This National Plan outlines the framework and mechanism for implementing and realising the policy goals White Paper. It is far-reaching and visionary in its attempt to deal with the transformation of the higher education system as a whole. It is not aimed solely at addressing the crises in some parts of the system, although these must be overcome. It will impact on every institution, as the institutional landscape of higher education is the product of the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners …. The National Plan therefore provides the strategic framework for re-engineering the higher education system for the 21st century” (DoE, 2001:2).

The NPHE identifies the strengths and the weaknesses that should be addressed in order to steer the current system towards a systemically unified enterprise of achieving the goals and the targets of the re-engineered HE landscape. Identified strengths include knowledge generation potential, whereas the identified weaknesses include (but not limited to) forms of programmatic differentiation that are inconsistent with National Qualification Framework (NQF) requirements (Fataar, 2003:32). The NPHE, most importantly, views higher education as providing the critical base for the socio-economic re-vitalization of the country, the region and the African continent (DoE, 2001: 9). To the latter extent, higher education institutions are required to submit to the DoE three-year “rolling plans” indicating the extent to which their mission statements, current and proposed programme integration/mix adhere to the Department’s specific goals in the context of HE transformation.
The high graduate unemployment rate has also accentuated the need for both institutional and individual redress. The NPHE then, is unequivocal in its affirmation that access, redress and equity, translate into HE’s capacity to deliver relevant socio-economic services (employment readiness, for instance) in a transformed local context and in the technology-driven global scenario. Institutional access and equity goals (which must enhance the country’s human resources developmental needs, should also reflect enrolment targets that are indiscriminate of race and gender (Fataar, 2003:34). Griesel (2003:5) and Herman (1998:39-48) raise the difficult challenges associated with “access” and “equity”. In its defence of elevating both institutional and individual redress as HE transformation aspects, the NPHE argues further that if race and gender were significant employment variables, then white male graduates, more than any social category in a racially segregated society, are more likely to be employed in the wider labour market and the HE labour market in particular:

“The race and gender impact of changes in the labour market and the link to educational qualifications is clearly indicated by the labour market studies [referring to employment/unemployment in relation to (un)skilled labour in various occupations; professional, technical and technological, and managerial vis-à-vis the mining and agricultural sectors] … The shift in employment distribution in favour of professional and managerial occupations between 1970 and 1995 has had a different impact on the rate of employment of African and non-African labour based on educational qualifications. In this period the employment of non-Africans increased by between 48% and 108%, while that of Africans remained constant. This difference is in part explained by the differing access of Africans and non-Africans to education in general, and to higher education in particular” (Fataar, 2003:36).

Among some of its achievements, the NPHE is also credited with making significant policy strides in the area of higher education research:

“Acknowledging the increasingly trans-disciplinary and transinstitutional nature of knowledge production and its increasing value in the information economy and society, ...Mode 2 thesis of research [was adopted] by encouraging the development of a research spectrum of four interdependent categories; traditional, applications-driven, strategic, and participation-based research” (Fataar, 2003:34).
Kraak (2000:5-6) contends that many of the new proposals and recommendations raised by these pre-merger HE policy initiatives derive their conceptual frameworks from the mode 2 kind of knowledge production. The significance of the homogeneity vis-à-vis hybrid knowledge structures lies in the ‘unification’ of the purpose of HE’s existence, and the extent to which it produces and applies knowledge, thus allowing for permeability of the cognitive/professional and the skills/vocational ‘borders’ being reconfigured in terms of quality-focused institutional types.

Ostensibly, it was the NPHE’s view that a research-driven orientation towards HE becoming locally relevant and responsive, while also striving towards international competitiveness, would add value to merit-based achievement, standards, and academic excellence. Given the legacy of the past, the NPHE’s policy orientation would have to succinctly articulate whether or not the local imperatives – which necessitated that the reconstruction and development needs of previously marginalised social categories such as the poor and the unskilled – should transcend global imperatives. The latter perspective holds that variables such as ‘competition’ and ‘excellence’ are some of the definitive benchmarks of ‘world best practice’.

(d) The 2002 National Working Group (NWG) Report

The NWG was established in April 2001 by the then Minister of Education Kader Asmal to advise his Ministry on, among others, “… restructuring the institutional landscape of higher education, as outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education… [and]…appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including reducing the number of higher education institutions [researcher’s italics]” (NWG, 2002:1).

The NWG Report itself, also known as the ‘shape and size report’ of February 2002 is one of the DoE’s primary documents referred to in the formulation and conceptualisation of the reconfiguration of South African HEIs (Bunting & Cloete, 2004:59). The NWG intended to advise the Ministry of Education on the basis of the following goals and principles:

• higher education’s contribution to national, regional and continental socio-economic development;
• advancement of institutional redress, recognising access and equity for both staff and students;
• promotion of quality through programmatic rationalisation and sustainable retention rates;
• openness/transparency and responsiveness of transformed academic cultures;
• a shift from discipline-based, to programmatic forms of learning and delivery; and
• diversity for institutional missions and programmes (NWG, 2002:69).

The NWG’s terms of reference could be viewed in the context of its ‘shape and size’ re-organisation of the HE landscape, in tandem with the following principles:

• promotion of quality in higher education;
• integration of the HE sector into the general education system of the country so as to harmonies its goals and objectives;
• advancement of the course of a regulatory framework through the establishment of a single (at systemic level), but differentiated (at institutional level through missions and programme offerings) HE sector that justified its “fitness for purpose” (NWG, 2002:21).

It is the researcher’s view that the Ministry of Education, while willing to be advised, already had some pre-determined views. Section 3 of the NWG Report (i.e. Terms of Reference) significantly points out that: “The National Working Group must: address how the number of institutions can be reduced, and the form that the restructured institutions should take, and not on whether the number of institutions can or should be reduced [researcher’s italics]” (NWG, 2002: 69). That HEIs were to be reduced from 36 to 21, rather than be increased (considering that the provinces of Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape were the only two in the country’s nine provinces without a regionally-dedicated HE base), most significantly presents two possible scenarios. Either some HEIs would completely cease to exist in their pre-merger form and structure, or they would continue in merger-determined format. The complexities associated with implementation of the latter option have continued to become the subject of acerbic and under current debates even after the mergers have already taken place (see Curri, 2002:133; Harman & Meek, 2002:4). The ensuing discussion focuses more on the organisational and conceptual aspects of the mergers, than on the institutional typologies resulting from the reconfigured HE ecology in South Africa.
2.3.4.5 The Role of the Media

Du Plessis (2009:2) described and analyzed the merger discourse as was reported in the South African public space. The aim of the study was to identify key themes that dominated media reports and influenced stakeholder perceptions of mergers. The above author found that very few universities took advantage of the media to express their views and market their respective merger processes. Consequently, a significant number of members of the public/media made unfortunate merger statements and formulated misconceived perceptions and opinions regarding the mergers and their concomitant processes.

As a result of the realization that HEIs did not fully exploit the public media, the above author recommended that universities should learn from politics and politicians to maximally take advantage of the media to advance and popularize major university developments. Clearly, this approach could go a long way towards empowering stakeholders to make and formulate better opinions on matters of national importance. A review of public opinion makers revealed that politicians were more outspoken on the subject of mergers than universities spokespersons or representatives. There was a loud silence from the higher education sector was visibly under-represented on merger developments in the public media. The few cases where the sector spoke on mergers were through the National Working Group process. Even then, most of the contributions were negative (Botha, 2001).

2.4 THE MERGER CONTEXT OF DIFFERENTIATED SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In its preliminary report of February 2002, the NWG sought to restore some degree of rationality in the plethora of apartheid HEI types and sub-types. Restructuring the HEI landscape into new shapes and sizes induced different historically and politically connotated responses from different HE sectors. Views pertaining to ‘institutional redress’ and ‘individual redress’ dominated the nomenclature of the higher education institutional. Generally, ‘institutional redress’ relates to the empowering of HDIs in particular, in areas such as funding, curriculum diversification, and staffing. In its attempt to retract from past racist HE practices, the Ministry of Education – consonant with CHE’s recommendations – attenuated the differences between ‘institutional’ and ‘social’ redress in order to de-emphasize the racially-motivated categories of ‘historically white institutions’ vis-à-vis ‘historically black institutions’. These differences, in the first place, created the very
existence of 36 HEIs. The DoE conflated the 36 HEIs into institutional types in terms of *missions* and *programme/curriculum mix*, rather than racial and geo-political differentiation. The DoE’s view was thus one of using type of institution as one of the descriptive mechanisms for reducing the number of institutions. The premise of ‘institutional redress’ then, was not on the elevation of the HBIs at the expense of the capacity-rich HWIs; rather, it was on utilising all 36 HEIs as South African, “… to be embraced as such, [and] must be transformed where necessary and must be put to work for, and on behalf of all South Africans” (DoE, 2001:14).

In spite of the institutional redress mechanisms, most, if not all HBIs had been engulfed by a state of uncertainty (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56-57; Cloete & Maasen, 2002:453). The state of uncertainty was engendered more by the HBIs perception that the reconfiguration process was gravitating more towards an absorption/take-over mode, than towards an amalgamation/ integration, or even a federation type of university integration. While the HBIs were concerned with ‘the fear of the unknown’, the DoE expressed its appreciation of some of the HBIs’ efficacy:

“The Ministry therefore agrees with the Council on Higher Education that: “The categories of ‘historically advantaged’ and ‘historically disadvantaged’ are becoming less useful for social policy purposes (and that) the 36 public higher education institutions inherited from the past are all South African institutions. They must be embraced as such, must be transformed where necessary and must be put to work for and on behalf of all South Africans”…The continued instability and permanent state of crises that characterises a small number of the historically black institutions cannot be countenanced any longer. Although the origins and genesis of the historically black institutions as products of apartheid cannot be ignored, the instability and crises cannot be reduced only to the legacy of apartheid. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that it does not affect all the historically black institutions and that some of the affected institutions have been able to turn around and achieve stability” (DoE, 2001: 14).
2.4.1 Implementation of a Single and Differentiated Higher Education System

The Education White Paper 3 (1997:3) reiterates that it was the (post-1995) DoE’s initial intention to establish a single differentiated, but coordinated HEI system: “The Ministry of Education favours an integrated and co-ordinated system of higher education, but not a uniform system. An important task in planning and managing a single national co-ordinated system is to ensure diversity in its organisational form and in the institutional landscape, and offset pressures for homogenisation [researcher’s italics]”. In congruence with the latter DoE transformation orientation, CHE (2000:25) employs “differentiation” and “diversity” as “… both distinct and connected”, in terms of “… orient[ing] institutions to meet economic and social goals by focusing on programmes at particular levels of the qualification structure and on particular kinds of research and community service … ‘Diversity’ is used with reference to the specific [and varied] missions of individual institutions” (p. 25). As understood in this study, “differentiation” would then imply a system-wide framework within which HEIs have to collate their missions to broad socio-economic imperatives. In the connective context, the two terms are complementary “… in that mandates provide the overall national framework within which institutions pursue specific institutional missions” (p. 25). Additionally, both “diversity” and “differentiation” are necessary transformative goals that nullify homogeneity and its concomitant duplication and wastefulness. Secondly, these terms advance the course of HE quality. In reversing the fragmented and socio-economically unproductive trend inherent in the previously differentiated HE sector, a single co-ordinated national HE system establishes purposefulness and efficiency in higher education provision. As an aspect of the democratisation of South African society, it also enhances the principles of access, equity and redress within a uniformly regulated, but diversified HE environment.

Kraak (2000: 20) and CHE (2002: 14) argue that the conceptual basis of the former apartheid educational dispensation could not be regarded as a “system” for three reasons. Firstly, the HE output did not contribute to the modernisation of the economy, whose employment patterns illustrated racial hegemony and class stratification. Secondly, the teaching, learning and research methods were premised on archaic academic cultures that emphasised discipline-based knowledge, rather than problem-solving interdisciplinary teamwork. Thirdly, the inherent organisational duplication (of functions and roles) and scant regard for accountability resulted in an incoherent regulatory framework with race acting as the primary determinant for successful HE participation.
Africa and most of its governments are famous for micro managing African universities (Teferra & Altbach, 2004:29). Accordingly, the state would make sure that its national universities function in support of the government of the day. Therefore, the emphasis on mission statements of universities as strategic symbols of transformation could be misleading and provide a limiting impression that well-crafted missions are synonymous with excellent university functioning. The envisaged model of a single, co-coordinated HE system de-emphasised the prevalence of a uniform responsive capacity for teaching, research, and service to the community. The regulated environment, functioning in a reconfigured HE context, determines institution types (in respect of size, shape, and programme offerings), and determines the framework for such types to develop their own missions in tandem with a nationally targeted qualifications framework designed to render efficient effective HE service delivery. The co-coordinated system enables goal-directed delivery of services with institutions presenting their three-year strategic plans intended to increase their socio-economic capacity (Fataar, 2003:34). While uniformity and co-ordination/integration are at macro/systemic level, diversity is at micro/institution level. For purposes of curriculum/programmatic diversity, the merger processes an unprecedented challenge for HE in general. The size and shape reconfiguration format as in many instances, given rise to new institutional forms that pose profound challenges to the previously disparate intellectual and academic cultures of these institutions. It would seem that the reduction in size has led to an expansion in the shapes of the new institutional types. Traditional, elite, hybrid and same-type institutional forms have been derived from the creation of a single, but co-coordinated higher education system in the following mould (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:56).

**Traditional/elite HEIs:** “These institutions are maintaining their pre-1994 character of catering primarily, mainly within their main campus, to full-time, straight-from-school [just-in-time] (18-22 year old) students … maintain[ing] a strong emphasis on ‘excellence’, postgraduate teaching and research” (Cloete & Bunting, 2000: 56-57). Any external merging partner has not fundamentally shaken their pre-1994 character. Examples here would include the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand;

**Same-type HE institutional forms:** These could be in the form of two contact universities merging to form a new institutional type. The former category is illustrated by, for instance, the new University of KwaZulu-Natal being the *product* of the former University of Durban-
Westville, and the former Natal University. In such a situation, missions of the new institution become the unifying curriculum base for the diverse range of fields and levels of study being offered. In this type of curriculum divergence, an explicit articulation of curriculum pathways, entry and exit levels have to be adopted and clearly defined in mission statements. Another example in this mould is the new University of Limpopo, which consists of the erstwhile Medunsa and Turffloop University. Similarly, the University of the Northwest, comprising of the former Potchefstroom University and North-West University (with its provenance in the former Bophuthatswana ‘homeland’) are also examples of merging same-type universities from diverse academic cultures and backgrounds;

**Same-type technikon institutional forms:** In this case two or more technikons merge to form a new institutional type. For instance, the former Technikon Natal, the former Mangosuthu Technikon, and the former ML Sultan Technikon merging and becoming the new Durban University of Technology (DUT). In some cases of this nature, “university of technology” has been preferred to “institute of technology”. This is the case with the new Tshwane University of Technology (product of the former Pretoria Technikon, the former Technikon North West, and the former Technikon Northern Gauteng). The curriculum articulation path of the universities of technology would be less problematic, as all the various components of the new structure are cognate from a single disciplinary/academic culture, namely, the application of (technological) knowledge; and

**Hybrid institutional types:** This category of HEIs relates two distinct institutions from dissimilar academic and intellectual cultures merging to become “comprehensive universities”, as in the case of the former Wits Technikon/RAU/Vista University merger which culminated in the formation of a new institutional type known as the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) was the product of the former Port Elizabeth University, Vista University (PE campus), PE Technikon, and Border Technikon. In addition, TSA (Technikon South Africa) was incorporated to UNISA in order to form a single dedicated open distance learning HEI in South Africa. It is axiomatic that the mix of universities and former technikons transcends the racial, ideological, and other barriers formerly recognised by their HBU/BWI and HBT/HWT predecessors.
2.4.1.1 Institutional Differentiation

Institutional or organisational differentiation has been manifested mainly in the creation of new and ‘modified’ institutions, such as exemplified by traditional/elite, same-type, and hybrid types of HEIs. The public sector higher education environment is presently organised in FET (college), the traditional/elite and the mixed mode/ comprehensive HE sectors; with urban-rural, single- or multi-campus, and rich-poor dynamics. In de-emphasising the uniformity/homogeneity character of higher education, the DoE (1997:13) recognises that the three institutional types referred to in Section 2.4.1 above (i.e. same-type, traditional/elite, and hybrid) “ … [could] not continue to be regarded as discrete sectors with mutually exclusive missions and programmes”. Accordingly, the institutional plans would determine the ‘type’ of institution created. Despite the reduction in size of HEIs from 36 to 21, Gibbon (2004:4-5) mentions that a systemically differentiated HE system should conform to the following organisational and programmatic principles:

**Responsiveness:** educational programmes and research should focus on local, national, and regional needs and concerns of students and communities;

**Diversity:** a range of programmes (with a critical- and cross-fields outcome) should cater for the vocational, career-focus, professional and general formative needs of students;

**Accessibility:** learning should be facilitated through various entry and exit levels for students from different learning backgrounds;

**Flexibility:** as with responsiveness, flexible learning programmes should be availed for the general human resources development of society;

**Student mobility:** in conjunction with all of the above, academic programmes should enhance vertical and horizontal advancement trajectories. The DoE (1997: 15-16) as well as the CH (2002: 31ff), call for a qualifications structure that diminishes “… the boundaries between academic, vocational, and technological post-matric education” (DoE, 1997:15). The previous separate qualifications structures created “impermeability” and “… hindered articulation and transfer between institutions and programmes, both horizontally and vertically” (DoE, 1997:15).
2.4.1.2 Programmatic Differentiation

The purpose of programmaticstreams differentiation is to prevent “academic drift” – the tendency to focus on a homogenous programme articulation pathway (Gibbon, 2004:7). It is through this form of curriculum diversity that programme qualification mix (PQM) or areas of programme correspondence (APC) could be cogently achieved in respect of the academic/disciplinary vis-à-vis competence/application framework. Naude (2003:74-75) views programmatic differentiation as a measure of curriculum transformation in the broader sense; in terms of which diversity is viewed as a paradigm shift in HE’s responsiveness to societal needs. The parlance of “learning programmes” contained in DoE primary documents indicates an academic and institutional restructuring oriented towards trans-/multi-/inter-disciplinarity (p. 74). This is the sphere in which fields of study are geared towards both an academic component (for professional expertise) as well as a vocational orientation (for skilling purposes). Mission statements in particular (as opposed to broad institutional plans), serve as the articulation point of the manner in which HEIs will deviate from ‘academic drift’ (CHE, 2000:6; DoE, 1997:8). A diversified curriculum is construed here as giving shape to the new institutional ‘types’.

In the (organisational and operational, rather than in a racial) context of the current boundaries between PDIs (Previously Disadvantaged Institutions) and PAIs (Previously Advantaged Institutions), diminishing (or expected to diminish), institutional missions have become the terrain in which vocational and academic shape of the curriculum is accorded substance. The NQF (National Qualification Framework) has become the overseer of qualifications and quality assurance mechanisms, ensuring that horizontal and vertical mobility and progression are enhanced at entry and exit points through flexible qualification requirements (DoE, 1997:3-4, 15). Examples intended to facilitate mobility and flexibility include non-formal (“just-for-you” and “just-in-time”) areas of knowledge into the mainstream curriculum; such as RPL and RAPL, thus de-emphasizing the centrality of the discipline as both organisational and epistemological forms of higher education knowledge (CHE, 2002:31).

The notion of “differentiation” evokes two levels of interpretations; one at subject/discipline level, and another at programme level, where “programme” denotes a group of subjects/courses constructed for a particular field of study. At subject level, skills training and critical thinking, (academic) are to be merged in the same field of knowledge, and the
proportion of “training” and “education” needs to be determined in the self-same subject. At programmes level, the proportion of skills-/competence-compliant courses, as well as the purely academic courses also needs to be determined within the same programme.

To the extent that access is a ‘non-negotiable’ policy issue, the complexity/difficulty levels of a subject should be spread to cater for students from all intellectual categories and backgrounds. Students should then have the choice of registering a particular subject at a level of complexity they are comfortable with. Furthermore, the content of a subject or field of study should be in accordance with frameworks or principles which are intelligibly translated as statements guiding the development and inclusion of disciplinary knowledge into the curriculum (Griesel, 2003:6). Exposing students to a range of knowledge complexities is supported by recent developments in cognitive theory; according to which these levels of complexity are categorised into “Knowledge/content, i.e. the what [author’s emphasis] of subjects; Skills, i.e. the how of subjects; and Applied competence, i.e. speed or efficiency in combining knowledge and skills … effectively to engage with familiar and unfamiliar problem-solving tasks” (Griesel, 2003:39) (see also CHE, 2000:6).

While programmatic/curriculum differentiation may be considered sine qua non to HE curriculum transformation, Morrow (2003:4-5) admonishes that unplanned curriculum transformation could lead to adverse consequences. Firstly, there are those who still value the epistemic/disciplinary qualities of knowledge, and regard this as the ‘official’ version of knowledge around which explicit principles of content, outcomes, skills and attitudes are organised (see also Muller & Cloete, 2004:37-38; Naude, 2003:70). Critics of this ideological version cite that – since curriculum theory is not mutually exclusive from a theory of ideology – the “hidden curriculum” could overtly be transmitted as ‘real’ knowledge. In addition, “… constructed knowledge can be deconstructed and reconstructed to serve different sets of interests” (Morrow, 2003:8). Secondly, the notion of a radical curriculum transformation is strongly repudiated: “… epistemic values cannot be re-invented at will or modified without good reason that is accepted by the relevant academic community” (p. 10). The implication here is that knowledge-for-knowledge’s-sake is not necessarily problematic; it is its usage or application that could be problematic. To that extent, diversifying the curriculum in the interests of HRD (a utilitarianistic/instrumentalistic perspective), erodes the fundamental (epistemic?) tenets which serve as the basis for further knowledge generation.
2.4.2 The Higher Education Quality Assurance Framework

The Department of Education advocated for a higher education quality assurance mechanism that would be a radical departure from the pre-merger dispensation, which was characterised by “separate and parallel qualification structures for universities, technikons and colleges [which] have hindered articulation and transfer between institutions and programmes, both horizontally and vertically” (DoE, 1997:15). These effectively did not allow for student mobility and progression through various certificate, diploma and degree qualifications. The NQF was thus established with the purpose of registering, recognising, and accrediting courses for various qualification routes for any form of learning the learner chose to pursue, without constraints of rigidity of whole-course qualifications. The HEQC (Higher Education Qualifications Committee), a branch of CHE, complemented the task of quality assurance by accrediting and assessing programmes and their qualification structures.

The newly reconfigured HE landscape requires that the pre-merger quality assurance obstacles that militated against student mobility and progression between programmes, qualifications and institutions, be obviated (Gibbon, 2004:34). In creating an enabling environment within which student mobility and progression prevails, conditions for the articulation of such mobility and progression have to be established, taking cognisance of “An accurate assessment of the achieved levels of competency in the programme from which the student is transferring ... An accurate comparison of curricular contents and outcomes between the two programmes ... On the basis of the above, a calculation of which courses can be credited for transfer to the new programme, and at what level; ... an assessment of the level at which the student will enter the new programme ... [and] the identification of any additional ‘catch-up’ courses that the student may have to take to fill significant gaps before progression is possible” (Gibbon, 2004:34).

The search for “quality” in higher education, accentuated by the quest to integrate academic and career-focused programmes or qualifications, suggests that HE quality assurance is a continuous DoE mission; hence its insistence on “… a single qualifications framework applicable to all higher education institutions” (DoE, 2006:2). To a very significant extent, such an orientation pre-empts duplication and fragmentation, which are some of the key elements for which apartheid education planning had come to be known. Admission to higher education is viewed as one of the pivotal tenets in ensuring the prevalence of quality programme offerings, qualification structures, progression and mobility within any field of
learning chosen by the student. The following table is intended to graphically represent the August 2006 HEQF structure of minimum entry and exit level requirements between qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification Type</th>
<th>NQF Exit Level</th>
<th>Minimum Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher Certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Certificate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Honours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DoE (2006)

In conjunction with SAQA, the new HE quality assurance framework is designed to ensure **seamlessness** of qualifications by, for instance, articulating progression and mobility trajectories between FE and HE, as well as within HE itself. Accordingly, such a quality assurance framework has to determine and register “legitimate, credible [and] common” standards (DoE, 2006: 9) pertaining to qualifications and programmes of learning. Among others, these standards would determine the amount (volume) of learning and the accumulation of credits necessary for a qualification. In its entirety, the fundamental thrust of a common HE qualification (and quality assurance!) framework is ‘nested’ within the following (summarized) parameters (DoE, 2006: 9):

**Flexibility**: allow for various HE ‘types’ and their curriculum missions to be pursued creatively through new qualification types or specializations;

**Graduate preparation**: qualifications should enable HE ‘products’ to be sufficiently equipped to participate in the knowledge economy and socio-economic upliftment of society; and

**Systemic efficiency**: user-friendliness is enhanced by simple and clear articulation (e.g. of qualification descriptors), which will assist students to develop their lifelong learning potential.
2.4.3 The Governance of a Regulated Higher Education System

Luhanga, Mkude, Mbwette, Chijoriga & Cleophace (2003:1-60) examined merged universities in West Africa with focus on university governance and management matters, and found that most universities were used manipulatively by many African State leaders to advance party political agendas, gains and selfish motives. For instance, universities would be facilitated to appoint Vice-Chancellors with no academic background and experience to serve as the vice-grip of institutions in order to ensure alignment of university vision and operations with views and political programmes of the national president of the time.

Ordorika (2003:361-382) undertook a study to examine tensions, links and relations between the University Nacional Autonoma de Mexico and the Mexican government. The focus was titled “the limits of university autonomy with focus on power and politics at the university”. The Mexican study was reviewed by the researcher due to the angle it brings into the merger discourse. The above study demonstrates how the HE-state power-play has enhanced the delivery of education to Mexican students. The study also assists in understanding how power-play influenced university decisiveness and pro-activeness on the one hand, and/or influential intervention or directives from the Mexican government to the institution, on the other hand. It was clear after the 1994 elections and perhaps more convincingly in 1997 after the promulgation of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) that apartheid education began losing its momentum and grip on the South African higher education sector.

The re-orientation of HE institutional governance in a regulated and coordinated environment was an inevitable outcome of the transformation process (DoE, 1997:3). Given the vestiges of HE organisational inefficiencies established by the machinations of apartheid ideology, the creation of a new culture of HE governance required protracted efforts on the part of the State. Instead of putting an emphasis on ‘management’, the conservative governance culture of the old HE dispensation emphasised ‘administration’ and its writ large bureaucratic ramifications, which enabled the state to keep the HEIs as “creatures of the State” under control. Ordorika (2003:363) cited a working definition of autonomy as “the location of authority somewhere within the university to govern itself without outside controls”. As a form of institutional regulation, ‘administration”, emphasises top-down, authoritative, and bureaucracy-ridden enforcement of policy. ‘Management’ on the other hand, implies that such regulation is interactively and systematically implemented as a process by a team of
organisational (sub) units, each of which is accountable to other components of the larger organisational unit.

As conceived by the DoE, the preferred form of co-operative governance in HE is a mutual/contractual agreement of rights and duties, the breach of which is legally regulated. While the State provides broad institutional governance guidelines, institutions provide their own day-to-day systems and procedures of governance mechanisms with the active involvement of all constituencies in the HE enterprise. In concord with its fiduciary responsibilities in a democratic society, the State devolves certain rights/obligations to HEIs. Such obligations may exist in the form of ‘academic freedom’ and ‘institutional autonomy’. The former implies that no outside interference poses impediments to free and critical academic enquiry and intellectual activity; and the latter presupposes the existence within HEIs of “… a high degree of self-regulation and administrative independence with respect to [inter-alia] student admissions, curriculum, methods of teaching and assessment, establishment of academic regulations and the internal management of resources generated from private and public sources [researcher’s italics]” (DoE, 1997:6).

Kruss (1998:98) and Olivier (2001:2-4) assert that the pre-1994 regulation of HE was typical of a State controlled form of governance – replete with its conservative, bureaucratic and autocratic administrative systems and procedures. Political and bureaucratic machinations enabled the State to exercise the creation, funding and management of HEIs ((Bunting, 2002:132; CHE, 2000:11). The concomitant demographic governance (racial separation and control of HEIs into eight different education departments according to their geo-political location) inculcated an institutional culture of apartheid reproduction. In its inculcation of a culture of transparent and democratic governance, the DoE (1997:7) clearly states:

“At the institutional level, the goals ... are [among others]: To transform and democratize the governance structures of higher education. New structures should provide for co-operative decision-making between separate but functionally interdependent stakeholders who recognise their different identities, interests and freedoms, while pursuing the common goal of a coordinated and participative polity and civil society ... The principle of public accountability implies that institutions are answerable to their actions and decisions not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community but also to the broader society”.

78
Furthermore, the ‘institutional community’ is expected to embrace a mind-set that reflects the new democratic ethos of society in respect of racial tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity; and freedom of political debate and assembly as part of student development. Informed by the growing evidence that some HEIs still have espoused a seminal culture of racism, and giving scant regard to the new dispensation, the DoE cautioned: “The ministry is seriously concerned by evidence of institutionalised forms of racism and sexism as well as the incidence of violent behaviour on many campuses of higher education institutions. It is essential to promote the development of institutional cultures which will embody values and facilitate behaviour aimed at peaceful assembly, reconciliation, respect for difference and the promotion of the common good” (DoE, 1997:26).

As an aspect of institutional governance, the problem of institutional culture is mostly worrisome without a correspondingly equal degree of institutional cultural rebirth. This could reinforce the argument of ‘unequal transformation’ at HEIs, as well as the ‘settlement approach’ to transformation. Councils, Broad Transformation Forums, Student Services Council, and Student Representative Councils should reinforce the rights of all stakeholders in order to prevent ‘defective’ institutional cultures – the prevalence of practices and values that are inhibitive to the well-being of other internal and external role-players of the university community. Such outlawed practices include racism.

### 2.4.4 The Funding of a Regulated Higher Education System

Funding patterns indicate that government generally accounts for 50% of HE financial sustenance; while student fees and an alternative private funding respectively account for 25% each (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:63). New funding-related reform measures have earnestly focused on efficiency and financial viability; as well as improving the planning capacity and quality in both the systemic and institutional domains of higher education (CHE, 2000:9). In order to meet the goals of a single and integrated HE system, goal-directed performance related public funding and the reduction of unwarranted expenditure have been instituted. The following guidelines and principles were developed to redress irregular and incoherent funding mechanisms of the past (DoE, 1997:27):

- cost reduction in an open and transparent public funding environment characterised by normative costs and performance criteria;
- reducing duplication of institutional, programmatic, and service targets and services;
• expanding the use of technology in teaching and learning at multiple sites of (contact and distance) higher learning; and

• increasing HE’s retention and completion rates through academic development and student support mechanisms.

From a total of 600 000 technikon and university student enrolments for 1998 (350 000 in contact and 250 000 in distance education programmes), only 75 000 graduates and diplomates succeeded – a 12% odd overall pass rate. CHE (2000:13) states that such a downward trend indicates the prevalence of some serious financial problems in the system.

In order to meet the goals individual and institutional redress, the DoE maintains that current HE levels of expenditure on HE could fundamentally be sustained by strategically employing a mixed base of funding (CHE, 2000:15; DoE, 1997:27). The failure by HEIs to involve alternative entrepreneurial initiatives/new investments may lead to an austere financial environment that is incapable of effectively addressing issues such as over-utilisation of resources; declining staff morale; a deteriorating quality and relevance of programmes; as well as “… a loss of confidence by students, employers, and funders in the devalued products of higher education” (DoE, 1997: 27). While the DoE is committed to meeting its goals and obligations, “it is clear that free HE provision would be an unsustainable option under the current economic conditions” (CHE, 2000: 18). A significant amount of the national budget still needs to be dispensed in other areas of service delivery; such as poverty alleviation programmes, health and affordable housing for the socio-economically depressed.

2.4.4.1 Funding Formula

Koen (2003:1) appropriated the actions of SA government well by stating that mergers which are often imposed from the top are mostly intended to save the nation’s financial resources and ensure political alignment, quality and rational concerns of the society. The goal of public funding includes increasing student access rates; invigorating the quality of teaching and research; fostering quantitatively observable rates of completion by students; and responsiveness to socioeconomic needs. The measurability of these desired outcomes is determined by institutions’ capacity to submit three-year plans that include block grants for general institutional needs. Institutional missions and plans should justify payments for such needs (e.g. full-time enrolments in various fields and levels of study). The plans should also indicate the extent to which particular HEIs intend to implement redress and equity
mechanisms (DoE, 2001:48). A new public funding formula has been identified as constituting an integral component of the goal-oriented, performance-related, pecuniary assistance by the state. By that very fact, the interventionist (rather than interference) approach is applied as an intermediate phase by the state. In the long-term, state financial supervision will determine institutional compliance with the funding goals.

In order to redress past inequitable and disproportionate funding mechanisms, the post-apartheid higher education authorities were faced with the task of adding ‘value for money’ in the new funding initiatives. Whereas public accountability had not been high on the agenda in a systemic context, the new goal-oriented and performance-oriented approaches seek to foster a culture of efficiency in the utilisation of available resources. All relevant constituencies should participate in maximizing these resources with evidence-based results. The following table indicates the proportional allocation increases designed to meet the goals and targets of expansion in the higher education sector.

Table 2.12: Proportion of Earmarked and Block Funding

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earmarked Funding</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block Funding</td>
<td>4,887</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>5,803</td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td>6,620</td>
<td>6,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5,432</td>
<td>6,003</td>
<td>6,610</td>
<td>7,014</td>
<td>7,532</td>
<td>7,969</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bunting & Cloete (2004:52)

*All the amounts above are Rands in millions

The new formula-funding framework (aligned to the EWP3 stipulations) was adopted in 2003 and applied for the first time in 2004 (Bunting & Cloete, 2004:52). The formula funding framework therefore, premises on the following main guidelines.

- balancing institutional autonomy with public accountability;
- management procedures that are imbued with flexibility, simplicity, and transparency; and
- procedures that are compatible with institutional academic and managerial capabilities and DoE expectations (DoE, 1997:34).

For HEIs’ conformity to the new funding mechanisms, their tri-annual plans should also indicate those curriculum fields in which they wished to expand, to retain, or to discard of. This is in keeping with the SET imperatives that would enable their global competitiveness
and curriculum innovativeness in both socio-economic and academic labour markets. Fiscal discipline inculcates an outcomes-based ethic, in that availability of block grants is linked to institutions meeting their three-year plans, the failure of which “… will make an institution liable to forfeit equivalent funds by way of reductions to its operating grants according to a publicly known procedure” (DoE, 1997c: 29). Institutions wishing to enrol beyond the number of publicly subsidized student enrolments, or wish to offer programmes not registered or accredited by the NQF, do so on the proviso that they use their privately-raised funds.

2.4.4.2 Earmarked Funding

Ear-marked funding constitutes the second element of the new funding framework. Whereas block grants are for general operational needs, earmarked funds are for specific, targeted purposes such as institutional redress; student financial aid; staff development; research development; libraries and information technology upgrading; capital works and equipment; as well as postgraduate development and regional co-operation (Bunting & Cloete, 2004:52; DoE, 1997:33-34). Bunting and Cloete (p. 64) contend that the government appears to have given more support for individual, rather than institutional redress. For instance, in 1999 alone, R390 million had been allocated to TEFSA (Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa) – which represents 5% of the total HE allocation for that year (Bunting & Cloete, 2004:64).

Between 1998 and 1999, a total of R87 million was allocated for institutional redress alone (p. 64). For HDIs in particular, earmarked funding for institutional redress was intended to enhance access, quality, and “…other forms of deliberate disadvantage suffered by learners and institutions as a result of past government policies” (DoE, 1997:35). Those HDIs, however, should demonstrate their capacity and/or potential to improve on those specific areas for which redress is targeted, such as staff and student development, as well as curriculum and ICT development. In order to be eligible for these funds, HDIs would be required to submit three-year ‘rolling plans’ that indicated financial audits, staff profiles reflecting qualifications and levels of posts being occupied on the basis of age, race and gender. Ear-marked funding for student financial assistance is premised on a cost sharing approach. The principle is that since HE generates private benefit for the student, its cost should be shared by government and the students (Bunting, 2002:132; DoE, 1997: 31). This innovative approach is radically different from the apartheid situation (pontificated and
advanced by SAPSE (South African Post-Secondary Education) framework in the 1980s and early 1990s which absolved the government of any direct financial aid):

“The government funding framework of the 1980s and early 1990s … explicitly rejected the principles of equity and redress, holding that it was not the business of the higher education system to deal with social inequalities which affected either individuals or institutions. Its built-in assumptions about institutional autonomy and the efficacy of the free market implied … that the SAPSE funding framework could not satisfy the principles of development or those concerned with efficiency and effectiveness” (Bunting, 2002:132).

As expansion in student enrolments becomes demographically representative of the general South African society, the inability of many students to pay – “... particularly first-generation students from poor families” (DoE, 1997:35) – necessitates that previously disadvantaged students benefit from a student financial aid scheme that is “… effective … equitable … business-like … sustainable … transparent [not to be misconstrued by recipients as] an optional extra… but an integral part of the public and private investment in the nation’s high-level human resources development. Neither is [it] a substitute for responsible self-help by students, but a valid form of supplementary support, especially for the majority of young South Africans whose family support systems can bear only a fraction of the cost of current higher education programmes” (DoE, 1997:36).

The new formula and earmarked funding mechanisms are pivotal in meeting the goals of access, redress, and equity. While there is no state interference in the structuring of HE fees, cost sharing by private and public means has become a viable higher education transformational and funding initiative (Donn, 1997:189). The reorganisation of the South African higher education sector should create a base from which meaningful growth and expansion of the sector would take place. Financial sustainability of universities cannot be divorced from the government purse. Universities, unless if they are private entities charged exorbitant fees, need government to subsidize their offerings for survival. Muller, Mthethwa and Mvulane (2006:215) identified funding as one of the issues that continue to threaten equitable access to institutions by black students, that these students find themselves going to institutions that have large sums of finances depending on how the government has apportioned its subsidy. This factor, if overlooked may undermine the policy intentions of government with mergers and retain superiority and inferiority categories of institutions in
the country. Description of the consequences of the merger implementation with a view to assert whether government goals were attained remains essential.

2.4.5 Some Pertinent Policy Issues Pertaining to the Transformation of South African Higher Education Institutions

The following issues are as germane to the rest of this chapter in particular, and to the entire research topic in general. Their ubiquitous nature straddles both the pre- and post-merger life of higher education in South Africa. These issues could not be left uncited, however minimal such citation has been presented hereinafter.

The long-term academic effects of apartheid HE will take long to be eradicated (Welsh & Savage (1977:144-45). While the struggle for political emancipation is construed as completed already, the struggle for the true liberation of the entire South African HE ecology – notwithstanding the perceived isolation of the Africanisation of the HE curriculum – is one that has to be fundamentally addressed through policy objectives of, for instance, equity, redress, and access. A lacuna of a vigorous and robust culture of intellectual engagement within and among HEIs is still extant (Cloete & Bunting, 2000:60; Jansen, 2004:101-102; Seepe, 2004: 179). Such a state of affairs is an indictment on apartheid HE policies, as well as the current ideologically aberrant policy frameworks; indigenous knowledge systems are undermined as socially and culturally relevant components of the mainstream curriculum in its entirety. Welsh and Savage (1977:144-146) stress the precarious state of the South African university:

“... serious efforts ought to be made to promote a vigorous and deep-probing debate on South Africa’s problems among scholars from the different segments of South Africa’s universities. It is a matter for deep regret, and also an indictment of South Africa’s academic separation, that such debate hardly occurs. South African conferences of the various social sciences which attract scholars with radically different opinions are rare occasions, and even then they are often inclined to take on the air of ‘bridge parties’ whose participants are too polite to take the gloves off and, intellectually speaking, fight it out. The position is as serious within [author’s italics] universities, for here too not only is the debate on critical issues facing South Africa too often blunted, or even avoided but, in their teaching, the particularly contentious or sensitive areas of the society are often only marginally
examined where they are examined at all … behind the different postures adopted by different groups of scholars in South Africa there may be a greater measure of consensus on the role of the university than first appearances might suggest. This could be an entirely misplaced optimism; nevertheless the possibility of its truth ought to be explored”.

The transformation debate – whether transformation should be evolutionary or revolutionary – constitutes some intellectual inertia across political, cultural, religious, and ideological barriers, and that seems not to have improved dramatically since the de-legitimation of apartheid higher Education. Writing about a decade and a half after the celebrated first democratic elections in South Africa, Seepe and Kgaphola (2004:45-46) comment thus:

“While these developments [the aftermath of the 2004 general elections and concomitant euphoria] were changing the political landscape, a parallel but low intensity struggle was being waged – the struggle for intellectual and ideological hegemony. This struggle is to be expected if we consider that apartheid did not only deny the African majority a right to vote, but had subjected the African also to economic, spiritual, and cultural subordination. To sustain the logic of apartheid – it became necessary for apartheid-supporting intellectuals to create certain philosophical, historical, cultural and scientific myths [explicitly cited by Welsh & Savage, 1977:144-45].

Given this experience, it is and remains necessary to challenge the intellectual edifice that sustained apartheid. This challenge and the historic task of transforming South Africa will of necessity require the participation of an assertive African intellectual leadership”.

Using the five merger cases of SACTE (South African College for Teacher Education) and Unisa; University of Pretoria (UP) and Medunsa; Univen (University of Venda) and GCE (Gauteng College of Education); and Wits and JTC (Johannesburg Teachers’ College), Mfusi (2004:98,101) undertook a study focusing on curriculum transformation. It was found that one or both institutions among the pairs retained their curricula and continued with ‘business as usual’ after the merger. Other mergers went for partial compromises of their curricula. If curriculum relevance to society is an important factor, then the pre-1994 curriculum was intended to produce a pliant and subservient class of educated black people to service the fictional homelands of apartheid’s imagination (Asmal, 2002:1). This means that it is the
responsibility of the democratically elected government to broaden the learning horizons of the masses of South Africans by radically revamping the curricula of South African universities. The mergers studied by Mfusi (2004) above, have regrettably found the pervasiveness of epistemological and intellectual hegemonies.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The current chapter presented the foundational domain of the study, which is largely located in the theoretical or abstract terrain of mergers as a governmental policy framework of applying mergers in higher education transformation. The merger process itself is posited not as an end in itself, but as a means towards and end; the end being the total and collective liberation of South African society following decades – if not centuries – of colonial rule, imperialistic domination, and apartheid oppression.

The focus of the reviewed literature was not a mere exercise intended to develop a bibliographic compendium of primary and secondary sources of evidence. Rather, the intended outcome of the review of relevant literature on the research topic was to establish a scholarship perspective according to which experts, social scientists, and other practitioners have contributed in the field of higher education mergers and transformation in an environment characterized by complex political, historical, and socio-economical dynamics. In this regard, international perspectives concerning the research topic and its consequent research processes afforded the study a context within which emergent themes, practices, and trends in higher education mergers and transformation could be viewed, discussed, and compared against the local South African context. On the whole, the chapter also provided the empirical trajectory for the implementation of the empirical phase of the study and its data collection instrument(s).
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Whereas the two previous chapters mostly entailed a theoretical/conceptual premise of the study, the current chapter encapsulates both the theoretical/conceptual and empirical domain of the research topic and its attendant evidence-gathering processes. The theoretical/conceptual (non-human and abstract) parameters of the study derive its impetus mainly from the reviewed literature (such as policy documents) as the primary source of evidence. Contrarily, the empirical/experiential aspect of the evidence-gathering process derives its relevance from the ‘lived experiences’ of the research participants consulted by the researcher as part of the research process and its attempts to garner the practical or human dimension in order to infuse and present the study as an intelligible human endeavour to resolve a human problem or challenge.

Scholars, academic and professional researchers, and other experts/social scientists from various “academic tribes” (Becher & Trowler, 2001:14) – intellectual paradigms that canonise certain epistemological cultures – posit various “territorial” dispositions towards ‘research design’ and ‘research methodology’ as conceptual nuances in evidence-based enquiries. On the one hand, some “academic tribes” – persuaded by their “territorial” inclinations – maintain that the two nuances are separate but linked concepts; while on the other hand, the opposing paradigm upholds the view that the ‘research design’ and ‘research methodology’ are synonymous and could be interchangeably. Mouton (2001:56) – a proponent of the separateness of the two research nuances referred to above – differentiates between research design from research methodology by indicating that the research design of a study “focuses on the end product of the research” whilst the research methodology “focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used”.

For purposes of both logical concatenation and syllogistic argumentation (considering the eclectic approaches used in the study to obtain data), ‘research design’ and ‘research method’ have been used interchangeably and in a synonymous mode in this study. The nature of the research topic (e.g. as a case study), its research problem, as well as the research objectives, have all constructed and shaped the manner and extent to which both the research design and the research methods have been implemented in the study. In order to optimise the data
collection and analysis processes, as well as the findings and recommendations of the study, a limited triangulated approach was opted for; according to which both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted by the researcher from eclectic data collection perspectives in order to broaden understanding in respect of the selection of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) as a case study for determining the extent to which governments policy objectives on higher education were achieved (or not achieved). Furthermore, triangulation was of major benefit to the study, as it is highly adaptive to the descriptive, analytic, and interpretive perspectives of both primary and secondary sources of information or data (Mouton, 2001:55). Notwithstanding the limited triangulation, the study is still fundamentally qualitative in its orientation.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The research design of this study refers to the broader action plan of the manner in which the research was conducted (Mouton 2001:55). Other researchers, such as Politand Beck (2008:764), and Burns and Groove (2009:218), elaborate that such a broad or overall action plan (blueprint) addresses such salient research aspects as the research question(s), specifications for enhancing the study’s integrity, as well as some of the difficulties encountered during the research process. Auriacombe (2001:31) describes research design and research methodology interchangeably as a stage in the report writing of the thesis where the researcher “presents a rough indication of the design, plan or structure of the study and the methodology that would be followed in addressing the research problem”. The latter author states further that it is at this stage of the thesis wherein the researcher provides details “of the data collection process, including the sampling methods, sampling size, data collection techniques and definitions of relevant terminology used in the thesis” (Auriacombe, 2001:31).

This research is essentially a qualitative and descriptive study intended to describe and discuss higher education policy within the larger context of South African society’s transformation (transition?) from decades of apartheid oppression to democracy and freedom. Fox and Meyer (1996:36), as well as Brynard and Hanekom (1997:6) agree that qualitative descriptive studies propose and consistently describe the causes and consequences of policy actions. Furthermore, such studies enhance and validate the processing of observation-based information.
Schurink (1998:240) posits vehemently that descriptive quality studies may be esoteric to some, as it is not easily intelligible to everyone’s satisfaction. However, the discussion of qualitative and quantitative methods by Brynard and Hanekom (1997:28) brought some clarity on the concepts and ensured an informed selection of qualitative approaches for this current study. Schurink (1998:240) further illuminated that descriptive qualitative research is a dynamic method which enables the use of a range of qualitative-oriented techniques and data collection methods to intensify interaction, with a view to bringing to the fore, the much-needed sense from discussions and interpretations of data on any subject under consideration. In the current qualitative research project, the methodological dimension is necessary, in order to outline the research objectives, the research route or path, as well as the identification of relevant instruments to be used during the course of the research.

Blumberg et al.’s (2005:40) presentation of a qualitative descriptive research is as a model that is consistent with, and congenial to the general purposes and specific intentions of this study. Such a model describes behaviour of elements within a system characterised by a paucity of theory, attempts to provide answers to the questions, while enabling the researcher to describe, or define a subject, often by creating a profile of a group of problems, people or events. This (current) study precisely describes elements that have characterised the implementation processes of South African higher education mergers in 2004 following the first democratic dispensation after the 1994 general elections. The intended outcome is a description on whether the policy goals of the State were attained with the implementation of the 2004 mergers in SA higher education.

3.2.1 The Research Methodology of the Study

Fox and Meyer (1996:81) provide a three-part definition of ‘research methodology’ as a conceptual variable in systematic evidence-based studies. For purposes of this study, the most relevant part of the definition is one which refers to ‘research methodology’ as “the systematic study of processes and principles that guide scientific investigations and research”. Mouton (2001:55) elaborates further that the research methodology refers to the specific instruments or tools used in meeting the objectives of the research as a mechanism to resolve the research problem (Mouton 2001:55). In this study, the specific research instruments used were the review of relevant literature as a primary source of narrative (non-numerical) information and theoretic/abstract evidence, as well as the empirical aspect of the study.
(Blumberg et al., 2005:124). The latter facilitated the practical/experiential component of the investigation by means of the focus group interviews.

Mouton (1996:35) approves of the use of descriptive qualitative methods in a study of this nature, as the methodological dimension from such an approach is able to address the question of the manner (the ‘how’ part) of attaining knowledge, and identifying ways in which the research objective(s) could be reached. It should be noted that the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is also based on the kind of information used to study a phenomenon. For instance, a quantitative researcher relies mainly on numerical or statistical information, while qualitative studies base their accounts mainly on prosaic information such as words, sentences and narratives. It could further be argued that “qualitative” refers to the meaning, the definition, analogy, model or metaphor characterizing a phenomenon, while “quantitative” assumes a measurement of the prevalence or effect of the particular phenomenon (Blumberg et al., 2005:124). Quantitative research approaches, furthermore, have the effect of imposing a control on the research components (Henning et al., 2004:3).

In the current study therefore, the justification for the adopted or preferred qualitative methodological approach is its capacity to describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate collected data through interviews and other relevant documents and reviews (Holtzhausen, 2007:20).

3.2.3 The Case Study Approach to the Study

Case study methodology is identified as a stand-alone qualitative research approach (Yin, 2003). The case study approach is one of the five research paradigms applicable to a qualitative study (Cant, Gerber-Nel, Nel & Kotzé, 2003:30). The latter authors define a case study as an exploratory research technique that intensively investigates existing records of one or a few situations similar to the research problem under investigation. De Vos (2002:274) and Miles and Huberman (1994:25) elaborate further that a case study is exploratively and situationally bound to time and place. In this study, the period under review is between 14 November, 2003 and 31 December, 2007. The case study also allows for the usage of multiple data sources (Baxter, 2008). The merging of TUT has been selected in this study as a case study to ‘measure’ the efficacy of the general merger processes of 2004 as a government policy objective. In this regard, the TUT case study then become the central unit of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994:25).
Compared to other research approaches, case studies permit the combination of different sources of evidence such as available literature and archived documents; interviews, and participant observations (Blumberg et al., 2005:193). Researchers who opt for the case study method are urged to observe similarities and dissimilarities about the case being investigated. This involves careful and in-depth consideration of the nature of the case, its historical background, its physical setting, and other institutional and political contextual factors (Yin, 2003). The flexibility of the case study method allowed the researcher to investigate the different phenomena that affect the effectiveness or otherwise of the mergers in general, and the TUT merger in particular. Due to its flexibility and rigor (Yin, 2003), the case study approach is valuable for policy research in that it enables theory development, programme evaluation, and development of relevant interventions. In the context of this study, careful attention has been paid to the political context, the historical background, and the nature of the post-1994 higher education system in South Africa (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014).

Due to the complexity of mergers, the focus of this study was narrowed to the technikon sector as the quintessential representative of a single-type case study. As opposed to multiple case studies – which focus on the investigation of more than a single case, a single-type case study was preferred – focusing on TUT as a single case or foremost and central unit of analysis (Blumberg et al., 2005:192-200). The latter authors further motivate that a single case study is adequate under circumstances where:

- Research provides the critical study to a longer series of case studies. In this study, previous long series of case studies were reviewed. Three of the merger cases were investigated by Mfusi (2004) on five South African institutions: inter alia, SACTE and Unisa, University of Pretoria (UP) and MEDUNSA, UNIVEN and GCE, Wits and JTC. Other five cases were investigated by Jansen (2003). Sehoole (2005) investigated another set of cases which included SACTE, JCE, and Giyani College of Education (GCE). The colleges had to be incorporated into the University of South Africa (UNISA), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), and University of Venda (UNIVEN). Fourie (2009:1) only investigated the case of Vista University, Unisa and TSA. In all the cases, the unique case of TUT was not included;

- A real-life situation is investigated on the basis of its problem statement or by theoretical propositions of the study (Blumberg et al., 2005:192); and
• Information is not easily accessible to the researcher. In this regard, one was able to access information relevant to the study, including data on the conciliation between NUTESA and TUT as well as a signed merger agreement from the institution. These documents brought to the fore unique merger dynamics which have characterized the TUT merger.

A very critical aspect of a case study is that its results are not necessarily generalizable, but for replicating logic. The results from this study could be observed by other researchers who may undertake similar research at TUT. The research approach and method employed in this study can assist in investigating other cases within and outside the South African higher education sector and be able to yield useful results in contexts with the TUT verisimilitudes.

3.2.3.1 Elements of a Quality Case Study

Concerted means were expended by the researcher to ensure that the TUT case study complied with scientifically established elements of a good-quality case study. Such compliance would ensure that the study’s findings and attendant recommendations were valid and credible, and arrived at objectively. Blumberg et al., (2005:195) outline eight logical elements of a good-quality case study, as well as elements that characterise or constitute achievement descriptors.

Table 3.1: Elements of a Quality Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description on how it can be achieved through case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>clearly defined</strong> Be <em>explicit</em> in the formulation of the research objectives and research problem. This was done in Chapter 1, and elaborated on in Chapter 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research process</strong></td>
<td>Provide all <em>information</em> pertaining to the research process, including information on <em>who</em> should be interviewed, documents obtained, and the secondary data used. This was done in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Research design** | **thoroughly planned**  
  • Providing a clear *explanation* of the case selection;  
  • *Plan* carefully on how information will be obtained from different sources of evidence;  
  • *Duration* of interviews; and  
  • Design a case study *information-base*, but clearly distinguish |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description on how it can be achieved through case studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the information obtained from the case study report. These activities were undertaken in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, as well as other applicable sections of the study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High ethical standards applied</td>
<td>• Protect the rights of other participants involved in the study such as sponsors, respondents and/or interviewees; • Ensure that the research fulfils the quality standards of good research by: o accurately accounting for the observations obtained; o mentioning any information that is an aberration to the study’s theoretical propositions; o Basing conclusions and recommendations on the findings of the case study; and o Resisting the desire to exceed the scope of the study. These requirements have been adhered to and complied with fully in the study. Chapters 1 to 3 and some parts of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 discuss these requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations frankly revealed</td>
<td>• Discuss the extent of completeness of the picture that is being painted in the study; and • Mention of a deviation from the planned purpose of the study to obtain information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate analysis of a decision-maker’s needs</td>
<td>• Explain how information from interviews was assessed; and • Do not be pedantic, maintain the line of argument.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding presented unambiguously</td>
<td>• Use a clear structure that allows inclusion of all the relevant details, and prevent the reader from ‘getting lost in the forest’ of discussion and rhetoric; and • Use tables and graphs to support the findings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion justified</td>
<td>• Conclusions must support the findings without exceeding the scope of research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Blumberg et al., (2005:195)
3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The quality of the data collection process complements “the logic of research” (Mouton, 2001:114). The “logic of research” entails the nature of the evidence on the one hand, and the processes involved in the acquisition of such evidence, on the other. The data collection process in the study focused on both the theoretic and empirical/practical aspects of the research topic and all its attendant research variables – such as the research problem, the research objectives, the research questions, the motivation of the study, as well as the methods and procedures applied in the collection of data. The afore-going considerations are in conformity to the maxim that, “The worth of all scientific depends heavily on the manner in which the data was collected and analysed” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:563).

In order to maximise understanding on the post-1994 merging of South African higher education institutions, the research instruments/tools preferred for this purpose were the review of literature and the unstructured interviews. It is worth stating that the instruments themselves are not the data itself, they merely facilitate the triangulated acquisition of data and information. Sarantakos (1998:167) illuminates that some social scientists prefer to design their data collection instruments prior to the execution of a study, while others do so during the research process itself. The advantage of designing the tools before the study’s commencement is that it “helps to avoid the collection of too much superfluous information” (Sarantakos, 1998:168).

In this study, the review of relevant primary sources of information was the foundational and qualitative data collection technique which provided the basis for the formulation of the interview phase of the study, which became the second logical data collection instrument. That is to say, the literature review was conducted first, and the interview questions were subsequently developed.

3.3.1 Literature Review

Literature review is utilised in the data collection process in order to support existing data where needed, and to confirm the researcher’s interpretation of data with existing knowledge on the research subject. The findings of the study are then discussed in the light of relevant literature conducted by other researchers in this field of knowledge (higher education mergers in general, and the TUT merger process in particular).
The main purpose of a review of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Polit & Beck, 2008). The review of relevant literature was the first means by which the data collection phase of the study was implemented. The document review process enhanced the researcher’s broader understanding of the research topic and its attendant research variables, thus providing critical perspectives on the findings of earlier studies, reviews, and evaluations associated with the study initiatives.

A distinction exists between “literature review” and “scholarship review” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:565-566; Mouton, 2001: 4-6, 90-91). Literature review is concerned mainly with the bibliographic referencing of consulted sources. This study, however, does not necessarily provide a comprehensive bibliography of the literature consulted for the entire study, which mainly locates the study “... in the context of the general body of scientific knowledge” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 565). It is for the latter reason that the list has been provided immediately after the last chapter of this study, i.e. before the List of Appendices. The comprehensive list of references itself was continuously pared – increasing or decreasing as “the weight of evidence” (Mouton, 2001:114) unfolded according to sources of information that respectively had direct or peripheral bearing on specific and general aspects of the study. The literature featuring in this category included both data and information from which direct reference was made and indicated by quotation marks, as well as data from which indirect reference was made – all of which contributed in varying degrees, to the development of the research topic, the method(s) of enquiry, and the resultant episodes of analysis and interpretation.

The purpose of literature review, or “scholarship review” (Mouton, 2001), is to enable the study to make its own unique contribution to the corpus of knowledge in a particular field, in this case, mergers as a policy aspect of Public Administration. Furthermore, the aim of literature review is to “… ensure that adequate and relevant literature is available to inform the theoretical approach, the research design and methodology, the instrument development and to assist in data analysis and findings made” (Muller, 2007:5). Instead of focusing much on literature review for model or theory development and conceptual analysis, the orientation and focus in this study’s literature review has been on the applicability (or otherwise) of the case study method as an effective tool for determining trends in higher education transformation (Kaplan, 1999:79-81). Huberman and Miles (1998:195) corroborate the efficacy of the case study method in establishing generalizable trends, citing that “Case-
oriented analysis … is good at finding specific, concrete, historically-grounded patterns common to all sets of cases, but its findings remain particularistic, although several case writers speciously claim greater generality”.

It should be mentioned that in this study, the review of literature preceded the interview phase with the selected respondents. That is to say, the relevant literature was reviewed prior to the study being undertaken in toto. Data and information obtained from government and university documents was used to further explore the subject under investigation (namely, the TUT as a case study to assess the efficacy or otherwise of the post-democratic government’s policy objectives in relation to the transformation of South African higher education institutions).

3.3.2 Empirical Phase of Data Collection

The empirical phase of the study refers to ‘the fieldwork’ conducted ‘outside’ of the study’s literature-based theoretic, abstract, or conceptual terrain. Accordingly, the empirical is concerned with the real-life, practical, or ‘lived experiences’ of the research subjects in the context of the phenomenon (HE mergers) being studied. In such a situation, the inductive approach to data collection facilitated and enhanced the TUT’s centrality as a point of reference from which generalizability or trend-centred characteristics could be inferred and translated to other South African higher education institutions that were affected by the self-same merger processes – albeit in dissimilar contexts and effects (Mouton, 2001:113). This centripetal (inductive) aspect of the empirical domain local higher education transformation trends was also valuable to the extent that it also served as a deductive basis for comparability with international trends and experiences insofar as higher education mergers are concerned. It is in this regard that the respondents (especially those meeting the selection/inclusion criteria for interview purposes) – in their respective capacities as practitioners in the ‘field’ – provided the human, personal, or emotional interactive side of the investigation; which could not have been easily established by means of the ‘non-human’ review of literature. Cast in this mode (of both inductive and deductive reasoning), the empirical component of data collection provided seamlessness between the research problem and the research objectives on one hand, as well as the congenial data collection processes on the other (Holosko, 2001:266).
The researcher’s interaction with live human beings during the one-on-one interview sessions opened-up a whole new and different case study perspective as a whole, since the observable characteristics of the participants (e.g. feelings, attitudes, motives, and so on) yielded deeper understanding and dynamics on HE mergers as a policy initiative of the post-1994 democratically elected government. Considering that the seven selected research participants constituted a demographically and intellectually heterogeneous group, the study benefited immensely from the real-life experiences of practitioners from fields as diverse administration/management, finance, policy development, collective bargaining, and quality assurance.

The most significant aspect of the empirical/fieldwork/practical aspect of the study, therefore, is premised on its indispensable contribution to the acquisition of the study’s findings/results on the basis of triangulated and multiple perspectives (Fouche, 2002:106).

3.3.2.1 Focus Group Interviews

Interviews were used as the primary method of data collection in this qualitative and descriptive case study. As empirically generated sources of evidence, interviews are the most widely used sources of data collection techniques. Case study interviews are often unstructured or even informal discussions with key respondents who are either directly or peripherally linked with the case being studied. Informal discussions or open-ended (unstructured) interviews with selected respondents (research participants or subjects) are a crucial part of many case studies, mainly due to the key respondents’ capacity to provide valuable insights into the idiosyncrasies of a case, while also directing the case researcher towards other reliable and credible sources of valuable and authentic evidence – such as relevant archived documents, surveys or other studies pertaining to the case being studied (Blumberg et al., 2005:193). For instance, during Interview 26 of February 2009, the respondent pointed the researcher to evidence of a case in which NUTESA (National Union of Tertiary Education in South Africa) lodged a dispute with arbitration authorities against the perceived unfairness of the TUT merger implementation meted towards some members of NUTESA (see Appendix 8 and Appendix 9 for the preface pages of the arbitration report). A copy of the arbitration was voluntarily given to the researcher by the respondent during this interview (Interview 26 of February 2009), subsequent to which the researcher was granted
permission to refer to the document (arbitration report) or publish it as part of the research report. Notwithstanding the granting of such permission, the researcher has exercised the option to only refer to the report without publicly disclosing its contents, other than its cover page only.

In the course of investigating or studying a case, the caveat is that the researcher should guard against bias, which may arises from the researcher’s emotional reaction to a respondent’s elicited views on an aspect the issue(s) being studied. Adler and Adler (1998:80-81) refer to the researcher’s unbiased approach to respondents as “non-interventionism”, a professional research ethic according to which:

“Observers neither manipulate nor stimulate their subjects. They do not ask the subjects research questions, pose tasks for them, or deliberately create new provocations. This stands in marked contrast to researchers using interview questionnaires, who direct the interaction and introduce potentially new ideas into the arena [such as the case for Interview B in sub-section 5.3.3.2], and to experimental researchers, who often set up structured situations where they can alter certain conditions to measure the covariance [degree of variability] of others … Qualitative observers are not bound, thus, by predetermined categories of measurement or response but are free to search for concepts or categories that appear meaningful to subjects … Naturalistic [qualitative] observers thus often differ from quantitative observers in the scope of their observations: Whereas the latter focus on minute particles of the world that can be agglomerated into a variable, the former look for much larger trends, patterns, and styles of behaviour [sic]. These differences are rooted not only in variations between the ways the two groups observe, but in the types of questions they pose”.

The researcher, then, should always ensure that such issues do not overshadow the objective purpose of the study, as failure to so (resisting prejudicial engagement with the participants) may eventually interfere with the integrity of the study and attenuate the validity of results of the case being studied. As opposed to the structured interview paradigms, the unstructured/semi-structured interview approach was opted for in this study for the following reasons:
• In Public Administration and Management, researchers are advised to utilise interviews as primary data gathering methods, since other techniques often provide inadequate clarity in cases which falls under Public Administration and Management (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997:32);

• Interviews allow for effective probing of respondents and diminish vague responses, while enabling the researcher to seek elaboration on incomplete responses (Welman & Kruger, 1999:167); and

• By virtue of their nature (e.g. prosaic orientation to information gathering), unstructured or semi-structured interviews lend themselves to less complications and are optimally supported by inherently qualitative studies (De Vos, 2002:298; Blumberg et al., 2005:193). Leedy and Ormrod (2001:159) reinforce the latter dynamic by stating that an interview in a qualitative study is rarely structured, and is either open-ended or semi-structured while revolving around few central questions.

3.3.2.2 Implementation of the Interview Phase

An Interview Guide/Schedule was prepared in advance as a framework of the questions to be asked during the unstructured interview sessions. All interview questions were aligned to the core research questions mentioned in sub-section 1.4.3 of Chapter One, (while the following constituted the core of the interview questions themselves (see Appendix 3b):

1. State your names and surname (optional in view of number 9 below) as well as the position which you were holding in the TUT Council between 2003 and 2007.
2. Explain the role that you were playing in the merger execution process of TUT between 2003 and 2007.
3. What did you understand to have been the key policy intentions of government with the merger?
4. Which of these policy intentions (which you have identified under 3) were achieved by the TUT merger execution process?
5. How were they achieved?
6. What are the key success factors attributed to the TUT merger execution process?
7. What were the shortcomings of the TUT merger execution process?
8. What needs to be prevented from happening should a merger of the same magnitude be commissioned by government in the future?
9. For ethical reasons: will you prefer to be quoted directly or will you opt for anonymity?
The researcher conducted the unstructured interviews with representative respondents from TUT within the framework of mergers as the pivotal point of discussion. Participants were treated in the most professional and respectful manner. The probing was conducted in ways that ensured the elicitation of appropriate responses to further clarity-seeking questions posed;

In order to facilitate well-coordinated interview sessions, individual interviews lasting not more than an hour were held with each of the respondents. The process went unhindered due to the researcher having over the years, developed strong professional relationships with the respondents in this study. Therefore, access to the respondents was not a problem;

During the individual/one-to-one interview phase, respondents were provided with sufficient time to seek clarity in the event of any (real or perceived) misunderstanding occurring during the interview session(s); and

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim thereafter. The data on the transcript was analysed to establish the extent of the State’s merger achievements. In keeping with ethical considerations, respondents were protected from suffering physical harm, discomfort, pain and embarrassment when the results of the research were published. In order to safeguard the respondents’ privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, their informed consent was sought prior to the commencement of the interview phase of the study. The respondents were also informed about the purpose of the study and the use to which the results would be put (Blumberg et al. (2005:93).

Whereas the TUT mergers were the focal point and central unit of analysis during the unstructured interview sessions, the researcher’s probing questions during Interview 26 of February 2009, also presented an opportunity for the researcher to establish the following aspects concerning the respondents’ collective human repertoire (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:159):

- their own views and understanding of the mergers;
- their motives for making certain decisions (e.g. management decisions);
- their present and past behaviours under similar or nearly similar situations (in order to understand their decision-making motives);
• their behavioural and moral/ethical standards (for instance, the respondents’ views on what think should be done (or should have been done) to project mergers as more acceptable; and
• their conscious reasons for actions or feelings.

The above-listed aspects were scrutinised for all the respondents during the one-on-one interviews in this study.

3.3.3 The Research Setting/Research Milieu

The research setting/research milieu provides the actual context of the study in respect of the place (physical location), the timing (historical/political/socio-economic period, era, or moment), and the people/characters or research respondents involved in the execution of the (case) study. The following information (evidence) pertaining to the research setting/milieu is derived verbatim from the TUT’s electronic sources:

“The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) is a proud product of South Africa’s first decade of democracy. While the size and scope of this dynamic new institution [established on 1 January 2004] impress, the quality of its teaching, research and community engagement is what makes the University really stands out. TUT was established on 1 January 2004, with the merging of the former Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria. At the time of the merger, the uniquely South African institutional designation of “technikon” was dropped in favour for [sic] the internationally accepted “university of technology” designation. Its geographic footprint covers four of South Africa’s nine provinces – Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the North-West Province – with campuses located in Tshwane ( Pretoria, Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa), Nelspruit, eMalahleni (previously called Witbank) and Polokwane (previously called Pietersburg). Large numbers of students are also drawn from other provinces and from neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Swaziland [researcher’s italics]” (http://sastudy.co.za/article/about-tut/).

The TUT’s electronic sources illuminate further on the contextual parameters of the setting (unit of analysis) thus:
“TUT is truly an institution in service of the Southern African community. One of its key focuses is, therefore, the economic and social development of the Southern African region. In its quest to promote knowledge and technology, it provides the market with a career-focused workforce. It also aims at making a significant contribution to creating sustainable economic growth that will impact on the standard of living of all of the region’s people. The education offered at TUT, with its entrepreneurial focus, opens up unlimited opportunities for students to become job creators and entrepreneurs. This is established by creating prosperity through the stimulation of innovation and creative thinking. This is facilitated by various incubators and technology stations. TUT strives to be a leading institution, viewing the diversity of its staff, students and other stakeholders as a strength to be nurtured in service of the country and the African continent. The University is committed to ongoing transformation to make it ever more responsive to the needs of Southern Africa and the continent, as a whole [researcher’s italics]” (http://sastudy.co.za/article/about-tut/).

TUT has seven (7) faculties, namely; Economics and Finance; Engineering and the Built Environment; Humanities; Information and Communication Technology; Management Sciences; Natural Sciences; and Arts. At its founding, TUT was composed of a 60 000 - strong student body, which is “one of the most demographically representative in the country in terms of both race and gender, reflecting the Rainbow Nation in all its diversity. With almost 22 per cent of contact students accommodated in residences, the University is by far the largest residential higher education institution in Southern Africa” (http://sastudy.co.za/article/about-tut/).
3.3.3.1 Sampling

In the context of this study, sampling refers to the process according to which *representative* individuals, objects or phenomena are selected in order to enhance knowledge acquisition of the entire population of the phenomena under investigation. Furthermore, sampling was undertaken as a process of drawing conclusions about *unknown* population parameters from the known sample statistic. Considering the unprecedented number of higher education institutions during both the pre- and post-merger stages, it was inconceivable to construct a modicum of generalizability on the basis of a survey of all SA higher education institutions simultaneously or even concurrently. An inductively informed, centripetally linked, and thematically coordinated microcosmic case study was therefore regarded as a relevant sample in the macrocosm of ‘the universe of universities’.
Identifying a unit of analysis is as important as arriving at the study’s clear statement of purpose (Maxwell & Satake, 2006:220). From the research topic’s organisational perspective, the TUT is unequivocally the central unit of analysis, as posited by Blumberg et al., (2005:188):

“The unit of analysis is described as the level at which the research is performed and which objects are researched. People or individuals are a common unit of analysis. However, in business research we often apply other units of analysis than people, individuals or employees. Frequently occurring examples of other units of analysis at a higher level than people are organisations, divisions, departments or more general groups, and at a lower level we can think of management decisions, transactions or contracts as units of analysis”.

The researcher’s intention and decision to investigate TUT as a microcosmic and quintessential aspect of the complex HEI transformation (and transfiguration?) process has necessitated and ensured that a focused review of existing merger records is further complemented by the input of a diverse or motley group of high-level officials at the Tshwane University of Technology.

In this study, the identification of the relevant research subjects (those meeting the inclusion criteria) was managed by means of the purposive sampling approach. The sampling of respondents was conducted in tandem with both the research population and the research setting. From ‘the universe of universities’ the TUT was both the selected unit of analysis and the research milieu, providing the place and the context of the investigation’s in respect of its (the investigation’s) timing and execution as a case study (Maxwell & Satake, 2006:220).

### 3.3.3.2 Sampling Methods and Procedures

Purposive sampling was applicable in this study, as the sample selection was based on the research purpose and the researcher’s knowledge of the research population’s dynamics. This sampling method is based on the judgment of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. An appropriate approach to purposive/judgement sampling is to select units of study that are judged to be the most common in the population under investigation. However, the danger associated with this type of sampling is that it is heavily reliant on the subjective considerations of the researcher (Babbie, 2001:179; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:92).
In pursuance of the purposive/judgement sampling approach, respondents were deliberately identified in respect of their strategic pre- and post-merger positions. Blumberg et al. (2005:222) describe purposive sampling as one technique which involves a non-probability sample that conforms to certain criteria. The sample in this regard is relevant to the research question, problem and objectives because of the roles that were played by the respondents in the merger implementation process.

3.3.3.3 Sampling Criteria

Participants were objectively identified on account of their expert knowledge of the phenomenon under inquiry (the SA higher education context in general, and the TUT merger in particular) as well as the roles they played during the merger. All forms of bias were preempted by ensuring that the sample is optimally representative of TUT’s internal role-players, in order to avoid a homogenous group of interviewees (Sanders & Pinhey, 1983:94; Babbie, 2001:179), as such an orientation would imply that a broader view of TUT’s population is not adequately represented (Mouton, 1996:134). In this manner, a well-structured heterogeneous sample was constituted. From the population of respondents, those sampled for this case study investigation (the sample size) consisted of the following TUT senior management staff and other relevant external stakeholders, totalling seven (7) individuals; three (3) black males; three (3) white Afrikaans-speaking males; and one (1) white Afrikaans-speaking female:

- TUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal (VC), a black male;
- TUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Technology (DVC), a white Afrikaans-speaking male;
- TUT Chief Financial Officer (CFO), a white Afrikaans-speaking male,
- TUT Strategic Planner, a white Afrikaans-speaking female;
- Chairperson (black male) of the TUT Institutional Forum (IF);
- Chairperson (white Afrikaans-speaking male) of National Union for Tertiary Education in South Africa (NUTESA); and
- Chairperson (black male) of National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU).
An analysis of the composition of the sampled respondents (particularly the TUT component) is critical insofar as it reveals the pre-merger TUT organisational and governance character and culture, and not necessarily the historical racial and ideological idiosyncrasies and attitudes that characterised the pre-merger higher educational demographics in South Africa. Other than the racial dynamics of the sampled respondents (three blacks and four whites), the gender dynamic (one female in a group of seven) is also demonstrative of the disproportionate socio-economic representativity (therefore, enhancement of social stratification and hegemony) in the country across both the colour and gender spectrum.

Except for the TUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who took office on 1 August 2005, the other members of the sampled TUT respondents were part of the pre- and post-merger staff contingent of TUT. These role players, who were tasked with managing the TUT merger, were able to provide an accurate and most appropriate account of what happened in the university (TUT), and how the university actually responded to the government’s mandate of implementing the mergers as they were directly and strategically involved in the TUT merger implementation process. The researcher’s employment at TUT until 31 December 2008, strengthened the professional relationship and rapport with the respondents. As part of the researcher’s job description then, the professional relationship and association was strengthened further by the researcher’s participation in some of the merger committees. In addition, the researcher also presided as the chairperson of the TUT task team on quality promotion and assurance.

It was not difficult for the researcher to constitute the sample because the problem and objectives of the study were clearly described from the outset.

(a) The Inclusion Criteria

In this study, both the inclusion and exclusion criteria were systematically established in order to coordinate and manage the unstructured interview process efficiently. Based on the latter, the criteria adopted by the researcher for respondents’ inclusion in the study were based on the following factors:

- only TUT staff members in senior executive or management positions;
- in addition to the above, their appointments in the respective positions should precede the 2003 merger processes;
• be a male or female Afrikaans-speaking TUT senior executive/management member;
• NEHAWU-appointed representative; and
• NUTESA-appointed representative.

(b) The Exclusion Criteria
The following exclusion criteria were adopted by the researcher:
• TUT academic staff members in non-executive positions;
• TUT non-academic staff members;
• TUT non-executive members;
• TUT students;
• Academic, non-academic, and executive/management, non-executive/management staff members from any other HEIs in the country; and
• Students from any other HEIs in the country.

3.4 DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION/ANALYSIS

Data collected from the unit of analysis was carefully studied and analyzed, with the view to ensuring accurate representation of the findings (Henning, 2004:149). The presentation of the collected data is the culmination and fulfilment of a process that collates the theoretic and empirical perspectives of the study. Most importantly, and on the basis of the nature of the interview questions themselves, the presentation of data should be aligned to the most critical aspects of the study – such as the research aim/objectives, the research problem, as well as the study’s significance or relevance.

In this study, data was presented mostly in prosaic/narrative form, rather than in graphic/visual form. By implication, no data presentation and analysis software was utilized. The latter would have been illustrated by means of, for instance, tables, graphs, charts, and other visual forms of illustration. Data in this study was gathered from simple observations and interviews from a single location (Blumberg et al., 2005:69), that is, the Tshwane University of Technology. The orientation towards the prosaic/narrative form of data presentation gives credence to the view propounded by Mouton (2001:55) and others, that the case method of enquiry and its attendant “logic of research” processes (that is, data collection, presentation, and analysis, processes) is amenable to qualitatively-oriented data presentation.
approaches; as such quantitatively-inclined numeric values are not necessarily a pre-determinant of the outcome of a study (Fox & Meyer, 1996:36; Brynard & Hanekom, 1997:6).

3.4.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity, reliability, and credibility are regarded as ‘tools’ for the standardization of instruments used in the collection of data, its analysis, as well as its findings (Delport, 2002:165-196), which in this case, is the unstructured interview technique. In addition to standardizing the research instruments, validity, reliability, and credibility are also measures to ensure trustworthiness in the integrity of the study (De Vos, 2005:345-347). Validity specifically relates to the extent to which an instrument measures that which it sought to measure (Sarantakos, 1998:168). Generalisability of the study’s findings is also a factor (determinant) of the validity of the findings (Gibbs 2007: 93-94). Reliability on the other hand, could be equated to the clarity, stability, consistency and accuracy of a measuring tool (Sarantakos, 1998:168). Both validity and reliability of data collection and its measurement tool/instrument are intended to:

- ensure that data collection is conducted in terms of the most current control plan revision;
- increase accuracy of inspection information using built-in data validation, checking and reminder mechanisms;
- enable positive means to document process problems by offering an easy mechanism to generate non-conformance reports
- reduce slothful paperwork and minimizes data storage space; and
- enable a quick way to retrieve and analyze data and generate inspection documentation upon request.

In this study, the notion of validity was established and applied by means of, firstly, aligning the core (as opposed to the biographic) interview questions to the core objectives of the study. Such alignment is sacrosanct, lest a superlative degree of disjuncture/inequality would characterize the logic and seamlessness of argumentation between empirical data collection (by means of the interview questions) and data analysis. The rationale for aligning the core
research questions with the core interview questions is premised on the fact that discordant responses would conflate the policy dimension as a critical factor of the higher education mergers in the country. Accordingly, the two sets of questions referred to above were mostly convergent insofar as the policy-orientedness of mergers was concerned. Therefore, other than the optional bibliographic questions – for instance, those concerned with personal information such as respondents’ names and positions – the rest of the interview questions in particular, focused on the extent of the respondents’ understanding of mergers and the manner of their implementation as part of government’s policy imperatives. For purposes of establishing validity in this regard, no question – other than those with a biographical orientation – veered outside of the domain of the policy domain of South African higher education transformation.

3.4.1.1 Internal Validity

Internal validity refers both to the study’s extent of thoroughness, as well as the extent to which it could confidently be concluded that the observed effects were produced primarily by the independent variables. In descriptive studies, internal validity refers only to the accuracy or the quality of the study.

An instrument becomes internally consistent or homogenous insofar as there is an element of the same variables being measured. The internal consistency approach to estimating an instrument’s reliability is regarded as the most widely used method among researchers today. In this study, internal consistency was maintained by ensuring that the interview questions were not at variance with the overall objectives of the study and the most critical aspects of various questionnaire items.

3.4.1.2 External Validity

External validity represents the extent to which a study's results can be generalized or applied to other people or settings, without derailing the data collection processes from the objectives of the study. At the initial stages, the study was localized to only TUT research milieu. In
order to afford adequate external validity to the study, the generalizability of the research results would be tested by conducting further investigations on higher education mergers other contexts within South Africa that have approximately similar organisational characteristics as Tshwane University of Technology.

3.4.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency or dependability with which an instrument measures an attribute (Katzenellenbogen & Joubert 2007:9; Sarantakos, 1998:168). In the context of this study, the particular attribute would relate to the degree to which the interview questions qualitatively and collectively ‘measure’ the research participants’ understanding/knowledge and approval or disapproval of the TUT measure in particular, and South African higher education mergers in general. Reliability was ensured by developing core interview questions after the literature review, but prior to the commencement of the empirical phase of the study. In this regard, understanding/knowledge and approval or disapproval would be regarded as the fundamental traits to be measured or determined non-statistically. The probing questions were informed by proceedings during the actual course of the interview sessions. The study’s credibility was further enhanced by means of the selection of a heterogeneous sample from various academic, management, and labour fields.

Reliability also means the research instrument(s) can be repeated elsewhere under the same circumstances as those that prevailed at the original research site (Gibbs 2007:100). In order to ensure repeatability, the same interview questions would be used in other higher education contexts – where the purpose (general aim) of research is the same as the current study’s – with a heterogeneous set of respondents exhibiting the same characteristics as those of the original respondents in the TUT case study.

3.4.3 Credibility of the Research Instrument

Credibility is described as the researcher’s confidence in the truth value of data and its interpretation (Polit & Beck, 2008:539). Credibility is established by the manner in which the entire research process has been executed, including the extent to which the research subjects were treated and the quality of their ‘lived experience’ or “social reality” (Holosko, 2001:265). In this study, credibility was established mainly by means of the implementation
of all the pre-and post-interview steps, as well as ensuring systematization of the data analysis processes applied in the study. The pre- and post-interview measures have already been referred to variously in the empirical phase of the study (sub-sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.3).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of data analysis is to bring the order of the data collected with the aim of interpretation and making sense of the study results and their possible implications or effects. Data analysis involves breaking the data into adaptable themes, patterns, tendencies, or associations. Furthermore, the purpose of data analysis is to reduce, organize and give realistic or practical meaning to data (Burns & Groove, 2007:41). The accomplishment of data analysis depends largely on the effectiveness of the process of interpreting data and information throughout the study, as the analysis of collected data has been applied in varying degrees throughout this study. Chapter Four in particular, encapsulates the prosaic/narrative analysis of data in close affinity with the findings of this study. The results of the semi-structured and informal personal interviews were analyzed and presented in a form of statements and words in an attempt to address the research problem and respond to its applicable question – which focused on the extent to which the implementation of mergers in South African higher education has realized (or not realized) the policy goals of government. An analytic focus on the question – and its probable ‘answers’ – is necessary in order to ensure an appropriate understanding of the views, perceptions and experiences of the selected respondents.

In this study, data was analyzed by means of content analysis, a process of organizing and integrating narrative, qualitative data according to emerging themes and concepts (Burns & Groove, 2007:41). Content analysis, furthermore, allows the researcher to analyze large volumes of data. All the interview responses were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Accordingly, data analysis was based on the content of all the transcribed individual semi-structured interviews. As recommended by Creswell (1998:200), the following steps of content analysis were adhered to by the researcher:

- One document at a time was analyzed in order to determine the prevalence of any underlying further information;
A list of recurring topics was made, and topics with more or less similar degrees of variability were grouped;

The most descriptive wording of the topics grouped together was used as categories. Inter-related and related topics were also grouped into categories;

Final decision were made of the naming for each category;

An analysis was performed again on the assembled data in order to finalize themes and categories; and

Categorized data was discussed in conjunction with literature review.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES

Polit and Beck (2008: 753) illuminate that the ethical considerations of research refer to a system of moral values that adhere research to professional, legal and social obligations to the study participants. Furthermore, ethical considerations and issues in research contribute to the scientific value and worth of a study (Henning 2005:1). In addition, ethical considerations are means of a professional commitment by the researcher prior to the execution of a study (Babbie & Mouton, 2002: 563). The ethical considerations inherent in the research assisted in reconciling the behavioural conduct of the researcher in accordance with scientifically accepted principles, standards, and norms with the treatment of the research respondents as primary providers and sources of information during the empirical stages of the research.

Furthermore, ethical considerations are enhancement of the harmonization and reconciliation of the researcher’s behaviour/conduct with the respondents’ expectations (Gibbs 2007:7). In this regard, the scientific worth and value of the study were then categorized into researcher-specific and research-specific ‘behavioural protocol’ (Mkhonto, 2007:295). The orientation to ‘behavioural protocol’ or ‘research etiquette’ was also pivotal in determining the construction of both the research methods and data collection and analysis processes. Furthermore, researcher-specific ethical considerations ensured that professionally and legally stipulated limits and requirements were strictly observed and adhered to. The ‘behavioural protocol’ guided the researcher’s expected conduct, in alignment with acceptable norms within the professional community of research practice, as well as the legal prescripts enshrined in the Constitution of the country.
The researcher-focused ethical considerations relate to that behavioural protocol by which the researcher commits to upholding the integrity of the study by adhering to the administrative and bureaucratic requirements as stipulated by the relevant regulatory authorities or institutions. The relevant researcher-focused ethical considerations considered in this study include the following:

- Permission was sought from the relevant research-approving authorities at Unisa (Senior Degrees Research Committee) for the actual commencement of the study (see Appendix 1). The researcher could not of his own volition embark on the research project unilaterally without the due approval of this research project by the Senior Degrees Research Committee;
- Formal undertaking by the researcher to conduct the study in accordance with Unisa’s ethical requirements of research; and
- Permission was sought from, and granted by the TUT administration to use the University as a research site for the study. The researcher could not of his own accord embark on the research project unilaterally without the due approval of this research project by the TUT senior management (see Appendices 2A and 2B).

The respondent-focused ethical considerations are mainly concerned with the researcher’s obligation and attitude to the fair and equitable treatment of the research subjects (Polit & Beck 2008: 18-19). The adherence to respondent-focused ethical considerations is in conformity with tenets of the observance of the human rights culture, which is particularly both desirable and sensitive in South Africa’s embryonic democracy; according to which citizens’ inalienable human rights are constitutionally guaranteed and protected. In that regard, the following respondent-specific ethical principles were complied with during the empirical execution of the study. These ethical considerations compel that the researcher’s dignified treatment of research participants be observed, respected and protected at all times:

- The Informed Consent of the participants was sought prior to the commencement of the interview phase of the study. Their rights and purpose of the study were also explained to them (see Appendices 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 13). Non-compliance by the participants would have rendered the study’s scientific worth invalid. Explanation of the study’s empirical process included: the duration of the interview sessions; procedures to be followed; and how the results of the study would be used;
- The researcher formally introduced herself to the respondents during the interview sessions;
• The purpose of the research was explained to the respondents during the interview sessions, and the importance of respondents’ voluntary participation in the study was emphasised;

• The participants’ right to human dignity was observed throughout the study. This entailed (but not limited to) their right to privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to full disclosure;

• The respondents were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any stage if they so wished without any penalty;

• The research respondents’ right to confidentiality and anonymity was emphasised and protected. To ensure anonymity, the respondents’ identity was obscured; and

• To ensure confidentiality, information collected was not made acceptable to others or shared with people known to the respondents and was not used for any other purpose except for this study

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the research design and research methodology of the study, as well as the critical aspect of the particular ethics of research applicable to the case study. The various ethical aspects are entailed in various appendices attached at the end of the research report. It is worth mentioning also that the data analysis discussed in this chapter had a very significant impact on the findings and results of the study discussed in Chapter Four. In the latter regard therefore, and to a large extent, Chapter Four is logically and thematically juxtaposed to Chapter Five.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

PART A: CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Four has been categorised into a taxonomy of two parts (Part A and Part B). The rationale for such a classification or categorisation of sections of the findings has been occasioned by the researcher’s intention to distinguish between the actual findings/results and the context within which the findings themselves were arrived at. Therefore, Part A mainly addresses the context and analytic framework of the study’s findings, while Part B of the current chapter focuses on the actual findings of the study.

The foremost consideration in the current chapter is the presentation of the findings of the study as accruing from the collected data and its concomitant presentation and analysis. Whereas the latter (data collection, its presentation, and its analysis) were the focal points in the preceding chapter (Chapter Three), to a large extent, a further presentation and analysis of the collected data constitutes a very significant aspect of the findings and results of the study. Ipso facto, the presentation and discussion of the study’s findings and results is conducted syllogistically with the presented and analysed data pertaining to higher education transformation processes in South African higher education. It is the researcher’s well considered view that failure to adhere to the latter syllogistic/concurrent approach will yield a proportionally high degree of disjuncture and a lacuna between the data itself and its consequent findings when translated into practical, meaningful, and relevant knowledge.

The findings are effectively, the results of the accumulated theoretical and empirical data and information translated into practical, intelligible, and relevant knowledge in the context of post-1994 higher education transformation in South Africa. Gibbons (1998a:31) contends that the relevance or usability of “knowledge” is largely defined by the social context within which that particular knowledge was derived. Otherwise, “non-knowledge” prevails when a social context for “knowledge” has not been adequately defined or established, resulting in “knowledge” becoming irrelevant; that is data or information that cannot be directly translated or linked to the social realities of higher education transformation. It is for this
particular reason that data collection, presentation, and analysis on one hand, as well as the respondents’ perspectives on the other, have been conjoined in a syllogism in order to construct both the social context/reality of higher education transformation and the relevance of the findings in relation to both the research topic and its problem to be resolved.

4.2 THE ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK OF THE FINDINGS

The analytic framework of the findings and its concomitant discussions describes the *modus operandi* and *perspective* according to which the entire research process has been collated into an eclectically convergent mode of enquiry on whose basis the findings have been credibly and authentically established (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:4). The primary objective of this chapter, then, is to consolidate and integrate the thematically perennial trends, issues, practices, and debates that have been found and identified to have had a major impact in the conceptualisation, development, implementation and evaluation of the content, organisation and delivery of the higher education mergers as the study’s most profound phenomenon of enquiry (Muller, 2000:1-2; 6-7). The complexity, interrelatedness of the identified HE organisational transformation variables necessitated that a *centripetally* directed and thematically linked approach to the narrational logic be adhered to (Mouton, 2001:89-91; 113). To that extent, the international-local and external-internal domains of higher education policy development have been afforded and accorded an eclectic-holistic, rather than a linear or sequential concatenation/logic. Such an approach is intended to translate the literature-based and empirically engendered data into some syllogistic logic and meaning, so as to collate points of agreement and disagreement pertinent to the development of the study. As opposed to previous chapters – in which various authors’ perspectives (in the case of primary and secondary literature-based sources) and respondents’ views (in the case of empirical data) constituted the pivotal thrust of discussion; in the current chapter, the researcher’s own analytic and interpretative perspective has been incorporated.

The latter dimension however, is not wholly new; in that the researcher’s own perspective has continuously been derived from what other academic experts, analysts and commentators have already articulated within the scope of the research topic itself. What is ‘new’ then is that the researcher’s own evaluative and analytic framework is cast against the framework derived from the literature-based and empirically-engendered data and information. To the extent that the current discussion is not a synoptic re-visitation of the previous chapters, a concerted effort has been expended in attempting to critically and logically discuss the
thematically and topically focused issues such that the researcher’s perspective is integral to the evaluative and analytic framework of the findings. The researcher’s own analytic, evaluative and interpretational framework then, is the pivotal elements around which this discussion revolves. In an attempt to facilitate and maximize the relationship between the logic of the thesis and “… the weight [support] of evidence” (Mouton, 2001:14), an analytic framework has been ‘imposed’ to consolidate and integrate the findings and concomitant discussion within a context of varying degrees of theoretical, causal, descriptive, empirical, interpretive, or evaluative analysis (Mouton, 2001:113).

PART B: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.3 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO LITERATURE REVIEW

Whereas the study is tacitly the product of the consulted or reviewed and relevant literature on the research topic, the literature-based findings also encapsulate the empirical (interview-based) component of the study in that, the consulted literature also directed on the processes of data collection, data presentation, and data analysis. Furthermore, the literature review has served as the theoretical foundation and an authoritative source that could: “… pronounce on what has, and what has not been established in a particular field [in this case, the field is higher education mergers as the post-1994 democratically elected government’s policy intentions towards the total liberation of South African society from the fetters of past injustices]” (Muller, 2004:5). In terms of the taxonomical organisation of the current chapter, the literature-based findings straddle both the international and local (South African) spheres of the merging of higher education institutions as policy means towards a transformative end.

4.3.1 International Perspectives on Higher Education Mergers

From the international sphere of the reconfiguration of higher education institutions, the following findings loomed large:

- Transformation in the form of mergers was not meant to engender an elitist system of education based on ideological, cultural, and other barriers. Rather, the real purpose of higher education mergers is to usher-in an inclusive and equitable aimed at benefiting the whole of society in respect of access, redress, and growth;
• In countries such as those in West Africa, where the university has been instrumentalised as a political and ideological organ of the State, the university’s contribution to societal development and upliftment has been severely compromised and hamstrung;

• In countries such as Mexico, higher education mergers have tended to focus more on *institutional autonomy*, which veered off higher education institutions from the political terrain government;

• The nature of university senates, councils, and/or boards is critical to their *governance* mechanisms as either compliant agents for change, or pliant and autocratic/bureaucratic ‘gate keepers’ who are averse to any form of innovation or change;

• The real *benefits* accruing from mergers were strategic and academic, instead of economic in the sense of financial returns. By implication then, the reorganisation of HEIs is in itself a costly process, and its results/benefits are not immediately observable. However, the academic outcomes (such as the reorganisation of the curriculum), apply more to the university; while the strategic dimension applies both to government and the university. For government, the enforcement of HEI mergers is strategically located to advance its policy intentions. For universities, the strategic element is encapsulated succinctly in the following statement by Hirsch and Weber, 1999:viii):

   “… universities must strive to contribute to the discovery of new knowledge, and to instil an appreciation of the value of the pursuit of knowledge. In doing so, universities contribute to both the intellectual vitality and the economic well-being of society; produce educated citizens; train the next generation of leaders in the arts, sciences, and professions; and …actively engage in public service activities that bring that faculty knowledge and research findings to the attention of citizens and industry”.

• Mergers lessons and experiences from countries such as Norway, Australia, England and the USA assisted in ensuring that the 2004 mergers in South Africa applied some, or all of the following trajectories:
  - clear *conceptual definitions* to ensure a convergent and common interaction of higher education institutions;
  - a thorough description and documentation of the envisaged *types of mergers*; and
  - the *rationale for mergers* was also explained sufficiently on the Size and Shape document commissioned by the Department of Higher Education and Training.
4.3.2 The Local South African Context of Higher Education Mergers

From the local South African sphere of the reconfiguration of higher education institutions, the following findings loomed large:

• Mergers were primarily a government policy directive, rather than an initiative of the universities themselves. In this regard, the character of the merger implementation process would be more involuntary than voluntary, with government specifying the expected outcomes accruing from merger implementation by universities;

• The merger processes were not mere occasional events, but part of a larger internal mechanism to institute a culture of total human rights – characterised by comprehensive socio-economic emancipation. Such a culture was absolutely necessary to reconstruct and create institutions with new identities and cultures consistent with the vision, values and principles of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society. Global indicators were also exerting pressure on South African higher education to be responsive to human rights;

• Notwithstanding the fact that an examination of international trends and practices of mergers were explored, the South African mergers occurred without local and international best fit or precedence, but still managed to yield remarkable success. The primary purpose of examining international merger models was for purposes of obtaining more understanding, from which comparative lessons could be learnt;

• In cases of involuntary merger options, resistance and opposition to mergers was tacitly expressed on racial, cultural, and other non-academic factors. Despite the fact that the mergers were a non-negotiable matter to universities, some universities embraced a more inclusive and consultative approach at the institution’s level of merger implementation;

• Political and ideological loyalties, affiliations, or sympathies were greatly accentuated during the pre-merger era, and shortly thereafter. Both the former historically disadvantaged universities and historically advantaged universities reflected a three-pronged and extant ideological strand within South African politics. The former White Afrikaans-speaking Universities unflinchingly embraced Afrikaner nationalism, which was the doctrine of the Nationalist Party. The former White English-speaking Universities were imbued with British liberalism, hence their refusal to become organs of the NP state, in preference of such values as academic freedom and institutional autonomy;

• In some merger cases, an unequal form of partnership ensued, with the lesser merging partner holding the view that the merger is more of an absorption; rather than an amalgamation. A significant number of merged institutions retained their curricula and
continued with business as usual after the merger, especially with regard to teaching and learning processes and activities. Cultural integration was neglected in some merger cases, when the more dominant HEI would enforce archaic processes and procedures on the less dominant partner. Technically, some smaller institutions were swallowed by bigger ones. Adherence to agreements on merger terms and conditions between merging partners, strong leadership and continuous sharing of a common purpose for a merger in motion was very useful in the process of merging;

• The South African mergers became a catalyst for a broader transformation agenda, and were able to enable the country and its government to:
  - Realize new possibilities for a higher education system which is free from the racial prisms of apartheid, and an inclusive post-democratic landscape serving the nation as a whole, inspired by democratic principles;
  - Inspire universities to become centres of excellence that embrace the values of access, redress, and growth;
  - Create effective and efficient institutions which are responsive and contribute to the changing skills and knowledge needs of South Africa in the context of a rapidly changing world propelled by globalization and its impact on the rapid transformation of the information and communications sector;

• Mergers have occurred, yet the implications remain enormous. For instance, the government has to ensure that the higher education sector is adequately resourced to address elements of equity and to invest in research and development, particularly growing a cohort of skilled academics;

• ‘The herd instinct’ is still to be resolved. The structural reconfiguration of HEIs has to maintain a functional perspective according to which autocratic (non-participatory) governance systems of the past are eliminated. Furthermore, many undemocratic practices by academics from the old system have to be changed unapologetically;

• Curriculum transformation is necessarily an integral aspect of the HE organisational reconfiguration. Therefore, the content of learning should focus on the needs of the heterogeneous learners, the economy and its diverse skills base, and society as a whole; all of which require innovative ways of teaching and learning – such as asynchronous methods and ICT implementation for off-campus learners;

• Transparency and consultation were important traits in ensuring ownership and legitimacy of merger implementation activities. Proper management of staff members, employment guarantees for employees and relentless communication of every milestone made the merger a manageable project;
• Very few universities took advantage of the media to market their respective mergers and to express their views. Consequently, some in the public ended up making unfortunate merger perceptions and opinions; and

• Higher education transformation could not be separated from the dictates of societal demands. The ever-increasing expansion in scope of citizens’ needs and expectations from government needed to be considered when re-thinking and/or reviewing the landscape of a nation’s education system.

4.4 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO GOVERNMENT POLICY DOCUMENTS

The findings pertaining to government policy documents refer specifically to the seminal primary sources on whose basis the post-1994 government was informed and directed to formulate strategic policy decisions in order to prevent a transformation vacuum. The latter state of affairs would further inculcate a culture of unfulfilled empty promises (policy rhetoric) to the majority of the previously disadvantaged communities. Consequent to the new government’s ascension to power in 1994, it became apparent that an alternative to the apartheid system was required; the kind of alternative which would enable government to develop the skills and innovations necessary for national development and successful participation in the global economy. Three broad political and policy objectives were conceived towards a durable solution to South Africa’s chequered past. The three policy objectives were developed to ensure that a higher education and training system would have to deliver on the following aspects:

• Meet the demands of social justice in order to address the social and structural inequalities that characterised the apartheid higher education legacy, which was evidently fragmented and distorted in nature; resulting in some institutions better resourced than others, and in which race and ethnicity continued to define and act as impediments to access into many of the institutions;

• Address the challenges associated with the phenomenon of globalization with a focus on the central role of knowledge and information processing in driving social and economic development. As a success indicator, such as system would have to produce graduates with the requisite skills and competencies to participate in the economy as citizens of a democratic society and as workers and professionals, and furthermore be able to contribute to the research and knowledge needs of South Africa, and
Ensure that the limited resources for the delivery of education were **effectively** and **efficiently** utilized in view of competing and equal pressing priorities in other social sectors of society.

In conjunction with the afore-cited three policy directives, the findings in this regard represented high education and training views of the political state of South Africa from a revolutionary point of view at the time; the political state of South Africa from a post-apartheid government perspective at the time; the Education White Paper 3 development phase; the promulgation of the Higher Education Act in 1997; and the merger implementation phase with government’s guidance.

### 4.4.1 The Role of the Education White Paper 3

The Education White Paper 3 fore-grounded the 2004 merger implementation in the South African higher education sector. It provided the political rationale for change of the higher education landscape. It dispelled invariable thoughts of possible micro-management of institutions by clarifying the role of government vested in the Minister of Higher Education and Training. Government’s expectations for higher education and training became clearer from the Education White Paper 3. Telling aspects which needed the attention of the post-apartheid government in SA were highlighted through the White Paper. These included but not limited to:

- **Unequal** distribution of access and opportunities for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography;
- **Chronic mismatch** between the output of higher education and needs of a modernized economy;
- Unmatched obligation to help lay the foundations of a critical civil society with a culture of public debate and tolerance in order to accommodates differences and **competing interests**;
- A significant quantity of parts of the higher education system observed teaching and research policies which **canonized** academic insularity and closed-system disciplinary programmes;
- Governance of the system was characterized by **fragmentation**, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, with too little coordination, few common goals and negligible systemic planning.
The need for a single-coordinated higher education system surfaced. Broad policy challenges of transformation, reconstruction and development, were identified in order to realize the objectives of a single but coordinated HE system. These were:

- Transformation of higher education was part of the broader process of South Africa’s political, social and economic transition;
- The South African economy was confronted with the formidable challenge of integrating itself into the competitive arena of international production and finance which was going through rapid changes as a result of new communication and information technologies; and
- The nation was confronted with the challenge of reconstructing domestic social and economic relations to eradicate and redress the inequitable patterns of ownership, wealth and social and economic practices that were shaped by segregation and apartheid.

Based on the above, the Ministry of Education resolved that higher education and training ought to develop the skills and innovations necessary for national development and successful participation in the global economy.

4.4.2 The Role of the 1997 Higher Education Act

It is the researcher’s contention that the Education White Paper 3 was the foremost document that laid the policy framework for the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997), hereinafter referred to as the Act. In the context of the findings of this study, the role and relevance of the above-mentioned Act is premised on the following factors:

- The Act institutionalised the major policy concerns of the EWP 3;
- The Act effectively nullified the Universities Extension Act of 1959, and all related forms of apartheid-era legislation designed to promote and enforce race-based discrimination in public higher education;
- The Act pioneered the era of transforming the higher education system by merging geopolitically scattered and racially segregated universities and technikons;
- The Act nullified the notion of ‘involuntariness’ by empowering government to proceed with the mergers against forms of opposition and disgruntlement;
- The Act formally ended decades of legislated apartheid education. Most importantly, by initiating the Higher Education and Transformation Guidelines for Mergers and Incorporations, the Act presented a huge shift and an irreversible way forward concerning the restructuring of the South African higher education landscape; and

123
• In spite of all its noble intentions, the Act could obviously not completely and immediately dislodge attitudinal predilections inherited by recalcitrant and conservative elements within the university and technikon sector.

4.4.3 The Higher Education and Transformation Guidelines for Mergers and Incorporations

The South African government developed and issued the Higher Education Restructuring and Transformation Guidelines for Mergers and Incorporations document to all universities and technikons in South Africa. The Guidelines document contained information which provided a useful regime for the implementation (as opposed to the conceptualisation) phase of the merging of higher education institutions. The most salient aspects of the guidelines are that:

• All merging institutions were provided with specific guidelines in order to obviate haphazard implementation of the process;
• Possible challenges associated with mergers were identified and plans to address their manifestations outlined;
• The guidelines provided for the establishment of a Merger Unit by the Department of Higher Education and Training to assist institutions with the implementation process during the pre- and interim-merger phases. Such assistance related to financial assistance for unavoidable human resource implications arising from mergers, as well as funds for the procurement of merger-related systems. The Guidelines document became a common of implementing mergers across all institutions;
• The guidelines’ opacity on monitoring mechanisms, even in the instance of voluntary mergers, resulted in a situation where post-merger challenges were hardly discerned and attended to. There were no mechanisms to detect extreme institutional circumstances which bore traits of the old apartheid systems. Ministerial intervention was pre-dominantly evident during the pre-merger phase. Consequently, some of the post-merger ills, such as tendencies and practices from the old system could not be addressed. As a result, forms of resistance against post-merger practices by some members of institutional management were not proactively detected and addressed. A case in point relates to TUT organized labour writing to the Minister of Higher Education requesting him to overhaul the TUT management, as it had contravened some of the agreed-upon strategic undertakings. The Union was of the view that the TUT management reneged on the pre- and post-merger implementation
agreements between stakeholders. The Union’s call for the Minister to act on TUT management fell within the consultation cracks and nothing was done about the request; and

- The existence of detection mechanisms for post-merger bottlenecks could have been helpful in situations such as the one described above. The South African government was clearly convinced that tertiary institutions would embrace change and manage it towards fulfilling government’s intentions without contestations and dissent. However, the latter was not the case.

4.5 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE EMPIRICAL PHASE

The empirical phase of the study then, is a determinant of whether or not the means (research process) justify the end (the final product as evidenced by the findings) (Fouche, 2002:106). Findings pertaining to the empirical phase of the study relate mainly to the case study method of enquiry, according to which the respondents’ participation and involvement in the study constituted a dimension from which the practical aspects of the research topic could be established. In this regard, then, the following aspects highlighted the empirical process:

- The essentially qualitative nature of the study was relevantly complemented by the empirical phase of the research;
- Inductive reasoning (whose logic of argumentation proceeds from the specific to the general) – as opposed to deductive reasoning (which proceeds from the general to the specific) – justifiably facilitated the data management process accruing to the usage of the one-on-one interview mechanism to derive the extent to which a case study centred on TUT could be applicable to the gamut of South African HEIs that (voluntarily or involuntarily) underwent transformation by means of merger processes. The fact that only a single HEI was selected as the only research site, from a total of twenty one HEIs, does not attenuate the integrity of the findings as the perennial thematic features are mostly extant to the other HEIs which were not the focus of the study (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1999:95). Huberman and Miles (1998:195) corroborate the latter fact further, citing that: “Case-oriented analysis [on the other hand] is good at finding specific, concrete, historically-grounded patterns common to all sets of cases, but its findings remain particularistic, although several case writers speciously claim greater generality [researcher’s italics]". What is common with all the twenty one HEIs is that all of them were, prior to 1994, put in positions where political and ideological neutrality was not an option. Furthermore, other than post-1994 organisational reorganisation, all HEIs also were/still are bound together by the
indispensable need to infuse curriculum transformation as part of their three-year ‘rollout’ plans in order to justify government’s financial support to these institutions;

- The essentialisation of the empirical phase through the single case study approach accentuate the social reality from which the research participants made their indelible contribution to the case of TUT as the study’s main point of reference (Mouton, 2001:113);

- Since the theoretical and abstract availability of data/information from the reviewed literature is non-human and impersonal (and therefore more objective), the empirical phase was appropriately suited to accord a human/personal element to the study. The researcher was able to engage with live humans during the interviews and observe the respondents’ human attributes, such as their attitudes, motives, aspirations, and so on.

4.5.1 Data Instrumentation and Management

The research ‘tools’ or instruments are not the data itself. Rather, they facilitate the quality of the collected data, its presentation, and its interpretation or analysis. Miller and Brewer (2003:166) assert that, “Interviews are not just conversations. They are conversations with a purpose – to collect information about a certain topic or research question. These ‘conversations’ do not just happen by chance, rather they are deliberately set up and follow certain rules and procedures [researcher’s italics]”. The validity, reliability and credibility of the collected data were applied by means of the following data management process:

- Ethical processes were adhered to in the following manner:
  - permission for the approval and commencement of the study was granted by Unisa’s Senior Degrees Committee;
  - the TUT senior management and organised labour respondents were consulted in writing for their informed consent to participate in the study;
  - senior TUT management agreed to the University being cited as a case study; and
  - approval from TUT was granted to the researcher to use the University’s merger case, collect and use data from the University and interview the selected respondents.

- Respondents were fully informed of their rights prior to the interviews commencing, including their right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. They were further informed that none of them would be victimised as a result of their involvement with the study;

- The research participants were also informed about the purpose of the study, and the use to which the results will be put;
• The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure maximum availability of their elicited responses;
• Each interview was scheduled for exactly one hour, and access to the study setting, together with the negotiated entry, followed after prior approval had been granted;
• No unauthorised persons were granted access to both the interview questions and the repertoire of responses emanating from the audio recordings and the researcher’s field notes; and
• Based on the formal data control and management processes described above, the results of this study – albeit the selection of only a single research site – could certainly be customized to suite any South African higher education environment. Undoubtedly, the political dynamics as well as some of the principles that played themselves in the TUT merger could also be discovered and found to have played significant roles in the merging of other South African universities and universities of technology in South Africa.

4.5.2 Sampling

The sample size of seven respondents comprised of:

Professor Errol Tyobeka TUT’s Vice-Chancellor and Principal (VC);
Professor Lourens van Staden, TUT Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Technology (DVC);
Dr Doeke Tromp, TUT Chief Financial Officer (CFO);
Dr Engela van Staden, TUT Strategic Planner;
The Chairperson of the TUT Institutional Forum (IF) (kept anonymous with his full consent);
The NUTESA Chairperson (kept anonymous with his full consent); and
Mr Tshepo Makitla, NEHAWU Representative.

The validation of sampling as a variable of the findings is premised on the following factors pertaining to the institutional memory of TUT:

• Except for the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who took office on 1 August 2005, the other respondents were part of the pre-merger and merger staffing contingent of TUT;
• The respondents were directly involved with the merger implementation process and have played significant roles individually and collectively;
• As a result of their direct involvement, they provided accurate and most appropriate accounts of what happened during the merger at TUT as well as views on how such developments fulfilled government outcomes with mergers;
• The sampling criteria is justifiable on the grounds that it would have been logistically difficult, arduously time-consuming, and costly to obtain detailed information from the entire TUT staff;
• By virtue of the researcher’s employment status then as a TUT management staff member, as well as his professional association with the respondents, judgement/purposive sampling was opted for. The latter sampling option enabled the researcher to select representatives from the governance group\(^3\) of the University of Technology (Kanji & Asher, 1996:210).

4.5.3 Accessibility of Respondents

Accessibility of the selected respondents from the TUT population was not constrained, due to the following factors:

• The historic ties between the researcher and all the respondents contributed to unconstrained access, as the researcher was a TUT employee
• Communication with the respondents and their respective personal assistants was cordial and accommodating. Such rapport is pertinent and helpful for a case such as the one in this study, where ‘gate keeping’ possibilities loom large; and
• Collectively, the professional association and cordial communication were both conducive to establishing a premise for trust between the researcher and respondents. Such an atmosphere enabled the researcher to successfully excavate, as deep as possible, into the kind of information necessary to clarify and respond to the research question and address the research problem.

4.6 FINDINGS PERTAINING TO THE RESPONDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES

From ‘the universe of universities’ in the country, TUT was opted for as the research site with the aspect of generalizability facilitated by the organizational, governance, financing, and curriculum verisimilitudes that prevailed at all HEIs prior and subsequent to the

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\(^3\) The governance group in the case of higher education South Africa is guided by the Higher Education Act whereby the sections or pressure groups or stakeholders which should form part of decisions and policy making are identified. Executive management and organized labour or staff unions play significant roles with regard to University transformation matters in South Africa.
implementation of the merger processes. Findings based on the respondents’ perspectives have been classified in accordance with their respective roles and experiences in the merger processes; that is, in their respective capacities as either TUT senior management staff or organized labour representatives.

4.6.1 The TUT Merger Organisational and Management Perspective and Experiences

TUT was used as a case for this study in order to determine and understand the extent to which government’s policy were achieved (or not achieved) through this specific merger of three former technikons; namely, Northern Gauteng Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, and North West Technikon. A list of respondents who would provide a strategic and reliable rapport on the merger and its implementation at TUT was compiled by the researcher. Officials who held positions of strategic importance at the University prior to and during the merger were selected and requested to become respondents for this study. The researcher’s previous knowledge and relationship with TUT assisted in the identification process of respondents. All identified officials accepted the request and confirmation mostly by e-mail and telephonically. This approach was inspired by the fact that gathering data does take several forms (Blumberg, et al., 2005:69; Ball, 1991:10).

As a result of the mergers, a new academic plan was developed in order to ensure that the core business of the institution was running effectively and efficiently. The interview of 26 February 2009 with Professor E Tyobeka revealed that at the macrocosmic organisational level, the 2004 merger was simply an amalgamation of three formerly separated technikons. However, at a micro-institutional level, it was a rather complex matter. TUT had suddenly become a mega institution with a student enrolment of about sixty thousand, and six operational sites within the Tshwane metropolitan area, as well as at three other distant sites; one in Limpopo Province, and two in Mpumalanga Province. The need for a coherent academic system immediately emerged, despite the view by some of the Unions that the model was influenced by inherent historic and divisive factors from the former Technikon Pretoria. Facts and figures as well as emerging models were interrogated and resolute decisions taken for the benefit of the institution as a whole. Eventually, a new academic model for teaching and learning was developed, adopted and implemented.
4.6.1.1 The Management Perspective

The researcher’s interview on 26 February 2009 with Professor E Tyobeka confirms that the merger resulting into the establishment of TUT did take place, according to which Technikon Northern Gauteng and Technikon North-West were initially opposed to the proposed government merger with Technikon Pretoria. Such a development was in contradistinction to the view held by some (like the anonymous NUTESA Chairperson) that Technikon Pretoria should have been merged with the University of Pretoria. On the other hand, the former Technikon Northern Gauteng was of the view that their student enrolment was showing a significant increase, therefore justifying the need to remain autonomous and be ‘exonerated’ from merging with any institution, especially that their targeted section of students were primarily those that were coming from disadvantaged communities.

Professor Van Staden (Interview 27 February 2009) indicated that resistance from the merging partners necessitated the need for the commencement of a pre-merger dialogue between the merging partners. The pre-merger consultation phase was followed by setting up of terms and conditions of engagements for the three institutions. Professor E Tyobeka (Interview 26 February 2009) enlisted the pre-merger conditions per each of the three merger partners as follows:

The former Technikon Northern Gauteng’s (TNG) pre-merger terms and conditions were:
• A strong transformation thrust to underpin the merger;
• A developmental approach should be adopted for the merger;
• The establishment of financial sustainability and stability during the merger; and
• An agreement should be reached on the merger model, in terms of centralization or decentralization of institutions.

The former Technikon Pretoria’s (TP) pre-merger terms and conditions were:
• Maintenance and retention of former Technikon Pretoria’s general standards and approach to quality;
• Retention of Technikon Pretoria’s overall performance of staff and students;
• Linking of programme and qualification mix to a unique strategy of multi-mode programme delivery and curriculum development;
• Diverse, flexible and broad research and development focus;
• Staff qualification standards that exceed those that were set by the national working group of government; and
• A well-established and well maintained campus, buildings, infrastructure, and ICT systems.

Technikon North West (TNW) never advanced any conditions because it was engaged in a different form of resistance against the merger. TNW was challenging government on the capability of the merger to achieve transformation, equity, efficiency, and development. Inspite of these pre-merger terms and conditions, the three former technikons eventually embarked on the merger process. They were able to institute a guiding structure for the governance of the merger implementation process at TUT. The structure was able to navigate the entire institution towards the attainment of intended institutional goals. In the process, the macro policy intentions of government with the merger were fulfilled.

4.6.1.2 The Strategic Planning Perspective

Dr E Van Staden (Interview of 3 February 2009), the TUT Director for Strategic Management at the time of this study, appreciated that this research was taking place on the eve of the national conference on mergers, which TUT was convening for October 2009. The conference intended to examine the financial success of SA mergers, in higher education in order to ascertain the extent to which institutions had become cost effective after the merger. The respondent above revealed that through the merger, TUT was able to:

• Develop an institutional merger plan in 2004, leading to a joint signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) (see copy of the cover page of the MOA between the three technikons on Appendix 7);
• Develop and sign a merger implementation agreement between the three merging partners. The Agreement entailed aspects of the merger which needed joint attention and implementation from merging partners. The last phase of merger implementation was concluded in 2008 by the establishment of an institutional staff complement for the entire institution;
• Develop and successfully communicated a new academic model to all staff and students;
• Conduct institutional audits and programme reviews to validate the fitness for purpose and relevance of the curriculum offerings;
• Consolidate its academic programmes, curbing duplications and reducing them in number. The University developed an academic model and an Institutional Operating Plan (IoP). The plan clearly defined ways through which duplication of programmes would be addressed and how the institutional expertise would meaningfully be distributed and optimally used in all campuses;

• Avoid the adoption and implementation of a federal system\(^4\) of merging. The federal system would have meant an increase in terms of human resources (HR) capacity for TUT. In turn, such an increase would not have been a cost effective exercise. Tuition would have been adversely impacted on;

• Distribute faculties to the campuses. For instance, Economic and Management Sciences Faculty and its programmes got located at the Ga-Rankuwa Campus; ICT Faculty and its programmes were located in the Soshanguve Campus; and Engineering Faculty was located in the Pretoria Campus. The viability of the latter model was tested in 2005, and again in 2008;

• Persuade staff and students to embrace the merger;

• Embrace the massive work which came as a result of merger announcements. A significant number of policies had to be introduced. The funding framework had to be considered carefully. At one stage there were just over 35 (thirty five) policy directives that needed to be considered within a short space of time of the restructuring process. Institutional policies, practices and procedures concerning human resources, finance and procurement needed to be standardized;

• Act decisively with some of the elements of resistance which existed during the early stages of the merger implementation process. Some of the challenges concerning staff members who were reluctant to relocate from one campus to the other were addressed. Some of the employees eventually resigned from TUT as a result of the merger, yet the resignations were well received by the institution. An advert would be made, new skills would be acquired and the new TUT’s ‘bigger picture’ would be pursued;

• Improve and implement teaching and learning strategies. New teaching aids were introduced. Learning approaches were introduced and standardized across the institution. As a result, the student success rate increased by 4% in two years, while also being mindful of the difficulty in linking the increase in throughput rate to efficiency. Efficiency at TUT is viewed as much broader than increasing success rate. In other words, an institution can be

\(^4\) Federal merger system is one where at the merged sites retain most of their structural and decision-making and resource allocation processes.
less efficient and still have a high success rate while the quality of academic programmes in
that institution is not relevant to the labour market’s needs; and

- Improve cost effective functioning of the institution. For instance, a decision was taken to
discontinue the Short Learning Programmes (SLPs), and all energies and efforts were
expended to the core business of the University which is mainly teaching and learning
through the delivery of formal quality programmes, after which services and student support
improved exponentially.

Considering all of the above respondent’s perspectives, it is irrefutable that the merger
process was not an easy project. It exerted huge pressure on TUT’s senior management,
leading to several situations where teams have to deal with a range of operational issues
whilst making sure that the planning component of the University was not compromised.
Several scenarios failed and had to be reviewed. A lot of consultation occurred. More
consultation, participation and involvement of role players were inevitable. The Department
of Higher Education ought to employ a better change management strategy to ensure
institutional readiness should a merger of the same magnitude be commissioned in the future.

4.6.1.3 The Institutional Forum Perspective

The Institutional Forum (IF) was consulted in order to solicit the voice and views of the
collective. At the time of this study’s empirical phase, the Chairperson (kept anonymous by
mutual consent) spoke on behalf of the IF (Interview of 4 February 2009). According to the
latter respondent, the role of the IF during the merger process was that of providing oversight
on the development of the Language Policy, Employment Equity (EE), and to advise Council
on the appointment of senior managers of the institution. The IF saw the merger as an
opportunity to address parity issues such as skills gaps, duplication of academic programmes,
and the overall need for the transformation of the University’s contribution to the broader
change of the national higher education landscape. The IF was more concerned with
consistent implementation of policies. The following are some of the views from this
responded:

- Most policies were in place from the early stages of the merger of TUT, but implementation
  was lagging behind;
- Structures were theoretically described on the IoP, but very little progress was made on
  implementation;
The only merger activity that was seemingly in motion at the time of this interview was the match-and-place exercise. Staff members were being evaluated and matched with a post-merger defined job; TUT stakeholders had generally bought into the merger from the onset due to intense and countless consultations with labour and Council. The consultations contributed to the TUT merger’s successful implementation, as a result of the stakeholders’ ‘buy in’ into the processes and planned operational steps; and

Many changes occurred at TUT as a result of the merger. For instance:

- The student population improved. TUT has become a *rainbow institution* with a visible race mixture in student enrolment and distribution between campuses. This achievement is believed to be something which was not going to happen without the mergers;
- The TUT academic model became a uniting tool for students and staff. Students who wished to study Information and Communication Technology at TUT had to be prepared to relocate to the Soshanguve Campus as the ICT programmes were located there for all students. Similarly, employees were relocated where their respective faculties and students were located. The Economic and Management Science programmes have were based at the Ga-Rankuwa campus of TUT.

The IF Chairperson (Interview 4 February 2009) further identified the following *shortcomings* from the TUT merger implementation:

- Intense levels of *low staff morale* resulting from the capping of staff promotions and general annual salary increases. The Human Resources Management division of TUT had been asked by the institutional management to place some employees under a moratorium because they were found to be earning more than their counterparts;
- Some employees were depressed from the mandatory relocations of staff from their old campuses to the new one, which was as a reflection of the new academic model; and
- Some of the reputable academics and administrators eventually resigned from TUT as a result of attendant uncertainties of the massive 2004 transformation process.

In concluding the IF perspective, the respondent above advised that any future merger should be thoroughly conceived by government and institutions of higher education prior to undertaking such a proportionally massive transformation exercise is commissioned or implemented. By doing so, both critical and peripheral implications on the institution and
people involved are clearly identified, and concomitant intervention strategies are developed – including risk registers, and better funding options.

4.6.1.4 The Finance Perspective

The TUT finance perspective was represented by Dr D Tromp (Interview 4 February 2009), TUT Chief Financial Officer at the time of the study. He mentioned that TUT resolved from the onset that the mergers would effectively address issues relating to funding and resource allocation in response to government policy and principles which arose from the National Plan for Higher Education (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996:3-4). The principles that were enlisted on the NPHE were *customized* to the TUT environment and implemented accordingly. These principles included:

- **The need to address historic inequities**: The merger had to close the divide that existed as a result of the apartheid higher education system;
- **Equitable allocation of funds and resources**: Financial support within the university had to be equitable and/or justifiable *not* because of the location of the campus of faculty or the community around it;
- **Accountable institutional governance**: Ensuring that TUT becomes an institution governed on the basis of acceptable best practices of management, accountability, and participatory decision-making;
- **Materials and human resources development**: Curriculum should designed in such a way that it prepares students to serve society and think independently, and that skills development should address the human resource needs of society;
- **Quality service delivery**: Government should obtain value for its investment from the TUT merger, and at the same time, students should receive quality teaching and learning services;
- **Academic freedom and institutional autonomy**: TUT understood its roles and functions in order to develop a sustainable and healthy relationship with government, society, and other HEIs locally and internationally; and
- **Efficiency and productivity linked to accountability**: TUT should be effective in its delivery of teaching, learning and research, as well as account for the use of resources allocated to it by the State and other funds received from third streams.

This respondent above further stated that the finance section of the University was mandated to restructure the finance department; consolidate financial accounts; and harmonize
accounting systems. As part of its orientation to efficiency, TUT acknowledged that it was *unproductive* to retain services which were offered at the campus of the former Technikon Pretoria which was located at some 350 kilometres away from its main campus in Pretoria. That arrangement was eventually revised. It was then accepted at TUT that any form of duplication would not be retained on its campuses, especially those that were located less than a radius of 50 kilometres from each other. In order to *actualise* the principles above in tandem with the TUT finance section’s orientation to efficiency, the following measures were adopted:

- Specialized merger task teams were established (see Figure 4.1). Each team had its own terms of reference, and was expected to report to the joint finance task team on mergers concerning its milestones;
- The finance task team was mandated to, among others, harmonize the fee structure. This task was spread on a four-year project plan, from 2004-2007;
- Many strategic outreaches were held. The Broad management Forum⁵ was formed and it debated many merger-related matters, including the one on study fees;
- The fact that mergers were promulgated by an Act of Parliament worked well for the TUT merger, in that there was a general sense that the debate would not be about to merge or not to merge; but more about how to merge, and how expeditiously could the merger be implemented; and
- The availability of competent staff, particularly in the area of finances, was also prioritized. The spin-offs accruing from this decision manifested themselves immediately.

According to the TUT Chief Financial Officer (Dr D Tromp, Interview of 4 February 2009), the following constituted the downside of the merger process as implemented at TUT:

- There was little, or no expressed instruction and/or sense of urgency from the Department of Higher Education and Training for merger implementation to be implemented expeditiously;
- There was also no previous merger models from which TUT could have learnt or benchmarked its merger implementation process. The serving Vice Chancellor (VC) coined a phrase “fixing a Boeing while it is in flight”, which implied that the TUT merger was taking place *concurrently* with the process as it was unfolding. Many organisational

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⁵ Broad Management Forum was mostly your extended executive management and directors of TUT.
practices were expected to change while some of their historic vestiges and antecedents were being phased out or reviewed;

- The guidelines from the then DoE were generally vague. A proper merger coordinating management structure needed to be put in place earlier to *pre-empt* inefficiencies. The finance team would have preferred a clearer set of guidelines; more technical support from the Department of Education; and a firm and early establishment of permanent management structures to take an early charge of the situation. However, in the absence of the latter, the finance team braved the storms and brought onto the performance basket, its collective expertise and skills leading to an eventual delivery of the planned merger.

Dr D Tromp (Interview of 4 February 2009) stressed that *cost effectiveness* and *productivity* were achieved at TUT by means of proper development and implementation of acceptable financial and resource allocation policies, processes and systems. As a result, TUT has become a post-merger University of Technology with a cost efficient functioning financial policy framework accompanied by the integration of finance systems. Furthermore, staff processes and policies were harmonized; academic programmes were integrated into one academic model; and campuses became optimally utilized.
4.6.1.5 Some Pertinent Matters Arising From the Overall TUT Perspective

From the researcher’s point of view, the selected TUT research participants offered eclectically convergent perspectives; that is, the mergers were a novel idea within higher education, and their eventual implementation was not without obstacles. The following aspects drew the researcher’s attention during the entire one-on-one interview phase:

• Institutions have become more and more **relevant** and mindful of their circumstantial dynamics when conceiving of important decisions to be made. Among these dynamics are: democracy; stability and continuity; resource availability; priority clarification and people’s buy-in; as well as organisational culture. Tanga (in CHET, 2000:119) referred to these five aspects as “pillars of the environment” which need to be upheld when dealing with institutional issues. Clearly, the TUT merger has been succinctly cogent on these pillars. Technically, the kind of management approach which was employed by TUT has enabled the University to deliver on the merger mandate and was able to focus TUT on attaining the pre-determined merger intentions;

• TUT operated under some of the following **principles** in its delivery of the merger and goals attached to it:
  o The distribution of faculties and departments should support a unitary integration system within a single TUT culture managed by common standards, policies and procedures. This one principle immediately debunks the views of the NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009), the NUTESA respondent whose views were that culture and standards were secondary in the merger process;
  o The ultimate location at which faculties and departments would be placed should be practical, flexible and cost effective; and
  o The proportion of students per campus had to be kept in line with an equitable distribution of seats, while maintaining academic excellence between the sites.

• It could be argued that there was no neglect for historic excellence and high performance of one or some of the merging partners, as it is implied by the NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) earlier. The new academic model for TUT was also predicated upon a set of criteria. Included on them was:
A need to consider services which were being provided by the former technikon partner to its immediate communities and industry, and

Existing partnerships with industry, the community, and higher education institutions with the same programmes.

• The TUT strategy for the success of the merger implementation included:
  o Extensive consultation with role players: This means that everyone and/or all role players and stakeholders participated in the merger implementation process. TUT’s external role players and stakeholders were also regularly listened to, and be brought on board with regard to process on the merger;
  o Managing internal and external political dynamics despite the fact that the merger involved institutions of a similar type;
  o Keeping sceptics informed: Critiques were identified and regularly fed with accurate information on the progress enabling them to calm down and endorse some of the milestones; and
  o Implementing some of the robust monitoring processes: Merger milestones were carefully implemented and monitored with a view to make corrections and improvements.

The eventual implementation of the academic model signifies one of the benefits of TUT’s collaborative approach towards merger implementation, as a result of which the following factors materialised:

  • The research profile of the institution took an upward trajectory (Nevhutalu, Dyason & Kok, 2009:9);
  • The pass rate reached the 70% mark in 2009 (Pretoria News, 2009:2); and
  • The University was ranked 24 out of 100 in Africa for having more post-graduate students when compared with other Universities of Technology in Africa (Pretoria News, 2010:7).

The achievements cited above are reminiscent of the caveat by Eastman and Lang (2001:216), that a successful higher education merger is one that helps universities or other institutions involved to succeed in their educational and research missions. The picture emerging thus far undoubtedly begins to communicate that there were huge positives with merger implementation in the South African higher education sector in general, and at TUT
in particular. Institutional records have revealed that TUT did not only organize structures to manage relationships in its merger implementation process, but also signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) in 2003 already. The MoA stipulates some of the most basic principles of working together with a view to achieving a common goal. Among the agreement’s principles were:

- **A need for transparency**: All merging partners would be open to each other;
- **Full disclosure of information**: The merging partners would disclose all that belonged to their former legal personas and their plans for the future; and
- **Equal status**: The three delegations from the former technikons would enter into the discussions as equals and respect each other for what they were.

Furthermore, the agreement extracted key aspects as part of the objectives of the partnership, from the Education White Paper 3; the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997; and the Guidelines Document. Clearly, the approach was instructive, incisive and decisive. It had capability to keep the institution focused on the goal whilst at the same time, fulfilling government objectives with the merger. The approach nearly matched with the one that was undertaken in the merger of KwaZulu-Natal technikons, where the merging partners drew and signed a Merger Project Charter (Jansen, 2002:136). The TUT and the KwaZulu-Natal technikons approaches were able to focus the merging institutions on pertinent and instructive factors that would influence the implementation of the change project.

Another matter which warrants mentioning from the TUT case is that the *University was able to sign an agreement with staff unions in 2004*, in terms of which TUT guaranteed a collective approach in the restructuring of the institution. The agreement further guaranteed job security for staff members, in terms of which no staff member would be retrenched, and that the unions would be approached on the retrenchment issue should the operational requirements so dictate (TUT, 2004:4). Clearly, the undertaking by TUT management was not only bold, but also decisive in attenuating uncertainties and focusing staff on the business of the institution.
4.6.2 The Labour Organizational Perspectives and Experiences

As opposed to the TUT respondents’ perspectives, the organized labour perspectives and experiences specifically refer to the merger-related views from two labour unions represented at TUT.

4.6.2.1 The NEHAWU Perspective

NEHAWU (hereinafter referred to as the Union) was one of the two major labour unions represented at the TUT ‘shop floor’ at the time of these interviews. Its chairperson (Mr T Makitla) was chosen for the interview (Interview of 22 February 2009) in order to obtain the union’s high-level views on TUT’s response to the merges. Mr Makitla stated that NEHAWU’s mandate was unambiguous from the beginning. The union’s view was that the anticipated change (mergers) did not marginalize individuals and organizations from smaller merging partners. NEHAWU maintained that the representatives of the former Technikon Pretoria were racially biased in several of their dealings and contributions to the merger process. For instance, the position of Principal Lecturer did not exist at the former Technikon Northern Gauteng and North West, but the Technikon Pretoria representatives insisted on having the post of Principal Lecturer adopted as part of the mainstream posts in the new institution. It was believed that this inconsistency was aimed at maintaining the status quo of the former Technikon Pretoria. Furthermore, the insistence by representatives of the former Technikon Pretoria was perceived by NEHAWU as a deliberate disregard of the dire need to reduce the salary bill of the University. The following reflect some of the views shared by NEHAWU:

- NEHAWU supported the equitable distribution and sharing of university resources. The aim was to ensure that the HDIs benefited from the mergers. For instance, the Union advocated for the University laboratories at the Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa campuses to be fully equipped. The Union noticed earlier in the merger implementation process that distribution of resources would be a contentious matter between the merging partners. Had it not been of the Union’s resoluteness and concerted efforts, the Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa campuses of TUT would not have been properly resourced. There was protracted resistance from many in the former TP against equipping the laboratories in the Soshanguve
and Ga-Rankuwa campuses. Many computers were kept and connected to laboratories in the Pretoria campus.

- Another example of resistance was demonstrated by the difficulty from managers who were loyal to the former Technikon Pretoria in getting staff to relocate from Pretoria to the Soshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa campuses of TUT. The signing of the IoP had implied that the Human Resources Department would relocate to the Ga-Rankuwa campus, and the Finance Department would be relocated to the Soshanguve campus. However, the affected staff from the two departments (mainly those who were located at the Pretoria Campus) resisted the relocation;

- NEHAWU raised another contentious issue about the location of the engineering faculty at TUT. The Engineering Faculty should have been centralized at Soshanguve. However, this was never achieved because the Engineering Faculty had more white employees, and they successfully refused to be relocated to the Soshanguve campus;

- NEHAWU agreed that despite some TUT internal problems, the government policy intentions were achieved to a greater extent. For instance:
  - Students were beginning to access the institution and its resources meaningfully;
  - Unnecessary duplication of work and curriculum offerings were eliminated;
  - Previous divides between the former three technikons were narrowed with the establishment of one University of Technology; and
  - The relocations of faculties were effected.

- A significant number of broader transformation issues were yet to be implemented; that is, TUT was transforming on paper and stagnant in practice on some of the broader transformation issues;

- At some stage NEHAWU had written a memorandum to the Minister of the then Department of Education, complaining that the TUT management was stalling on the implementation of the agreed-upon merger transformation activities. These stalled activities included:
  - The absences of an Employment Equity Plan;
  - The institutional agenda was seen to be deviating from the agenda of government;
There were no timelines for implementation of some of the pertinent IoP decisions; and

There was a perceived laxity from the side of Institutional Management concerning the implementation of some transformation and merger related decisions.

The NEHAWU representative (Interview 22 February 2009) cast aspersions at the newly appointed TUT management for their inability to implement broader transformation matters. The stagnation had reached a stage where NEHAWU had requested the Minister to intervene and to overhaul the management and its sub-structures. Management was seen as philosophers who were failing in terms of implementing policies. Where policies were implemented, management was seen to be entrenching the reactionary practices of the former TP. NEHAWU strongly believed that the perceived management practices were not progressive and adversely impacted on the socio-political rationale for the merger and institutional transformation.

In case a merger of similar magnitude is commissioned, Makitla (Interview 22 February 2009) offered a caveat *writ large* that the authorities (*inter alia*, government’s Department of Higher Education and Training and managers of institutions) should:

- Prioritize the sustainability of historically disadvantaged institutions ensuring that they were not turned into *white elephants* or become transformation debris when change takes place;
- The distribution of faculties should be based on transformation principles and be implemented in ways which sought to benefit the broader masses of society;
- Institutions should not be hasty to introduce and adopt new models (e.g. academic models) without proper pilots prior to implementation. This was stated in view of the belief that the implementation of the new academic model at TUT has had a significantly adverse impact on access to scarce and important education opportunities such as Engineering and Agriculture for many students from the disadvantaged communities. Local infrastructural development was hampered and resources were taken to the already developed campuses and communities using an unfair allocation of Agriculture and Engineering faculties to Pretoria; and
- The role of organized labour and staff in general on institutional transformation is crucial. Therefore, organized labour should be afforded an ample opportunity to play its role on the transformation of institution and on the development of institutional policies.
Based on Makitla’s (Interview 22 February 2009) own admission that the TUT academic model tended to further enhance the depravation gaps for disadvantaged sectors of the Soshanguve community is baseless. Clearly, this discussion confirms that indeed academic transformation occurred and took into account the basics that had to be considered at the time when this change took place. Eventually, 15 faculties were reduced to eleven (11), and later to seven (7). The seven faculties had to share and manage some 99 (ninety nine) departments which were later reduced to 78 (seventy eight). Van Staden (Interview 27 February 2009) acknowledged that the merger was a complex exercise for TUT. It was immaterial to them as senior TUT officials whether the merger implementation process was voluntary or not. The fact of the matter was that the mergers presented the institution with a diverse set of opportunities to become better.

4.6.2.2 The NUTESA Perspective

NUTESA (hereinafter also referred to as the Union) was one of the two labour unions at TUT during the interviews. Its Chairperson was interviewed for the purpose of understanding the Union’s views on TUT’s merger as a fulfilment of government’s policy objectives. The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) provided an instructive genesis of TUT as a merger of three former technikons. The explanation presented an interesting paradox. On the one hand, it revealed the depth of malevolent intents that were rooted in the heart of apartheid; while on the other hand, it conveyed an appreciation of the eventual decision by the post-1994 government to merge institutions in order to rescue the majority of South Africans from the throes and carnage of a divisive education system. The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) commenced the interview by providing his personal profile from his early days at the former Technikon Pretoria, to the period of the interview as a TUT employee. He was TUT’s longest serving employee since 1980, with a background in biological science; a former lecturer; a former head of department; a former senior lecturer; a former principal lecturer; and served on the TUT Council since 1992 representing academic staff. He was also chairperson of the workplace forum at TUT, representing organized labour and staff in general at the time of the interview. Given his illustrious background, he could arguably be considered as having a wealth of institutional memory behind him – having both the pre- and post-merger sides of TUT’s development.

He spoke of the evolution of TUT from its Technikon to University of Technology status with passion, conspicuous emotions, and zeal. The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26
February 2009) stated that he also led the workplace forum which only existed in the Pretoria Campus of TUT, because the size of NUTESA’s membership of almost 70% of TUT staff was based at the Pretoria campus at the time of this study.

Interview of 26 February 2009 with the NUTESA Chairperson paradoxically mentions that the post 1994 government was forced “to do something” about higher education; while also paternalistically mentioning that Technikon Pretoria was the foremost technikon prior to the mergers. He cites the following factors to uphold his stance on the post-1994 having “to do something”:

- The homeland university system had failed. Bluntly stated, it was inconceivable of the apartheid government to have created institutions in homeland areas without seeing to it that the staff members at those universities were trained to do their work;
- Managers of homeland institutions were not properly trained or supported to run universities. Instead, they were oriented to being subservient to the government of the day;
- Communities around the homeland universities were technically marginalized from knowledge by the apartheid government;
- Communities and the respective universities had limited and/or no exposure to other universities in the rest of the world;
- The homeland-based universities were created for the homelands without considering the knowledge development grid of the country;
- Homeland universities were generally and tremendously instrumental in negatively affecting South African society as they mirrored the country’s disproportionate development, particularly in the area of Financial Management;
- Homeland universities were ill-equipped and had less-empowered structures, yet the former government expected those institutions to produce financially skilled graduates, while they themselves were unable to cope financially;
- The homeland model was an educational droop. It did not really work. It became a liability even for the former government, and it had reached high levels of under-performance with disempowerment staff and over-politicized students;
- Student riots had reached their zenith, making it difficult for the new government to manage those institutions and their councils; and
- The apartheid government created homeland institutions for political reasons.
Undeniably, the post-1994 government was under pressure to create institutions that would ultimately be able to function and move to acceptable standards and sustainable levels of performance. It was therefore proper and appropriate for the democratic government to bring an end to such problems. The mergers then became a political solution to the inherited apartheid educational problems (the NUTESA Chairperson Interview, 26 February 2009). The latter’s (Interview 26 February 2009) paradoxical exegesis continued with his insistence that Technikon Pretoria was a leading Technikon in the whole country, due to the following factors:

It has had the highest research output in the region until 2004. It had a good relationship with industry. It was competing with top universities in the country, and was functioning within the class of University of Pretoria, UNISA, and Wits, to cite a few. As a result of the latter, its former Council once decided that Technikon Pretoria would invest in attracting the best staff members or employees to the Technikon. The decision was coupled with one of paying staff two salary notches higher than their former employers’ salary structures. Such momentous and grandiose achievements were obtained in two years. Distinguished professors and senior members of management and administration, as well as technical engineers, were recruited. The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) maintained that the profile of the then Technikon Pretoria (TP) soared, and induced Council to begin considering possibilities of upgrading TP to a University status.

Coincidentally, legislation was passed to create universities in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The former TP Council decided in 2002 that discussions for a possible conversion of TP into a University should be commenced. A year later, Minister Kader Asmal announced the mergers. The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) is of the view that TP was already of University material. The merger came at a time when the intention to convert into a University was at an advanced stage. The merger interjected the intended conversion. Sadly, accordingly to the NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009), TP was merged with TNG and TNW, instead of UP. It would have been prudent for the government to have amalgamated TP with UP as they had a lot in common then, and would have complemented each other on a range of aspects, including culture and language. The former Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) would have been a perfect match for TNG and TNW due to their proximity to each other. Seemingly, the NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) would have preferred and settled for a merger which produced a modern homeland university system. His argument clearly shifted from principled thinking
to subjective desire when compared to his earlier thoughts. He believed that, had the merger conformed to his version, it would have prevented the kind of racial conflict, mistrust, and difficulties of cultural miscegenation which occurred at TUT’

The bringing together of Pretoria, Ga-Rankuwa and Soshanguve technikons has led to a nightmare for TUT. Change and transformation has not yielded the kind of results the NUTESA Chairperson (2009) would have preferred to see. He cited the following to support his ‘nightmare’ argument:

- TUT went through a process of structural turmoil;
- The institution has moved backwards in terms of its reputation and performance; and
- The gains from the merger were overshadowed by many losses. For instance, the selection criteria for students have been lowered three to four times since 2004. The kind of students who have been admitted at TUT since the mergers, presented another form of problem by not basically meeting the required academic standards. High school results for Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Biology were appalling, and yet the TUT top management during the time of this interview had lowered academic standards. For instance, the criteria for entry into Journalism training were reduced in order to allow as many students as possible, and yet it is expected that the success and pass rates of the same lower-level students should compare with that of students from other well organized universities nationally. Throughput rates were adversely affected by the new types of students. Some of the students struggled to acquire skills which would enable them to contribute to the economy of South Africa.

The paper output (i.e. the graduation statistics) which TUT is producing since the mergers could not be complemented by skills. Instead of contributing to a skilled workforce, TUT and higher education in general were producing qualified, yet unskilled graduates.

The NUTESA Chairperson’s (2009) views are somewhat in tandem with the revelation that South African universities were producing graduates who had difficulties with “hitting the industry ground running” (Mkhize in Business Day, 2011:5), due to increasing pressure on academics to turn learners who come to higher education without requisite grades, into qualified students and graduates. If these university teachers failed to do so, they were severely reprimanded at faculty boards and senates for failing the students (Interview of 26 February 2009 with the NUTESA Chairperson). Furthermore, almost 80% of TUT students could not pass precisely because of being at the ‘right’ institution at the ‘wrong’ time (Interview of 26 February 2009 with the NUTESA Chairperson). These degrading factors
were partly caused by bad management, playing the numbers game (focusing on student enrolments quantitatively only), and succumbing to political pressure instead of excelling on academic freedom and knowledge engagement.

In addition, the NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) believes that:

- An impression had somewhat been created since the first democratic elections in 1994 and especially after the merger, that everyone in the country is entitled to university access. This impression is an unsustainable misnomer. It is, and will always be at a huge expense for the country. Even in the most civilized countries, only 10% of the citizens have the ability to access tertiary education. Massification of tertiary education is one of the many ghastly ways of dealing with education. It has a huge potential to lower educational standards. Normal populations of the world work hard to provide quality education to their near 10% participants who should have access to tertiary education, and yet South Africa hopes to emerge as the best with just close to 14% of students whose backgrounds were destabilized by apartheid’s Bantu Education;
- Despite the evident misery from the foregoing revelations, the NUTESA Chair (Interview 26 February 2009) concedes that for transformational reasons, the 1994 government had a responsibility to enforce/implement the mergers. The impression has been created that all has gone well while in essence, the country has a problem of massification without emphasis on quality service provision and quality output in higher education.

The NUTESA Chairperson (Interview 26 February 2009) made further interesting observations on transformation barriers:

- Foreign expatriates were being employed in high numbers at TUT. In the process, many appointment errors were committed. Some governance compliance aspects were compromised when employing some of the expatriates;
- Senior positions which would best be occupied by local South Africans were allocated to non-South Africans;
- The merger has had little or no benefits for white people. Many of the TUT white employees were “taken badly”, and there was very little or nothing that they could do about it. There was a need to look into the actual training, integrity and academic ability of employees, rather than focusing on mere papers (qualifications or certificates). The new education authorities and managers of merged institutions were supposed to allow excellent
white colleagues to train young people. Instead the worst has occurred. The following further observations were derived from the Interview of 26 February 2009 with the NUTESA Chairperson:

- The merger has had a huge focus and emphasis on racial politics instead of the quality of teaching;
- Staff with excellent skills and capability to uplift the disadvantaged colleagues were marginalized;
- Opportunities were taken from whites and not allocated to the disadvantaged South Africans, but to foreigners in the name of transformation;
- The mergers were used by TUT management ‘to try and ripe the fruit by pressing it’ instead of allowing it to take its natural maturing process. Put differently, the management of TUT was hasty to change or replace some of the institutional aspects that worked. For instance, the country was experiencing a skills shortage, yet actual skills and competences were being neglected. Knowledge and skills of most white colleagues were marginalized;
- The above respondent also insisted that some high-level people (again referring to white people) left the country because of politics and ‘the so called’ affirmative action in the education sector. Merger implementation at TUT took a racial trajectory which somehow lowered the quality of teaching and learning at TUT in particular, and in the country in general.

Against the above-cited background, (Interview of 26 February 2009, with the NUTESA Chairperson) enlisted the following as indicators of the contribution of the TUT merger towards fulfilling government policy intentions:

- Political and not educational transformation was achieved. In other words, the post-merger educational landscape in South Africa did not address the teaching and learning question, but was a fulfilment of a political agenda to replace the apartheid system with a democratic one;
- Poor quality students were accessing tertiary education since 2004. This means that the doors of learning were uncontrollably opened, allowing less qualified students for university degrees;
- Unskilled academics have been recruited. In other words, the advent of a democratic dispensation inadvertently attracted poorly trained university lecturers.
The NUTESA Chairperson’s (2009) perceptions find resonance from comments that universities in South Africa were partly to blame for lack of innovation in different industries. Some professors did not regard themselves as investors in start-ups and supervisors of application and development (Pandor in The New Age, 2012:4). Comments of this nature suggest that indeed there is an element of mass production of students with very limited effort towards ensuring usefulness and relevance of university graduates to the world of work and innovation.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Given the common pre-merger HEI idiosyncrasies, the results of this study could certainly be customized to suite any higher education environment, particularly in South Africa. It should be stated that the outcome of this study is valid and can be replicated. Despite one’s historic links and relationship with TUT and the respondents, professionalism was maintained by the researcher. For purposes of this study, only the recorded (empirical) data and information from official documents were considered and analysed.

Undoubtedly, the TUT merger was a success to a greater degree. Government policy objectives were fulfilled in areas which TUT and government’s priorities and understanding of the purpose of the merger, coincided. Conclusively, it could be asserted that any South African merger can succeed if the stakeholders take into cognizance the domestic or institutional socio-political aspects of transformation, inculcate key elements of Ubuntu in the process, and work together. TUT took-off from a runaway of a seemingly cosmetic amalgamation of three formerly separated technikons into a University of Technology with an academic model that enabled the institution to contribute to the skills development of South Africa as a developmental state. Chapter Five concludes this study with a compendium of conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The fundamental objective of the current chapter is to provide conclusions and make recommendations on the extent of the study’s exegetic contribution and relevance/practical usefulness to policy development and implementation in respect of the identified academic/intellectual, socio-economic, and political variables closely associated with the research topic and its attendant research problem. In pursuance of this critical objective, the modus operandi in the ensuing conclusions and recommendations focuses on the literature (theoretic perspectives) and the fieldwork/empirical (practical observation) framework. The rationale for such an eclectic and holistic approach premises on the fact that it provides the discussion with a general/deductive and specific/inductive perspective on the one hand, as well as the international-local perspective on the other. In an attempt to maximize the efficacy of this chapter’s objective, a holistic approach was embraced, such that the subject matter under investigation (post-apartheid mergers of South African higher education institutions) has not been dislodged from its concomitant and symbiotic affinity with the post-apartheid government’s policy development and implementation environment. Cast in this (holistic) mould then, the policy environment encapsulates the macrocosmic perspective on whose basis the conclusions and recommendations were made; whereas the institution-based transformation reflects the microcosmic perspective of the conclusions and recommendations (Kraak, 2000:13). Every important aspect of the study has been summarized with a view to providing a conclusive outcome and final recommendations.

5.2 REALISATION OF THE RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

A determination of the extent to which the research aim and objectives were realised (achieved) is indispensable, on the premise that such a determination justifies the validity and authenticity of the findings (presented in the previous chapter) on the one hand, and the conclusions and recommendations on the other.
5.2.1 The Context of the Articulation of the Research Aims and Objectives

In addition to the study’s aim and objectives outlined in Chapter One, the research problem and its background, as well as the rationale/ motivation/justification and the research questions also served a complementary role in the articulation of these objectives. Therefore, the objectives themselves became a catalytic factor in the determination of the entire research variables referred to above.

South African higher education has been marred by decades of racist educational policies (Matos, 2000:12-13; Jansen, 2001:12; DoE, 2001:3). One of the most daunting challenges of the post-apartheid government was “… to establish a single coherent national system of norms, rules and procedures to steer the entire educational project in directions that are consonant with key economic, social and cultural goals, and to facilitate in an orderly fashion the diversity and responsiveness now an intrinsic part of all modern systems of higher education” (Kraak, 2000: 13). The researcher’s interest in this study (Muller, 2004:4; Sarantakos, 1998:16-17) was developed by the desire to examine the extent to which South African higher education transformation (as opposed to reformation) was responding both to exigent socio-economic demands locally and to internationally competitive imperatives. The problem being investigated therefore is the extent of the pace (rapid or incremental) and direction (reform or transformation) of change local higher education curriculum; with the pace and the direction becoming the product of the nature of the post-apartheid government’s policy directives and obligations.

5.2.1.1 The Nexus Between the Research Questions and the Research Objectives

As opposed to the research questions of the interviews with the selected research participants, the research questions referred to in sub-section 1.4.3 of Chapter One this study are those framed by the researcher in order to direct him as to the form and shape the research objectives will take, and are not meant for the respondents’ attention. Therefore, the latter research questions were constructed in accordance with the purpose and objectives of the study. Furthermore, these research questions necessarily encompassed the three essential aspects of the mergers in higher education, namely: the government policy domain; financial and programmatic sustainability of the mergers; as well as the accountability factor as an aspect of higher education governance mechanisms:
What are the key concepts and processes that relate to the implementation of mergers in general, and higher education implementation in particular?

What are government’s intended policy objectives and outcomes in opting for higher education mergers in a post-apartheid dispensation?

To what measurable extent has the post-merger environment and higher education landscape been transformed?

To what measurable extent has the grassroots (empirical) experiences of practitioners been affected by the actual merger implementation processes?

The above research questions were also constructed with a view to establishing a context for the articulation and realisation of the research objectives. Research interviews were able to illuminate on the extent to which the intended government policy goals and outcomes were realized, or not realized.

5.2.1.2 The Articulation and Realisation of the Research Objectives

The re-statement of the research objectives (as outlined in Chapter One).

The following objectives constitute the framework on which the study’s efficacy and usefulness are to be determined.

Objective 1: To analyze and synthesize the core nuances and nomenclature in higher education mergers in the context of the research topic.

The Abstract in this study has identified 10 (ten) key concepts which are critically linked to the research topic. The ten concepts are Mergers; Policy Implementation; Voluntary Merger; Involuntary Merger; Transformation; Accountability; Sustainability; Diversity; Accessibility and Student Mobility. However, the complexity of the research topic (induced by the linkage between policy development and implementation on the one hand, and higher education transformation on the other hand) implies that the ten listed concepts in the Abstract are not the only core nuances. Reference has also been made to Access, Change, Equity, Redress and Efficiency within the context of higher education mergers. Therefore, in essence, the core nuances and concepts in the study are not confined to any particular chapter. Rather, the listed key concepts – and other verisimilitudes – are cascaded throughout the study in a thematically convergent manner and are bonded by their analytic and synthetic association with the policy terrain of the post-apartheid reconfiguration of higher education institutions.
Intensive literature-based research became the ultimate *via media* by which a conceptual framework and understanding of the study was developed. This literature-based phase of the study provided a fundamental understanding of international trends and key concepts relating to higher education transformation. The literature-based phase of the study became the terrain from which the pace and direction of South African higher education transformation could be compared with international trends and practices. It could then be justifiably stated that this objective was optimally realized. It is the knowledge derived from the international perspectives that provided the foundational arguments raised in different parts of this study. The most crucial analytic framework provided by the international, literature-based perspectives to the researcher is the overwhelming evidence that indicates that externally-derived challenges on higher education are *irreversible*. These challenges include: the advent of globalisation, the impact of information and communication technologies, and massification as a product of the world-wide democratisation of societies.

**Objective 2: To assess both the success factors and challenges of higher education mergers in the context of government policy development and implementation.**

Both the success factors and challenges of the mergers – from a government policy perspectives – are clearly articulated in sub-section 5.3.1 below. The empirical phase of the study (the interview sessions) was most illuminating and complemented the literature-based knowledge and information pertaining to the achievements and challenges of merging the South African higher education institutions. Amongst other important achievements or success factors pertaining to the above-cited objective, the following aspects loom large:

- the *political provenance* of the implemented higher education mergers;
- the *nature of the mergers* in terms of the homogeneity or heterogeneity/hybrid typology; that is, university-to-university, technikon-to-technikon, or technikon-to-university merger type;
- the success factors have been cited in the form of examples such as increased *access*, institutional and individual *redress*, and growth/expansion as evidenced through *massification*; and
- contributing to *narrowing* the racial, cultural, and other forms of divisive influences of the past.
The challenges experienced prior to, during, and after the merger processes are encapsulated in sub-section 5.3.2 below. These include:

- *cultural integration/miscegenation* is still ‘work in progress’, the academic and governance practices of the dominant HEI absorbed those of the less dominant merging partner;
- *the financial sustainability* of the mergers was costly to the state; and
- *curriculum diversity*, irrespective of the merger type, had to be applied in order to match the skills requirements necessary for graduates to function in the world of work and society in general.

Based on the repertoire of both success factors and challenges cited above, and in sub-sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 below, the researcher is of the view that Objective 2 above has been optimally achieved as well.

**Objective 3: To assess the post-merger higher education environment in the context of efficiency, sustainability, and accountability.**

It is the researcher’s contention that efficiency, sustainability, and accountability are complementary concepts that reinforce each other connotatively and denotatively. For instance, in the case of TUT, the *collective* input by Tromp (Interview 4 February 2009), Tyobeka (Interview 26 February 2009), and Van Staden (Interview 27 February 2009), reveal that by instituting a *new academic plan* – as a part of the *pre-merger dialogue* between TNW, TNG, and TP in preparation for the new TUT with about 60 000 (sixty thousand) at its inception – measures were already taking place ahead of the actual mergers to ensure that both efficiency and sustainability were part of a new ethos of managing the institution. The *terms and conditions* that formed part of the pre-merger dialogue ensured that a modicum of accountability was entrusted to each of the three merging former technikons. A strong system was necessary to ensure accountability in the *coordination* of an institution with six learning sites (campuses) in the Tshwane metropolitan area alone; another learning site in Limpopo Province; and two others located in Mpumalanga Province. Clearly, a state of affairs such as the latter reflected the immediate need for a *coherent academic system for teaching and learning* in order to infuse all the three elements of efficiency, sustainability, and accountability within the TUT organizational model. *Eventually, such a model was developed, adopted and implemented.*
Furthermore, the reflections by van Staden (Interview 3 February 2009) demonstrate TUT’s commitment to “accountable institutional governance” ensured that TUT was an institution governed on the basis of acceptable best practices of management, accountability, and participatory decision-making. This was already put into practice in 2004 when an institutional merger plan, an institutional audit and programme review mechanism, as well as an institutional operational plan were just some of the range of processes embarked on to ensure that accountability, sustainability, and efficiency become part of an acceptable set of norms, standards, and values of TUT. Given all of the researcher’s assertions above, Objective 3 is regarded as being completely achieved.

**Objective 4: To provide an empirical perspective of higher education mergers in relation to the actual experiences of practitioners in the affected higher education institution.**

With regard to the above objective, TUT was selected as the preferred research site. The interview was opted for as the preferred data collection instrument. The *purposively* sampled respondents were chosen on the basis of the researcher’s judgement and knowledge of the research setting and its broader milieu. Whereas ‘the universe of universities’ consisted of 21 (twenty one) higher education institutions in a reconstituted landscape, the fact that only one HEI was selected for this study does not compromise the integrity of the research. All of the merged institutions have some commonalities, characterised by factors such as *all of them emerging from an apartheid past during which they all espoused opposing political ideologies* – Afrikaner nationalism by the historically Afrikaans-medium HEIs, British liberalism by the historically English-medium HEIs, and left-wing radicalism by the former historically Black HEIs (Gerwell in Mamdani 1998:73). Furthermore, all the institutional merger processes were variously supported by the government financially, contingent on their submission of three-year “rollout plans” indicating their transformation plans.

Both the sampled TUT senior managers and executives, as well as the organised labour representatives, provided satisfactory answers and responses to all the questions posed to them. For instance, senior management, on one hand, was able to explain ways through which they conceived the merger and thereafter mobilized the university community to support the Institutional Operating Plan, which served as one of the important guides in forming the post-merger TUT. Organized labour on the other hand relentlessly punched holes
on the efforts of senior management to bring about a merged institution. The Unions ensured
the prevalence of the voice of employees on the merger implementation discourse and
processes. The questions themselves covered a wide-ranging scope of merger aspects relating
to the TUT mergers. All the respondents were directly a part of the TUT merger process in
their various occupationally capacities. To the extent that all the respondents possess ‘first-
hand’ institutional memory (Sarantakos, 1998:218) of the TUT merger implementation
process, and that their audio-recorded input and responses constitute the core of the study’s
findings – on whose basis the conclusions and recommendations were made – the researcher
is absolutely convinced and persuaded that Objective 4 was also overwhelmingly achieved.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The overall or main conclusions in this study serve as the parameters within which both the
researcher’s motivation for the research topic and the findings are stated, developed,
extended, and defended (Muller, 2004:6). In an attempt to organize the reasoning and the
basis upon which the main or overall conclusion were reached, a taxonomical approach has
been opted for here, so as to obviate among others, both “red-herring argument” – bringing
peripheral and irrelevant side issues to the main argument (Mouton, 2001:120); as well as
“non sequitur reasoning” – conclusions that have no logical connection to data or evidence
presented (Mouton, 2001:120). In tandem with the taxonomical approach alluded to above,
the main conclusions have been categorized into the three essential aspects in the
reconfigured higher education ecology, namely: the government policy domain; financial and
programmatic sustainability of the TUT merger implementation processes; and the
accountability factor as an aspect of higher education governance mechanisms. It is worth
mentioning that, whereas the first set of conclusions embraces a systemic character, the
second and third compendium of conclusions are more institutional and specifically relate to
the TUT case study as the quintessential example or ‘prototype’ of a homogeneous or same-
type of merger by three former technikons from disparate academic and historical
backgrounds.

5.3.1 Conclusions Emanating From the Government Policy Domain

In the context of this study, the government policy domain refers to the politically driven
terrain according to which the state intended to fulfil its mandate to both its
electorate/constituency and the South African public in general. As emerging from the throes of apartheid oppression and white supremacist domination for decades (if not centuries!), the South African public – especially the masses of the previously disadvantaged citizens – expected complete emancipation from the fetters of the past. Accordingly, the ANC as the victorious ‘voice of the majority’ after the first democratic elections in 1994 was faced with the unenviable and mammoth task of democratizing South African society in accordance with arrangements contained in the ‘negotiated settlement’. In pursuance of the democratization ideal in general, and higher education transformation in particular, a range of initiatives – from the 1996 Constitution, to the Department of Higher Education’s concerted and protracted efforts (for instance, NCHE’s efforts in 1996; the EWP 3 and Higher Education in 1997; the NPHE initiatives in 2001; and the NWG Report of 2002) – were developed and adopted for implementation in order to reverse the educational injustices of the past.

In addressing the relevant conclusions in this sub-section of the study, the broader principles of higher education transformation in the country are described for the purpose of determining the extent to which the ANC government’s policy objectives were realised (or not realised). In the latter regard, three critical factors become the main determinants or ‘measurements’ of the extent of (in) efficacy of the post-democratic government’s policy objectives. These factors are: growth, equity/redress, and growth/expansion or massification, all of which needed to be premised on, and be guided by an unambiguous policy conceptualization and implementation framework on the part of government.

De Clercq (1997:146) avers that “policy” could be regarded as a conflict resolution mechanism intended to “restore the cohesiveness, order and functionality of society”. The insensitive development and implementation of policies could accentuate power dynamics and tensions in society by advancing the interests of the dominant group against those of the less dominant groups. In this regard then, the conceptualisation and development of policy is shaped or influenced by the extent of its restorative function. The above author illuminates further that policy conceptualisation and development is typified by any, or a combination of the following functions: substantive, procedural, material, symbolic, regulatory, or redistributive. In the context of the research topic, it is the government’s fiduciary responsibility to develop and implement such restorative mechanisms (policies) by regulating the functionality of HEIs by legal means or instruments. As a trustee of the public good, government has the substantive power to determine what it should do to redress past
educational imbalances. To the extent that it utilizes legal instruments to assert its intentions and courses of action, the state equally demonstrates the regulatory and procedural aspects of policy initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation. By instituting policy initiatives such as equity, redress, and access, the state (represented by the Department of Higher Education), is fulfilling both the redistributive and material functions of policy development.

Both the redistributive and material policy aspects apply in the event that the allocation of resources is equitably redirected to previously marginalised groups such. Symbolic policy is an extreme case, exemplified by the prevalence of more rhetoric and promises than by actual fulfilment and implementation (delivery) of those promised (educational) services. In the context of the South African HE policy formulation environment, the post-1994 era has been generally characterised by competing interests, which is a reflection of “… a struggle for alignment [in which] … Higher education policy has been made within larger societal processes… The government has been unable in the post-1994 period to move far in establishing a systematically reconfigured and transformed system. The period can be characterised as having manifested policy hesitance and inefficacy … much of the influences that contributed in shaping the policy field have come from outside higher education” (Fataar, 2003:31-32). The post-1994 democratically elected government’s interventionist predilection towards policy formulation and implementation was informed by the need to change “… from an oligarchic racial state to an inclusive political democracy …” (Fataar, 2003:32), in order to establish an regulatory environment in tandem with the newly ushered-in democratic principles enshrined in the new Constitution of the RSA (Act 108 of 1996).

Insofar as the policy conceptualization and implementation environment is concerned, the study concludes that the post-1994 democratically elected ANC government’s interventionist policy orientation stood it (the government) in good stead to effect access, equity/redress, and growth/expansion/massification as the microcosmic (institution-specific) components within the larger macrocosmic environment of the transformation project intended to completely liberate the majority of the citizens from the legacy of apartheid education. Failure by the government to act decisively (for instance, by resorting to rhetoric policy approaches in order to appease the ‘negotiated settlement’ ideologues), would have left higher education transformation to external agencies and forces, with no guarantee that that the local socioeconomic interests of the majority would be seriously taken cognizance of. Notwithstanding the government’s resoluteness in implementing the HE mergers across all HEIs in the country, the success factors were also accompanied by some challenges as well.
5.3.1.1 Some Success Factors of the TUT Mergers in the Context of Government Policy Development and Implementation

The mergers were conceived with little or no intentional ‘best fit’ model for the South African higher education transformation project. Nonetheless, the government was able to enforce the implementation of the project across the higher education sector. Clearly, the pre-merger South African higher education sector would not have initiated the merger and/or any form of transformation voluntarily. Institutions were effectively reduced in number from 36 to 21. Universities and technikons had to contend with their own internal merger-related dynamics, whilst also ensuring that mergers were realized as prescribed by the government. Aspects such as ‘the winner takes all’, or the more dominant merging partner swallowing the less dominant one, or conflict arising from insecurities and uncertainties among and between students, staff and other stakeholders, were left with university interim councils and management to resolve.

Structures such as SAUVCA (South African Universities’ Vice-Chancellors Association) and CTP Committee of Technikon Principals, which were the political gatekeepers of the wishes and aspirations of the apartheid education system, were disestablished, and HESA (Higher Education South Africa) was formed to serve as one new body that relates with the nation and the minister of higher education and training on issues of transformation and service delivery in the higher education sector.

Afrikaans, which has been a medium of tuition for several decades in most if not all universities, is no longer a predominant language of teaching and learning in the post-merger higher education in SA. In fact, the democratic government was clear from the outset on languages. It pronounced early in its assumption of authority and power that SA would have eleven (11) official languages. Technically and in accordance with the SA Constitution’s Bill of Rights, students could demand to be taught in a language of their preference as long as it is one of the eleven approved languages. White institutions, including the University of Pretoria and the University of Stellenbosch, have had to meaningfully include and serve black students in all their programme offerings.
5.3.1.2 Some Challenges of Higher Education Mergers in the Context of Government Policy Development and Implementation

As an aspect of higher education transformation, the merger implementation processes have taken place, yet the implications and the remaining challenges are enormous. Cogent means have had to be expended in order to ensure that the higher education sector is adequately resourced to address elements of equity, invest in research and development, as well as growing a cohort of skilled academics.

A significant number of merged institutions retained their curricula and continued with business as usual after the merger, especially with regard to teaching and learning processes and activities.

New learner-centred teaching methods had to be introduced, funded and be provided to lecturers in order to equip them in the quest to meet the expectations of a new type of student who predominantly uses ICT aid and complement their learning. The massification of HEIs by students from previously disadvantaged communities and backgrounds has tended to reignite the issue of standards, with antagonists arguing that massification is an affront to excellence and merit-based student qualifications and performance. On the other hand, the cultural compatibility of “standards” has been seriously interrogated (Seepe, 2000:60-61). In the latter regard, both curriculum development and its epistemological premises are viewed as being Euro-centric, with Afro-centric intellectual contributions to scientific development and advances, as well as African perspectives of knowledge in South African higher education institutions are being gradually relegated to the periphery (Goduka, 1999:26).

In terms of the success factors and challenges relating to higher education mergers in the context of government policy development and implementation it is the researcher’s contention and conclusion that on a quantitative scale, the success indicators surpass the challenges that still remain to be obliterated. However, these challenges do not constitute failure at all on the part of government. In fact, as a result of the mergers, the research output and profile of some local HEIs (such as UNISA, UKZN, Wits, UCT, to cite just a few) has increased exponentially and attracted favourable African and international acclaim. Furthermore, the curriculum diversity and programme offerings of some ‘home grown’ HEIs are also rated favourably with some of the best HEIs around the world.
5.3.2 Conclusions Emanating From the Programmatic Diversity, Sustainability and the Accountability Factor of the TUT Merger Implementation Processes

As opposed to the previous systemic conclusions, the current conclusions are institution-specific to the TUT merger implementation process. For purposes of logical concatenation and avoidance repetition, red-herring, and non sequitor argumentation, the conclusions in this sub-section variously complement some of the main findings mentioned in Chapter Four. Accordingly, only the complementary aspects of the conclusions are discussed where necessary. A similar modus operandi was adopted in sub-section 5.3.1.1 and sub-section 5.3.1.2 above. The relevant conclusion in the current sub-section relate to efficiency, programmatic sustainability, and accountability. It is the researcher’s contention that the latter three nuances mutually reinforce each other. For instance, an efficient, goal- and performance-driven organisational system enables the development of a diverse curriculum base for the different needs of different learning backgrounds. By taking charge of such a huge responsibility, such an organisational system displays a high degree of accountability within a self-regulating environment.

Efficiency

A single coordinated higher education sector and system for SA has been instituted. All post-merger public universities are now the political responsibility of one government department, that is, the Department of Higher Education and Training, which was not the case prior to 1994, and until the end of 2003 to a greater extent. TUT’s efficiency has been reinforced by, amongst other factors, its increasing student population and pass rates since the merger implementation; its coordinated academic plan to integrate learning and teaching at its nine campuses; and its ‘decentralization’ of academic faculties across the nine campuses on a needs-based criteria (for instance, the needs of the students and the communities in the vicinity of a particular campus.

Programmatic Diversity and Sustainability

Newby (1999:120) categorically declares that “diversity” is understood differently by different ‘academic tribes’: “This term [diversity] can be interpreted in a variety of ways. On the whole, most commentators favour an increase in diversity in the higher education sector, but are divided over what it precisely means. There is also some confusion over whether diversity is best seen as a means – a variety of pathways towards a common degree standard – or an end – a variety of degree standards ... the move towards a mass system of higher
education has produced a greater diversity of institutions in terms of their structure, organization, purpose, mission etc. ... the growth of higher education also produces greater diversity among the student body ... and staff, with respect to their class origins, ages, interests, and talents. This development, in turn, brings about an increasing diversity in curricula and pedagogy”.

The need for diversity in higher education is a reflection of HE’s fundamental response to external realities – such as the marketization/commodification of the curriculum, or “academic capitalism”, which is a market-like form of practice by HEIs intended to secure private funding or partnerships by rendering academic or professional services to the private or corporate funder (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997: 8). The reconfiguration of higher education into various institutional types (e.g. comprehensive universities) and a plethora of fields of study and programmes occasioned by the knowledge explosion are challenges that make some traditional approaches to higher education’s problems become anachronistic (Gibbons, 1998:2; Fehnel, 2002:1-3). The growing demand for access to higher education by ‘non-standard’, working adults for instance, necessitates that diverse and asynchronous ways of learning and curriculum delivery be incorporated into the mainstream higher education organizational missions and culture (Zusman, 1999:119-120).

The researcher contends that programmatic/curriculum sustainability is the outcome of an efficiently diversified programmatic/curriculum environment. Curriculum or programme diversification per se refers to the mixing of subjects or courses to construct a programme of study that entails both an academic and practical/application or experiential component. In order to effectively inject both programmatic diversity and sustainability, the mission statements of HEIs in a post-merger environment also need to be ideologically and academically refocused or re-conceptualized from their erstwhile pre-merger origins (Bunting, 2002:63; NWG, 2002: 69). Weber (1999:3-4) makes the case for the relevance and indispensability of differentiated (mixed) HE missions (statements of intent) in a changing higher education environment:

“In comparison with industries, and even with the state, universities have remained extremely conservative institutions ... It is at least implicit ... that accelerating geopolitical, economic, and technological changes, which affect the whole world, do not spare the university. Even their secular history, in particular in the Old World, the
universities had to face difficult periods, now, for the first time ever, the way in which they fulfil their missions or even their existence is challenged not only by political threats, but also by technological and economic changes and pressures. *First the corporate world has had to change; now it is the turn of higher education* [researcher’s italics]

TUT’s mission statement reads in part: “In fulfilling its vision, TUT will support its students to achieve their highest potential in a safe, enabling and conducive environment by: … Providing relevant and competitive academic programmes with seamless articulation pathways … Conducting relevant research and promoting innovation, engagement and social enterprise … [researcher’s italics]” (http://www.tut.as.za/about). TUT has opened and broadened its access to students from heterogeneous educational backgrounds. It is axiomatic from its mission statement above that the notion of “seamless articulation pathways” also encompasses the nuance of curriculum or programmatic diversity/differentiation in order to enable students not to pursue monolithic career trajectories in order to reverse the pervasive question of “standards” being raised in many instances to ‘justify’ the quantitatively disproportionate student enrolments between these students’ points of entry and points of exit at higher education level.

**Accountability**

Weber, 1999:6) declares boldly that “… universities should not, as they were too long inclined to do, pretend that they are above the crowd and not accountable to anyone. Universities, public or private, belong to society and therefore have to be both transparent and accountable [researcher’s italics]”. Cast in this mould therefore, the implication is that publicly funded HEIs in particular, while they exercise a form of self-regulation characterised by university autonomy and freedom of speech, owe their existence to both society (as tax payers whose money sustain the particular HEI) and to government (whose fiduciary task it is to institute policies that advance society’s interests). It is debatable whether or not universities have tended to be accountable to the dictates of the corporate sector and ‘the world of work’ at the expense of society’s interests. Sound accountability procedures and practices perpetuate public confidence in the HE systems.

Some academic analysts regard “accountability” as a necessary compliance mechanism for more responsiveness to society’s needs (Neave, 2000:20). This latter view propounds and
compares accountability “… with the obligation of a firm to report to its share-holders, to keep them abreast of its fortunes and appraised of how the enterprise has fared in attaining its objectives” (Neave, 2000:20). To the extent that certain tasks have to be performed in order to achieve the university’s objectives or mission, “accountability” is then associated with “performance management” (Henry et al., 2001:169). Accountability then, focuses on two elements of institutional functioning. On the one hand, it is directed at establishing fiscal probity and a responsive governance or management system; while on the other, it is a means by which knowledge practitioners and other professionals on campus are held responsible for what they purport to be doing. Performance audits have become one of the means by which academic and professional staff are ‘tested’ in order to determine the extent to which they are complying with institutional, programmatic, and other requirements and objectives.

The trend towards performativity by institutional staff may be considered by some as ‘disenfranchising’ the academics, and an erosion of their autonomy by ‘outsiders’. Contrarily, ‘disempowering’ academic staff could also be viewed as re-orientating HEIs more towards society, and an obliteration of perceptions of the university’s elitist vestiges. Both government’s and society’s demands for transparency add more responsibility to academics’ workloads. Performativity by academic staff may inadvertently introduce an administrative burden which might severely limit their instructional responsibilities. Marginson (2000: 32) alludes to the possibility of the blurring of operational functions becoming a problem caused by the quest towards academic performativity. For instance, a range of ‘para-academics’, such as curriculum technologists – as a second tier to teaching – blurs the extent of both accountability and academic freedom. While they ‘lessen’ the work for academics, the boundaries between the academic and the professional would warrant clearer distinction. While academics of yonder years might have been answerable to their disciplines, their (post) modern counterparts are having a more representative and broader stakeholder constituency to account to. The marketisation of the HE curriculum has meant that there are even ‘invisible’ academics that have severely diminished the role of the traditional academic as an autonomous knowledge provider.

University autonomy is conspicuously still used as an instrument of preserving some of the tendencies of the old system especially when it comes to what is generally referred to as quality and standards of teaching and learning. Academic senates and/or boards are yet to fully transform and align their ideologies and intellectual contributions to the broader needs and aspirations of society whilst championing the course of ensuring better lives of the people
through knowledge provision. However, in the case of the TUT merger, it is concluded that accountability has evolved from the pre-merger participatory dialogue framework to the post-merger transparent model, according to which all relevant stakeholders participate in decision-making processes involving the academic, operational, and other forms of administrative mechanisms necessary for effective coordination of all the nine campuses.

5.3.3 Conclusions Emanating From the Actual Experiences of Practitioners

The actual experiences of the various practitioners represent the collective “social reality” or perspectives of the sampled research participants in the context of their direct or indirect involvement and participation in the TUT merger implementation processes. The “social reality” referred to above determines first-hand involvement or experience gathering; where “... “first hand” implies the context of investigation or the immediate on-site setting in which qualitative methods are employed, and “involvement” refers to the actual participation of the research in the social world that is being studied” (Holosko, 2001:265). It is on the basis of the respondents’ “social reality” that a representative and generalizable context could be established in terms of the post-merger centrifugal applicability of the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations to other South African higher education institutions.

5.3.3.1 The TUT Management and Strategic Perspective

The findings revealed a range of merger downsides. The TUT merger implementation process was on some occasions slowed down by the protracted need for common ground among the three merging technikons. As a result, timelines had to be changed to accommodate delays. A lot was expected from the University within a very constrained period of time. The dynamics of the merger were not matched by available resources. For instance, there was little or no expressed instruction and/or push from the Department of Higher Education and Training for merger implementation to happen speedily. There was no previous merger examples from which TUT could have learned or benchmarked its merger implementation process. Processes had to take place live whilst the institution ran its normal business. Some of the things were expected to change while some of the historic practices were being phased out or reviewed.

The adoption of a federal system was rejected and avoided. The federal system would have been an expensive alternative for TUT and the sector as a whole, as it would have meant an
increase in terms of human resources capacity for TUT. In turn, such an increase would not have been a cost effective exercise. Tuition would have been adversely impacted.

The Merger Guidelines Document from the government were generally vague, but assisted with the development of an institutional merger plan in 2004, leading to the joint signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the three former technikons. Consequently, a merger implementation agreement between the three merging partners was developed, signed and implemented. The Agreement entailed aspects of the merger which needed joint attention and implementation from merging partners. The last phase of merger implementation was concluded in 2008 by the establishment of an institutional staff complement for the entire institution.

A proper merger coordinating management structure needed to be put in place earlier to avoid inefficiencies. It would have been helpful to institutions if the Department provided a clearer set of guidelines, more technical support, as well as the early establishment of permanent management structures to take charge of the situation.

A new academic model integrating all academic programmes was developed and successfully communicated to all staff and students. Institutional audits and programme reviews were conducted to validate TUT’s fitness for purpose and relevance of the offerings. Staff processes and policies were harmonized. Academic programmes were consolidated to curb duplications and reduce the number of programmes offered to a manageable and cost saving list. The Institutional Operating Plan was developed. The plan clearly defined ways through which duplication of programmes would be addressed and how the institutional expertise would meaningfully be distributed and optimally used in all campuses. Campuses became optimally utilized. For instance, the Economic and Management Sciences Faculty and its programmes were located at the Ga-Rankuwa Campus; the ICT Faculty and its programmes were located at the Soshanguve Campus; while the Engineering Faculty was located at the Pretoria Campus.

The researcher concludes that in spite of the varied challenges experienced, the three merging technikons were able to overcome such challenges by strategically opting for a pre-merger consultative process which outlined the terms and conditions of engagement as follows:

- a strong transformation thrust should underpin the merger;
a developmental approach should be adopted for the merger;
financial sustainability and stability of the merger should be established;
there should be agreement on the merger model, in respect of centralization or
decentralization of institutions;
maintenance and retention of former Technikon Pretoria’s general standards and approach
to quality;
retention of Technikon Pretoria’s overall performance of staff and students;
linking of programme and qualification mix to a unique strategy of multimode programme
delivery and curriculum development;
focus on diverse, flexible and broad research and development;
staff qualification standards that exceed those that were set by the national working group of
government; and
a well-established and well maintained campus, buildings, infrastructure, and ICT systems.

5.3.3.2 The TUT Finance Perspective

There was high-level commitment and will to make the merger work. TUT resolved from the
very beginning that it would effectively address issues relating to funding and resource allocation
in response to government policy and principles entailed in the National Plan for Higher Education. Accordingly, the TUT finance team undertook the following tasks:

• addressed historic inequities in order to close the inequitable allocation of funds and
resources;
• ensured that TUT is governed on the basis of sound management principles and
accountability;
• ensured the restructuring of the finance department, consolidation of financial accounts, and
harmonizing of accounting systems;
• prioritised the availability of competent staff, particularly in the area of finances was also
prioritized and ensured and the spin-offs for this decision swiftly manifested;
• achieved cost effectiveness and productivity through the proper development and
implementation of sound financial and resource allocation policies, processes and systems.
As a result, TUT has become a post-merger university of technology with a functioning and
cost efficient financial policy framework; and
• a Broad Management Forum was formed, and it debated many merger related matters including study fees.

5.3.3.3 The TUT Institutional Forum’s Perspective

Generally, the TUT Institutional Forum (IF) submitted that a lot changed at TUT as a result of the merger. For instance, the student population increased, and TUT has become a rainbow multi-campus institution with a visible race mixture in student enrolments. This phenomenal achievement is believed to have been directly attributable the merger. The academic model became a uniting tool for students and staff. For instance, all students studying ICT had to be at the Soshanguve Campus, where the ICT faculty is located for all students. The same principle applied to all teaching staff, they have to be where their respective faculties and students were located.

The IF provided oversight on the development of language policy, employment equity, and advised the TUT Council on the appointment of senior managers. The IF regarded the merger as an opportunity to address parity issues such as skills gaps, duplication of academic programmes, and the overall need for the transformation of the University’s contribution to changing the broader national higher education landscape and consistent implementation of policies.

Notwithstanding measurable success indicators, the IF experienced some challenges in the form of the following factors:

• there were intense levels of low staff morale resulting from the capping of staff promotions and general annual salary increases;
• some employees were placed under a moratorium as they were found to be earning more than their counterparts;
• some employees were depressed from the mandatory relocation of staff from one conventional campus to the new one, which was as a result of the new academic model; and
• some of the acclaimed academics and administrators resigned from TUT as a result of uncertainties of the massive 2004 transformation-oriented merger process.
5.3.3.4 The NEHAWU Perspective

NEHAWU was in support of the mergers, and its ideological stance was generally progressive. The Union ensured that mergers did not marginalize the smaller merging partners. The Union espoused the principles of fair, just and equitable access to resources. The Union steadfastly resisted the former Technikon Pretoria’s conservative insistence on retaining some of their pre-merger positions and structures. It was believed that this insistence was aimed at retaining the former TP’s status quo ante, and as a deliberate disregard for a need to reduce the salary structure of the University. It was NEHAWU’s contention that students were beginning to access the institution and its resources in a meaningful manner; that unnecessary duplication of work and curriculum offerings were eliminated; that previous divides between the former three technikons were closed with the establishment of one University of Technology; and that the relocation and decentralization of faculties was a necessary academic development.

5.3.3.5 The NUTESA Perspective

It is the researcher’s contention that the NUTESA perspective is replete with paradoxes. On the one hand, the Union exhibited a conservative sympathy to the retention of the former Technikon Pretoria in its old form; while on the other, the Union made a volte face and supported the mergers as a transformation mechanism. The Union’s argument for the retention of TP was based on its belief that TP was the leading technikon in the country. However, NUTESA’s conservative stance was defended on the following premises:

• the Union argued that the TUT merger fulfilled a political, rather than an educational transformation function. The Union posited further that the post-merger educational landscape in South Africa did not address the teaching and learning question, but was merely a fulfilment of a political agenda designed to replace the apartheid system with a democratic one;
• the Union argued further that the mergers created opportunities for a lowering of standards, such as a poor quality of students accessing tertiary education in 2004, as well as the recruitment of unskilled or poorly trained academics and less skilled graduates. It was argued that the expatriates were being employed in high numbers at TUT, in the process of which many appointment errors were committed. Some governance compliance aspects
were compromised when employing some of these expatriates. Senior positions which would best be occupied by local nationals were allocated to non-South Africans. To compound the situation even further, NUTESA believed that the merger has had little, or of no benefit to white South Africans, a *writ large* demonstration that the merger has had a huge focus and emphasis on racial politics, instead of elevating the quality of teaching. The NUTESA respondent also insisted that some high-level white academics and administrators left the country due to racial politics and the so-called affirmative action in the higher education sector; and

- in support of its view of lowered standards, the Union declared that high school results for Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Biology were appalling, and yet the TUT top management at the time of this interview had lowered academic standards. For instance, the criteria for entry into Journalism training were reduced in order to allow as many students as possible to be admitted, and yet it is expected that the success and pass rates of the same lower-level students should compare with that of students from other well-organized universities nationally.

NUTESA’s (surprising?) support of the TUT merger implementation process was based on the following premise:

- the post-1994 government had no other option, but to transform the higher education landscape due to the abysmal failure of the geo-political homeland university system, whose managers were compliant executives to the government of the day; communities around the homeland universities were technically marginalized from the knowledge world by the apartheid government; and communities and the respective universities had limited and/or no exposure to other universities in the rest of the world; and
- the homeland-based universities were created for the homelands, without consideration to the knowledge developmental grid of the country; homeland universities were generally and tremendously instrumental in negating the value of education in South Africa.

### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following propositions are neither prescriptive (mandatory) nor prescriptive (opposed to other conventional or orthodox views and arguments). Rather, these propositions are meant to maximise the premises on which the findings in Chapter Four and the conclusions in the current chapter (Chapter Five) were arrived at. For logical and juxtapositional reasons, the
propositions below have been categorized in relation to their relevance to, and affinity with the research topic and its attendant research problem, research questions, research aims and objectives, as well as the data collection and presentation processes.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

The legacy of apartheid was legally and officially denounced in accordance with the post-1994 election results and the precedent ‘negotiated settlement’ arrangements. For the formerly oppressed majority, policy development from either symbolic or rhetoric perspectives would be inadequate.

While there is general concurrence on the efficacy of the post-1994 government’s interventionist policy conceptualization and implementation terrain, the nature (pace and direction) of changes required to obliterate the injustices and inequalities of the past suggest that a more reformist (as opposed to transformational) approach has characterized the post-1994 merger processes (Seepe & Lebakeng, 1998: 6-7). Considering that the HE mergers themselves were a part (means to an end) of a policy strategy for the total overhauling of South African society into a genuinely democratic and socio-economically emancipated (as opposed to re-engineered) dispensation, political liberation has only preceded economic transformation. Therefore, higher education transformation requires a more radical approach concomitant with the massive socio-economic disparities that are still pervasive – such that South Africa has even been regarded as the most unequal society on the planet. A more succinct view of the symbiotic link between HE transformation and macrocosmic socio-economic development is encapsulated by Adedeji (1998:6-7):

“Indeed, in the increasingly competitive global economy, education holds the key to the capacity of countries to face the next millennium and substantially improve both the standard of living and the quality of life of their people. There is no way in which a country can transform its political economy and society without first transforming its schools and its universities. No one now disputes the fact that education is a critical ingredient in the transformational process”.

172
5.4.2 Organisational Recommendations

In the argot of local higher education development, the term “diversity” has been inadequately applied and limited to programmatic and missions differentiation mainly (Cloete, et al., 1999; Cloete & Bunting, 2000). Such a limited application to ‘diversity” erroneously gives the impression that “transformation” in higher education is an end in itself. However, in its entirety, the notion of diversity embraces all of an institution’s operational and instructional functioning (Duderstadt, 2000:193). Therefore, examples such as diversifying funding streams and diversifying the curriculum to cater for different kinds of learners indicate the microcosmic application of “diversity”. By limiting the scope of diversity, South African higher education institutions face the threat of losing students to alternative higher education providers, while attenuating their capacity to serve the multicultural population of the country (Duderstadt, 2000:193). Epistemologically, this paucity (limited diversity) encourages perceptions of the Euro-American ‘copycat’/hegemonic argument, according to which Afrocentric epistemologies are devalued in preference of the canonized Western academic and intellectual cultures and models (Makgoba, 1996:173), thus establishing a monolithic epistemological culture. In support of the above-cited recommendation for a broader range of diversity in higher education development, Power (2001:22) asserts that, “World citizenship does not imply an abandonment of legitimate national and cultural loyalties, nor the abolition of national autonomy, nor the imposition of uniformity. It does imply unity in diversity, internationally as well as nationally... In the twenty-first century, we will need to give much greater attention to developing an understanding of, and respect for, the richness and diversity of the world’s cultures”.

In addition to broad-based diversity in local higher education transformation, and based on both the reviewed literature perspectives and the empirical phase of the study, the researcher recommends further that:

- Institutions should not be hasty to introduce and adopt new models (e.g. academic models) without proper pilots prior to implementation. New models could be very costly to implement. A thorough thought and financial analysis and assessment is therefore necessary prior to the adoption of any new model;
• The sustainability of previously disadvantaged institutions should be prioritised, ensuring that they were not turned into white elephants or become transformation debris when changes take place; and
• Prior to any implementation of a merger-related project, both hard and soft implications on the institution and people involved should clearly be identified and strategies for intervention be developed on time.

5.4.3 Curriculum Recommendations

The researcher contends that mergers have mostly been structural and not much on the core aspects which should address access and success for all South Africans, particularly the black students. The cultural compatibility of the curriculum needs to be rescued and dislodged from its academic ‘comfort zone’ and be elevated to mainstream social/public discourse. Given the multicultural state of South African society, “culture” should translate into making meaning of any segment of knowledge in the curriculum. Culture should not be associated with ‘backwardness’ only when it relates to anything African; but accorded a proselytizing status when relating to Eurocentric modes of knowing. Multiculturalism should be incorporated into the mainstream curriculum as an instrument for fostering equality, democratic citizenship, and interracial understanding and tolerance.

Furthermore, competing epistemological and intellectual interests striving for dominance within local higher education curriculum reform/transformation have tended to dominated debates and epistemological contestations in higher education curriculum development. These contestations range from the orientation towards the retention of the subject/discipline, to the various modes of deconstructing the subject; as demonstrated in the inter-/trans-/multi-disciplinary schools of thought that promote “skills” over “knowledge”. There is also the continuing ‘struggle’ for the integration of Africanisation in the HE curriculum – as opposed to Africanisation of the HE curriculum. The former (Africanisation in the HE curriculum) implies that Africanisation (Afrocentric perspectives) are partially integrated in some aspects of the curriculum; whereas the latter (Africanisation of the HE curriculum) implies that Afrocentric perspectives are incorporated to every aspect of the higher education curriculum.

It is the researcher’s contention that bringing about curriculum change should not be confined to only the productivity interests of the capital-economy-industry nexus. Furthermore, the notion of Africanisation should not be merely regarded as only a culturally significant factor.
Broadening the curriculum base should not only be restricted to the intrusion of ‘non-academic’ models to the preferred ‘mainstream’ options. Broadening access and diversity should be characterized by ideological, epistemological/intellectual, and the philosophical rationale for studying. If an emancipatory rationale and logic does not constitute such a rationale (such as perpetuated by socially exclusionary agendas which feed the ‘hidden curriculum’), the Africanisation ideology is the one missing component in the total and complete democratisation of the higher education curriculum. (Eurocentricism and its economic ramification – globalization – is itself an ideology).

In the view of this study, the mediation of Africanisation as an epistemological, rather than an affirmative action/employment equity exercise, is the only viable proposition to resolving “… a clear tension between responsiveness understood as directed to social development, and responsiveness as a necessary reaction to financial constraints and the marketisation of higher education” (Gibbon, 2003: 229). Stunted in the “negotiated settlement” mode of intellectual discourse, Africanisation’s viability could only be realistic in the inclusive mode of HE curriculum transformation. The ideological ramifications of higher education curriculum development bring to the fore the contrast between rhetoric and actual curriculum practices; between the taught or stated/official and the unstated/unofficial or “hidden” curriculum. The currently-adopted Western university model is founded on cultural values that are diametrically opposed to African value systems (e.g. privatism versus communalism), and propagate liberalism at the socio-economic level. The ideological function (ergo, the link between knowledge, culture, and identity) are not openly stated as the function of the content of learning, and the extent (and context) to which that learning will be put to use. While the ideological-political function is not overtly stated, when Africanisation is mentioned, it is overtly cited as being “political”. Freire (1972) and Lyotard (1994) have repudiated the neutrality of any form of knowledge.

The dominance of market-oriented curriculum perspectives is another factor that warrants close scrutiny. While the impact of globalisation, ICT, and democratisation of societies on the higher education environment could not be refuted, many academic analysts and commentators denounce the extent of higher education curriculum’s resolute orientation to the interests of the market and the ‘world of work’ (Margolis et al., 2000). To that extent, the curriculum is viewed as preparing students for the functionary role of (neo) capitalism’s “foot soldiers”. Cast in that mould, HE becomes subservient to the private sector – thus ushering into its terrain contending constituencies. By devoting substantial resources to ‘perfecting’
the instruments of capital (in the form of job-compliant skills), higher education institutions could inadvertently become the terrain for competing ‘stakeholders’ and ‘shareholders’, with society becoming the least beneficiary.

While the need to infuse work-specific skills into the HE curriculum is not in dispute, the researcher argues that curriculum development and management perspectives should maintain a balance between the broad transformation policy objectives, societal needs, and the imperatives of the corporate sector without devaluing the role of higher education in purely developing individuals’ intellect. There are fields of study that do not necessarily entail capital currency upon completion of HE studies. Examples in this regard include fields such as the classics, theology, and so on.

5.4.4 Teaching and Learning Recommendations

In a merged higher education context, the distribution of faculties or colleges should be based on transformation principles and be implemented in ways which sought to benefit the broader masses of society. As is the case in the epistemological, intellectual, and academic domains, the conservation of traditional modes of teaching and learning is inimical to the objectives of mergers as transformation-oriented mechanisms to align the country to global trends and practices. Teacher-centeredness is still the predominant mode of curriculum delivery. By further extension, the academy’s hold on curriculum management has made it (the academy) ‘averse ‘to external influences, even to knowledge practitioners in the ‘training’ field (e.g. evaluators/assessors of skills).

‘Outsiders’ are viewed as being intellectually incompetent to evaluate any component of the curriculum. Ironically, the skills capacity and work readiness of graduates need this kind of input (Haines, 2003:193). While matriculation serves as the conventional admission and entry requirement, therefore the predominant determinants of academic ‘readiness’, the methodology used for determining its efficacy for learners from unequal secondary education backgrounds, warrants scrutiny (Naude, 2003:115). The methods of assessment (a factor of staff training) require a distinction between knowledge content and knowledge application (skills and competence development). To a large extent, the preferred (mainstream) curriculum models magnify the virtues of ‘popular’ courses from the ‘unpopular’ ones.
The researcher recommends further that higher education development should be incorporated as a field of study. The complexity of higher education development and functioning necessitates that this not be left to researchers and policy makers only. Students should be exposed to the complexities of this multipurpose organization as a publicly funded institution. Students will further explore the kind of changes the university has undergone throughout its history as an institution of society. The problem of higher education as a field of study being a “discipline in status nascendi” (Frackmann, 1997:116) – in search of “disciplinary identity” – could be resolved by applying a multi-disciplinary approach. Such an approach would locate into various departments, the function of structuring ‘content’, derived from among others, the policy environment and developmental studies. The longer higher education becomes only a matter of “special interest” to policy makers and researchers, the more the risk of the curriculum becoming an ideologically instrumentalised domain. ‘Curriculum studies’, for instance, should not be a mere pedagogic exercise in mitigating justification for behaviouristic theories of knowledge organization. Such studies should instead become the infrastructural domain within which the super structural domain (higher education in general, as a field of study) is facilitated and studied by students.

This proposition is highly emphasised here, as “… it underlines the need for a radical re-examination of the role and functions of higher education systems and institutions” (Mayor, 1997: xi). In an age of student-centric learning, higher education challenges in the millennium are so diverse that a student perspective is necessary in the form of a formally-constructed course of study in this field. Why not? Wouldn’t HE be contributing to the training of public policy makers and researchers at early stages of their lives? In addition, research into HE as a field of study would most importantly, advance the course of empiricism and case study research, which are direly needed skills in investigating curriculum development in practical terms.

5.4.5 Stakeholder Recommendations

Considering that the merger implementation involved processes, systems, and individuals/people with a broad range of professional, technical, and academic skills and knowledge, it is therefore critically significant that broad-based consultative and participatory stakeholder involvement approaches be applied. All stakeholders and other parties with vested interests should be afforded and accorded proportionally equitable status in order to attenuate ‘winner takes all’ propensities.
In the case of the TUT merger, the empirical phase – as a form of stakeholder involvement by the researcher – focused mainly on organised labour and senior management staff, all of whom offered valuable insights and perspectives. Neglecting organised labour would have denied credibility, representativity, and openness to the merger process as a whole. The lesson learnt in this regard, as well as the concomitant recommendation is that, all labour unions juristically represented on any campus undertaking transformation processes should be consulted and involved throughout the entire process, and not at selective stages only.

**Media involvement** should not be underestimated. During the merger implementation processes in general, and the TUT merger in particular, the public media in particular was not optimally utilised to inform and educate the public on the mergers. Such an opportunity would also assist in communicating unambiguous and clear information to the public, such that misconceptions and uniformed views are pre-empted without resorting to propagandistic inclinations.

### 5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The main limitation of the study is located in its **scope of investigation** by focusing on only a single merger (TUT) within a motley of a revamped higher education landscape. However, the case study approach – largely due to its qualitative orientation – attenuated the numeric/quantitative dimension of the total of the post-merger HEIs. In addition, the research design and research methods – on the basis of triangulated generalizability – complemented the microcosmic findings and their applicability in the macrocosmic ‘universe of universities’ numbering twenty one.

Secondly, the study was undertaken before 2004, and its report was published in 2003. Its period of consideration focused on **two different periods**. For instance, the study investigated access to higher education even during the three years during which the National Party (NP) or New National Party (NNP) was in power, and not the ANC. The study could potentially and unintentionally misdirect the reader and the public on issues of transformation especially that the report referred to above was published just two days prior to the announcement of the higher education mergers by the South African government. The study correctly documented some of the transformation-related achievements which occurred after the 1994 elections, and before the implementation of the massive merger project.
Thirdly, the *deficiency in the broader stakeholder involvement* could render the study devoid of these stakeholders’ perspectives. For instance, no students, curriculum practitioners, middle managers, other labour organisations such as Solidarity, and the public were consulted. The inclusion of these stakeholders would have enhanced ‘the weight of evidence’ and broadened stakeholder involvement, thus nullifying perceptions of HEIs as elitist organisations.

5.6  **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Considering the nature of the study, as focusing on a phenomenal project with no local precedence and immediate topicality of available literature, the empirical phase of the research was critical in obtaining information on only one higher education institution. The researcher advocates that future research on local HE mergers should also focus on *participatory* research methods in order to obtain ‘untainted’ eye-witness accounts.

The proposition for further research hinges mostly on the extent to which limitations occurred and, therefore, the environment of the study’s objectives. A generalistic proposition, rather than an item-by-item approach is that the study as a whole has been designed and approached in a thematically centripetal manner; to that extent, a conceptual ‘overlap’ prevails.
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LIST OF APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1:
UNISA PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
Dear Mr. Moleyi,

Your thesis for the DPA

This serves to confirm our telephone conversation that the Senior Degrees Committee for Public Administration and Management have approved your research proposal with its title and that we have allocated a Promoter and a Joint Promoter to guide you through your studies. You will also receive a letter from the Registrar once the College has dealt with the recommendations.

The particulars are:

Title: Mergers in South African Higher Education: Realisation of policy intentions?
Promoter: Professor V A Clippers (telephone at extension 6378)
TW: 6 - 02
Joint Promoter: Dr G Naidoo (telephone at extension 6746)
TW: 4 - 07

You are also advised to make use of the services of your Personal Librarian, Ms M Malan at extension 3219.
The writing of a thesis should be based on deep and extensive reading.

Best wishes with your research and writing.

Prof J C Paauw
Chair: Senior Degrees Committee: Public Administration and Management
E-mail: paauwjc@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 4296266
Facsimile: 012 4296075
APPENDIX 2A:
TUT PERMISSION TO CONDUCT ON-SITE RESEARCH
Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

11 June 2015

Prof G Naidoo
Head of Department
Public Management and Administration
Unisa

Dear Professor Naidoo

APPROVAL LETTER

This letter serves to confirm that Mr MC Baloyi was permitted to:

(a) Use the merger case of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) for his PhD research;

(b) Interview seven (7) senior officials of the University, whom he selected with their consent, to be his respondents; and

(c) Use the data collected in line with the generally acceptable research standards and ethics.

Kind regards

[Signature]

Prof Laurens van Staden
VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRINCIPAL

We empower people
Tel. (012) 382-4112/5, Fax (012) 382-0422, www.tut.ac.za • Private Bag X080, Pretoria 0001
APPENDIX 2B:

TUT APPROVAL TO CONDUCT ON-SITE RESEARCH
11 June 2015

Prof G Naidoo
Head of Department
Public Management and Administration
Unisa
1 Preller Street
Muckleneuk
Pretoria
0002

Dear Professor Naidoo,

RE: APPROVAL LETTER

This letter serves to confirm that Mr MC Baloyi, during my term as Vice Chancellor and Principal of the Tshwane University of Technology was granted permission to use the merger case of Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) for the purposes of his research towards a PhD at UNISA. He proceeded to collect data and interviewed respondents who also were in the employ of the University. He demonstrated to my satisfaction and those of my other colleagues that he would operate within the ethical parameters that govern research of this nature. I am not aware of issue that might cast doubts on ethical conduct in the course of this study.

I therefore recommend that you should not at all hesitate to consider his data and provide him with the requisite support where applicable.

Kind regards,

Erol M Tyobeka (Prof)
Special Advisor to the Rector
APPENDIX 3A: REQUEST FOR RESPONDENTS INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION

Good Morning Convy

Please the below as requested.

Kid regards.

Dorah Molepo
Personal Assistant
Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Finance & Business Development
Tshwane University of Technology
Building 21, 5th Floor, Room 545
Tel.: 27 12 382 4713/5426
Fax: 27 12 382 5424
E-mail address: Molepodd@tut.ac.za

From: Baloyi, Convy [mailto:Baloymc@unisa.ac.za]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2009 4:42 PM
To: Dorah Molepo
Subject: REQUEST

Dear Dorah,

Kindly e-mail me the e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers of the following people:

- Engela van Staden, VanStadenEL@tut.ac.za 012-382 4903
- Doeke Tromp, TrompD@tut.ac.za 012-382 5056
- Chairperson of NUTESA
- Chairperson of NEHAWU, MakitlaTG@tut.ac.za 012-382
- Susan Niemann (for Prof. van Staden), NiemannS@tut.ac.za 012-382 4690
- Chairperson of the Institutional Forum

I have to make personal appointments with them for individual interviews on the merger.
Kind regards

Convy Baloyi
Dean of Students
University of South Africa (UNISA)
9th Floor, TvW 9-38
Pretoria, 0003
Tel: 012-429 2552
Cell: 0825603900
E-mail: baloymc@unisa.ac.za

Tshwane University of Technology
This email is sent and received in terms of the Electronic Communications Policy of Tshwane University of Technology. In line with this policy, this email is private, privileged and confidential. The full text of the Electronic Mail Disclaimer can be seen on the TUT website at http://www.tut.ac.za/Other/disclaimer/Pages/default.aspx or obtained by phoning (012) 382-5911
From: Baloyi, Convy
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 11:06 AM
To: ‘anonymous’
Cc: ‘nyelel@absamail.co.za’
Subject: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Respondent,

Thank you for your kind availability under the circumstances. My research is titled: Mergers in South African Higher Education: Realization of Policy Intentions. I am investigating whether the merger has ensured the fulfillment of policy intentions of Government. TUT is the case I am using to describe the merger implementation process. As a result, you are one of my respondents in your capacity as XYZ.

The interview will not be structured; however these are some of the questions that may guide your preparations. You will be expected to express your views and experiences on the merger implementation of TUT between November 2003 (announcement of merger) and 31 December 2007 (post-merger implementation):

1. State your names and surname (optional in view of number 9 below) as well as the position which you were holding in the TUT Council between 2003 and 2007.
2. Explain the role that you were playing in the merger execution process of TUT between 2003 and 2007.
3. What did you understand to have been the key policy intentions of government with the merger?
4. Which of these policy intentions (which you have identified under 3) were achieved by the TUT merger execution process?
5. How were they achieved?
6. What are the key success factors attributed to the TUT merger execution process?
7. What were the shortcomings of the TUT merger execution process?
8. What needs to be prevented from happening should a merger of the same magnitude be commissioned by government in the future?
9. For ethical reasons: will you prefer to be quoted directly or will you opt for anonymity?

I am looking forward to interviewing you following the confirmation of your availability with your office.

Kind regards

Convy Baloyi
Dean of Students
University of South Africa (UNISA)
Theo van Wijk Bld
9th Floor, Room 9-38
Tel: 012 429 2552
Fax: 012 429 6482
E-mail: baloymc@unisa.ac.za
APPENDIX 4: COPY OF INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I recognize that MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Convy Baloyi, as a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others, the description on whether the 2004 implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realize policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baloyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview.

Date of the interview: 4 February 2009

Time:  12:00 – 13:00

Venue: Pretoria Campus (CFO’s office)

Signature of interviewee: _____________________

Signature of interviewer: ______________________________________
APPENDIX 5:

TUT VICE CHANCELLOR’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW & USE OF DATA COLLECTED

[Signature]

RECIPROK recognises that

MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION:

REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Convy Baloyi, a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others the discussion on whether the 2004 Implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realise policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using an audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baloyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview

Date of the interview: 26 February 2009

Time: 12:00 - 13:00

Venue: Pretoria Campus (CEO's Office)

Signature of Interviewee: [Signature]

Signature of Interviewer: [Signature]
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW & USE OF DATA COLLECTED

I, [Name], recognise that

MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION:
REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Convy Baloyi, as a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others, the description on whether the 2004 implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realize policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baloyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview.

Date of the interview: 4 February 2009

Time: 12:00 – 13:00

Venue: Pretoria Campus (CFO's office)

Signature of interviewee: [Signature]

Signature of interviewer: [Signature]
APPENDIX 7: FIRST PAGE OF THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT
BETWEEN TNG, TP & TNW

Source: an extract from CD Rom titled Merger History (OMC12) from the Strategic Planner’s Office, 2004

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

Entered into by and between:

TECHNIKON NORTHERN GAUTENG
(established as a Technikon in terms of the Higher Education Act, Act No. 101 of 1997)

and

TECHNIKON NORTH WEST
(established as a Technikon in terms of the Higher Education Act, Act No. 101 of 1997)

and

TECHNIKON PRETORIA
(established as a Technikon in terms of the Higher Education Act, Act No. 101 of 1997)

[Signature]

EMC181/2003(37)
APPENDIX 8: COVER PAGE OF NUTESA ARBITRATION AGAINST TUT MANAGEMENT

In the Voluntary Arbitration Agreement entered into by and between

TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
(Hereinafter referred to as "TUT")

and

NATIONAL UNION OF TERTIARY EDUCATORS OF SOUTH AFRICA
(Hereinafter referred to as "NUTESA")

MATTERS FOR VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION

BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE THAT NUTESA herewith lodges its list of matters to be decided by arbitration:

FURTHER BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE that the list herewith lodged is delivered in terms of the agreement entered into between the parties and dated Monday 9th February 2009;

AND FURTHER BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE that the list herewith lodged has been drawn as an exhaustive list that will encompass all outstanding and contentious issues regarding the legitimate and statutory strike embarked upon by the members of NUTESA on Friday, 23rd January 2009.

Thus done and signed on Monday, 18th February 2009.

For NUTESA

Received:

For TUT
APPENDIX 9: VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN TUT AND NUTESA

In the Voluntary Arbitration Agreement entered into by and between

TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
(Hereinafter referred to as 'TUT')

and

NATIONAL UNION OF TERTIARY EDUCATORS OF SOUTH AFRICA
(Hereinafter referred to as 'NUTESA')

MATTERS FOR VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION

BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE THAT NUTESA herewith lodges its list of matters to be decided by arbitration;

FURTHER BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE that the list herewith lodged is delivered in terms of the agreement entered into between the parties and dated Monday 9th February 2009;

AND FURTHER BE PLEASED TO TAKE NOTICE that the list herewith lodged has been drawn as an exhaustive list that will encompass all outstanding and contentious issues regarding the legitimate and statutory strike embarked upon by the members of NUTESA on Friday, 28th January 2008.

Thus done and signed on Monday, 16th February 2009.

For NUTESA

Received:

For TUT
South African Universities Outlook

It is the mission of the Department of Higher Education and Training to develop capable, well-educated and skilled citizens who are able to compete in a sustainable, diversified and knowledge-intensive international economy, which meets the development goals of our country.

University of Cape Town

The University of Cape Town (UCT) is a public research university located in Cape Town in the Western Cape province of South Africa. UCT was founded in 1829 as the South African College, and is the oldest university in South Africa and the second oldest extant university in Africa. The language of instruction is English.
Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University (SU) is striving towards a welcoming campus culture that will make all students, staff and visitors feel at home, irrespective of origin, ethnicity, language, gender, religious. Stellenbosch University has ten faculties: AgriSciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Medical and Health Sciences, Engineering, Military Sciences, Arts and Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Law, Engineering and Education.

University of Pretoria

Established in 1908, the University of Pretoria is a multi-campus public research university in Pretoria. The University is organised into nine faculties and a business school. Established in 1920, the University of Pretoria – Faculty of Veterinary Science – is the second oldest veterinary school in Africa and the only veterinary school in South Africa.

University of the Witwatersrand

The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, is a multi-campus South African public research university situated in the northern areas of central Johannesburg. It is more commonly known as Wits University. Wits University contributes to the global knowledge economy and local transformation through generating high level, scarce skills and innovative research. The South African University has 5 faculties, Commerce, Law and Management; Health Sciences; Humanities and Science.
University of KwaZulu Natal

The University of KwaZulu-Natal or UKZN is a university with five campuses all located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. A truly South African university that is academically excellent, innovative in research, critically engaged with society and demographically representative, redressing the disadvantages, inequities and imbalances of the past.

University of the Western Cape

The University of the Western Cape is a public university located in the Bellville suburb of Cape Town, South Africa. In its mission, the University of the Western Cape strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. The University of The Western Cape has grown to become one of the best universities in South Africa.

Rhodes University

Rhodes University is a public research university located in Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, established in 1904. It is the province’s oldest university, and is one of the four universities in the province. Rhodes has six faculties: Humanities, Commerce, Law, Science, Education and Pharmacy.
University of South Africa

The University of South Africa is the largest university on the African continent and attracts a third of all higher education students in South Africa. UNISA has a reputable, comprehensive, flexible and accessible open distance learning institution that is motivating a future generation. We offer internationally accredited qualifications and have world-class resources.

University of Johannesburg

The University of Johannesburg (UJ) is a public university located in Johannesburg, South Africa. The newly emerged institution is one of the largest comprehensive contact universities in South Africa, with nine faculties having more than 90 departments and an enrollment of approximately 48,000 students, spreading over four different campuses. The university is one of the largest residential universities in the Republic of South Africa.

North West University

As a multi-campus university, the NWU offers students choice and variety, both academically and geographically. Collectively, the three campuses have 15 academic faculties, which in turn consist of more than 50 schools. Some faculties also have centres and institutes offering short courses, other types of skills development and various community and commercial services. NWU Vaal focuses on programmes in economic sciences, commerce, information technology, education, social science, languages and the humanities.
University of the Free State

The University of the Free State is a multi campus public university in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Free State. As part of the mission to become ‘a university recognised across the world for excellence in academic achievement and in human reconciliation’, the university, its staff, students and alumni play a pivotal role in the central parts of South Africa, the country as a whole, the region, Africa and abroad. Academic Divisions include: Economic and Management Sciences, Education, Health Sciences, Law, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Humanities and Theology.

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) is a South African tertiary education institution with its main administration in the coastal city of Port Elizabeth. NMMU is a comprehensive university offering professional and vocational training. The University has six campuses – five in Port Elizabeth and one in George.

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The Cape Peninsula University of Technology is at the heart of technology education and innovation in Africa. An internationally acclaimed institution, it is the only university of technology in the Western Cape and is the largest university in the region with an enrolment of more than 30 000 students. The university has six faculties offering a wide range of accredited undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the fields of Applied Sciences, Business, Education and Social Sciences, Engineering, Informatics and Design as well as Health and Wellness Sciences.
Durban University of Technology

With approximately 23,000 students, the Durban University of Technology (DUT) is the first choice for higher education in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). It is located in the beautiful cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg (PMB). As a University of Technology, it prioritises the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring its academic staff possess the highest possible qualification that they can get.

University of Zululand

The University of Zululand is the only comprehensive tertiary educational institution north of the Tugela River in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Unizulu offers career-focused programmes as well as a limited number of relevant university degree courses that have been structured with potential employees and employers in mind. Programs are offered within four faculties: Arts, Commerce, administration and law, Education and Science and agriculture.

Vaal University of Technology

Vaal University of Technology is a tertiary institution in South Africa and attracts students from all over the country. It is one of the largest residential Universities of Technology, with about 15,000 students, 300 programs, all primarily taught in English. The campus and facilities are conducive to learning, research, recreation and sport, art and culture, and community service.
Central University of Technology

Central University of Technology is based in Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa and was established in 1981. The Central University of Technology employs over 800 academic and research staff spread across four faculties: Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology; Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences; Faculty of Humanities; Faculty of Management Sciences and General description for Africa Universities site.

Walter Sisulu University

Walter Sisulu University is a university of technology and science in Mthatha, Eastern Cape, South Africa, which came into existence on 1 July 2005. WSU is a developmental university, focusing on urban renewal and rural development by responding to the socio-economic needs of community, commerce and industry through science, technology and innovation. The university is organised by faculty: Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology; Faculty of Health Sciences; Faculty of Business, Management Sciences & Law; Faculty of Education.

University of Limpopo

The University of Limpopo is a public university in the Limpopo Province, South Africa and was formed in 2005. The Campus is situated to the north-west of Pretoria. Its grounds extend over some 350 ha adjoining the Ga-Rankuwa Township and are easily accessible by roads and rail. The University of Limpopo stands for human and environmental wellness in a rural context; finding solutions for Africa!
Tshwane University of Technology

Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) is a public higher education institution in South Africa that to life in 2004. As the number of students registering annually grows rapidly, records show that Tshwane University of Technology caters for approximately 60,000 students and it has become the largest residential higher education institution in South Africa.

University of Fort Hare

The University of Fort Hare is a public university in Alice, Eastern Cape, South Africa. The 5 faculties include: Education; Science & Agriculture; Social Sciences & Humanities; Management & Commerce; Law. The staff are committed to helping students fulfill diverse needs and in the process development, responsibility, and accountability are promoted.

Additional information
Downloaded from: www.careerhelp.org.za/List-of-23-SA-Universities.html
(accessed on 08 October 2012)

List of universities in South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Technology</th>
<th>KwaZulu-Natal</th>
<th><a href="http://www.mut.ac.za">www.mut.ac.za</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Venda</td>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td><a href="http://www.univen.ac.za">www.univen.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Public universities in South Africa are divided into three types: traditional universities, which offer theoretically-oriented university degrees; universities of technology, which offer vocational oriented diplomas and degrees; and comprehensive universities, which offer a combination of both types of qualification.
APPENDIX 11:
TUT DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR TEACHING, LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW & USE OF DATA COLLECTED

1. PROF LR van Staden____________________recognise that
MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION:
REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Convy Baloyi, as a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others, the description on whether the 2004 implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realize policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baloyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview.

Date of the Interview: 27 February 2009

Time: 12:00 – 13:00

Venue: Pretoria Campus (DVC’s Office at Building 11)

Signature of interviewee: ______________________

Signature of interviewer: _____________________
APPENDIX 12:
TUT NEHAWU REPRESENTATIVE’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW & USE OF DATA COLLECTED

I, Thapelo C. Makita, recognise that MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION:

REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Caro V. Baleyi, a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others, the description on whether the 2004 implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realize policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baleyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview.

Date of the Interview: 22 February 2009

Time: 10:00 – 11:00

Venue: Pretoria Campus (Student Affairs Office)

Signature of interviewee: [signature]

Signature of interviewer: [signature]
APPENDIX 13:
TUT DIRECTOR STRATEGIC PLANNING’S SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT FORM
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW & USE OF DATA COLLECTED

I, Elvan Study, recognise that

MERGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: REALIZATION OF POLICY INTENTIONS?

is a study conducted by Mr. Convy Baloyi, as a PhD student of the University of South Africa, and that he is using the merger case of TUT as his source of description. I contributed to this study as a respondent to the interview only.

He made me to understand that the primary purpose, objectives and rationale of the study include among others, the description on whether the 2004 implementation of mergers in the South African higher education sector and system was able to realize policy goals of the government.

I also understand my role as a research participant/respondent to the interview and the fact that the information gathered in this interview will be utilized solely for the purpose of the study as described in the paragraph above.

I am aware that the interviewer took notes and recorded the conversation using audio digital recording instrument to ensure accurate documentation of information during the interview. I am aware that the use of records and data will be subject to standard research policies which protect the anonymity of individuals participating in this interview, unless advised otherwise.

Mr. Baloyi has my permission to use the outcome of the interview.

Date of the Interview: 3 February 2009

Time: 10:30 – 11:30

Venue: Pretoria Campus (Strategic Planning Directorate Office)

Signature of interviewee: __________________________

Signature of interviewer: __________________________