UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

AN ANALYSIS OF TUITION POLICY DISCOURSES IN HISTORICALLY BLACK AND WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

By

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DECLARATION

I Nokwazi Maseko declare that this Thesis/Dissertation/Research Report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

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(Signature of candidate)

28 day of May 20 24 in Braamfontein

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the discourses around tuition policies in Historically Black and Historically White Institutions. This was motivated by the move towards incorporating discourse analysis into policy studies, contributing to the literature regarding discourse in higher education tuition policies, and understanding how discourse affects policy decisions. All these are aimed at addressing the shortfalls in tuition policy which contribute to issues such as the ongoing student protests. Semi structured interviews were conducted with 11 participants and were analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis tools provided by Machin and Mayr (2012). The analysis showed that the historical discourses and personal ideologies held by those in power influence policy decisions. The study concluded that a reflexive and discourse orientated approach in the policies of HBIs and HWIs would promote policy solutions that are tailored for each institutional type, and this may ultimately decrease the frequency of tuition related protests.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Tuition Policy, Historically Black and Historically White Institutions

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study intends to analyse the discourses around tuition policy in historically black and white universities in South Africa. It is worth noting that the study does not contain an analysis of internal university or higher education policies, but rather considers the relationship between policy and discourse and how this ultimately affects tuition policy in historically black and white universities.

There has been a global shift calling for incorporating discourse studies into policy studies. This also includes the tuition policies of higher education institutions (Adger & Wright, 2015). Previously, literature describing tuition increases and the policies supporting them was based largely on traditional (rational) theories, which provided important ways of understanding them. Mzangwa (2019:8) states that traditional theories of policymaking and analysis largely "derive from economic principles and apply tools such as cost-effective analysis and cost-benefit analysis, which are rooted in the positivist approach, also known as the rationalist policy analysis". This approach seldom acknowledged how the whole policy-making environment involves different discourses shaping policy outcomes. However, over the last few years, there has been a move towards integrating discourse studies into policy studies to cover the shortfalls of practice-based theories (Mulderrig, Montessori, & Farrelly, 2020).

Like most organisations, higher education institutions (HEIs) are governed by policies. Policy can be defined as legislative guidelines according to which decisions are made and are tailored towards achieving specific goals or targets (Hinostroza-Paredes, 2020). These policies are meant to serve those whom they are created for and to address the issues that affect them to create a more cohesive social order (Faine et al., 2016) which is defined by Cummings, de Haan, & Seferiadis (2020:99) as "social practices networked in a particular way". Furthermore, the introduction of corporatisation models in government entities such as New Public Management (section 2.5) has also destabilised the social order in HEIs.

The rise in student protests in recent years presented challenges to the cohesive social order that university policies seek to achieve. These protests stem from different factors, including those related to financial issues such as tuition and financial aid (Becker, 2010; Ejoke, Enwereji, & Chukwuere, 2019). Some prominent examples include the 2010 UK student protests, the 2011 Quebec and Chile student protests, and the 2015 #FeesMustFall movement in South Africa. This study focused on carrying out a multi-case study critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the discourses around university tuition fee policies in Historically Black (HBIs) and Historically White (HWIs) South African institutions in Gauteng between 2015 and 2020. The selected period for the study saw the advancement of the #FeesMustFall movement, which gained momentum in 2015 and has continued until now. This period also saw several changes in the tuition policies of various HEIs.

The institutions selected for this study are the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and the University of Johannesburg (UJ). These were selected because of their proximity to each other and their participation in the #FeesMustFall movement. Besides their proximity (2 kilometres) to each other (CityMeter, 2022), their diverse histories and student populations, they were both part of the #FeesMustFall protests and are both highly ranked HEIs in their respective rights. Wits University is representative of a traditional HWI, and it was eventually foregrounded as the face of the #FeesMustFall movement (Naidoo, 2016). On the other hand, UJ has a unique composition of both HWIs and HBIs merged into a single entity, making it a distinctive inquiry location. It is also worth mentioning that because of the changes in the South African higher education landscape, these universities are no longer as different as they previously were.

It is particularly important in the South African context to understand the discourses that shape how university policies are made and the influences behind how they are applied because "discourses are also subject to institutions, power relations and ideology" (Cummings et al., 2020:101). With the existing distinctions in higher education between HBIs and HWIs, how these are funded and the overall legacies that shape their creation and influence students' experiences in them, it is increasingly important to unsubscribe from the view that policies are strictly rational processes that achieve rational results across the board. The histories of these institutions and how they are funded imply different experiences, which makes a rational approach less suitable for understanding policy-making within them and calls for an interrogation of the discourses within them (Bacchi, 2000; Ntshoe & de Villiers, 2008).

This distinction is also significant to this study because while it does acknowledge that a single institution may have various discourses influencing its tuition policy, an analysis of two historically different institutions with differing legacies, governance methods, origins and experiences may provide richer data and may possibly highlight differing discourses affecting them. Although these universities have gained similarities over the years, their historical contexts remain relevant to this study.

There are understandably other factors that form part of tuition policy processes, however, for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on discourse. This requires interrogation of the views held by key role players in tuition policy formulation, such as university council and senate members, members in the registrar's office, managers in central finance and funding departments, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the South African Union of Students (SAUS). All these directly or indirectly influence tuition policy texts, and seeing as CDA is concerned with the influence of power structures on people, processes, and outcomes, those who hold power are key (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

After South Africa became a democratic state in 1994, one of the goals of the post-apartheid government was to address the inequalities caused by the previous government (Badat & Sayed, 2014)**.** This was done partly by granting previously disadvantaged students access to tertiary education equivalent to their white counterparts through various policies discussed in section 2.3 (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012)**.** Questions then arise regarding why tuition-related protests are still prevalent and appear sporadically at different times when policies are in place in government and at individual institutions.

This is why the context in which policy is made should be as important as the documented policy changes (Bacchi, 2000), since policy is formulated in specific environments containing different discourses that are bound to influence the process of and the outcomes of policy (Fairclough, 2013). Reality should be reflective of policy outcomes for a policy to be considered successful. Mzangwa (2019) states that attempts to transform higher education policies have not resulted in material benefits for most previously disadvantaged people when it comes to higher education. This may indicate a failure of policy in some ways to take into account the histories and contexts of HBIs and HWIs and suggests a need for further study.

1.1 Defining Discourse

It is important to define discourse and its application to this study for clarity since various scholars agree that there is no single universally accepted definition of discourse. Gasper & Apthorpe (1996:2) state how "significant gaps exist between the definitions in different research streams in the social sciences and policy fields", highlighting that the term can be used in multiple ways for different purposes. Bacchi (2000:46) argues that "the whole idea of discourse is that definitions play an important part in delineating 'knowledge'". He further suggests that definitions of discourse should, therefore, not be replicated but rather critically analysed since theorists who view policy-as-discourse apply the term to accomplish a goal that usually calls for some change to happen. Taylor (1997) supports this view and states that a single definition of discourse may not be possible since discourse is dynamic and changes with time and context. "Differences in terminology reflect the particular historical and cultural context and have implications for the ways in which particular concepts are used and understood" (Taylor 1997:28). Parker (2008) clarifies that selecting a specific definition can assist in narrowing down the particular discourse/s that researchers want to address when faced with multiple discourses.

Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph (2005:370) argue that discourse calls for change and that it "does ideological work, constitutes society and culture, is situated and historical, power relations are partially discursive, mediation of power relations necessitates a socio-cognitive approach". This is supported by Bacchi (2000:47), who explains how theorists who analyse policy-as-discourse "are primarily interested in identifying the reasons progressive change has proved so difficult to accomplish. Hence, they tend to emphasize the constraints imposed by discourses through meaning construction". These theorists also understand that society is influenced by more than just subjective meanings; meanings are connected to historical conditions (Howarth, 2010).

This view guided the definition of discourse in this study, specifically that history, context and power are central to discourse studies and that discourse is situated in knowledge creation, requires change to happen, and questions existing ideologies in society. Additionally, the theoretical framework guiding the study was Critical Discourse Analysis and certain elements of CDA were used in the analysis of data (discussed further in section 3.4).

1.2 Knowledge Gap

The call for the incorporation of discourse analysis into policy studies mentioned previously is due to several scholars agreeing that since context and power relations matter, they should not be separated from policy, especially that which concerns issues of social justice (Adger & Wright, 2015; Bacchi, 2000; Howarth, 2010). Looking at tuition policy and discourse analysis in South Africa revealed that studies considering the two have been conducted in the country and other parts of the world, including those discussing transformation policies within the higher education sector. Saarinen (2008) also states that while the methods belonging to CDA have been applied to policy analysis, it has not been a frequent topic within higher education spaces. This has, however, evolved and "CDA has been widely used for policy analysis by academics because it can be employed to identify dominant, marginal, oppositional or alternative discourses within policy texts, such as policy documents and speeches" (Cummings et al., 2020:99). However, a multi-case study conducted in South Africa, with a particular focus on acknowledging the differences between HBIs and HWIs whilst attempting to uncover and understand how different discourses around tuition policy may influence the policy decisions within them, especially considering the continuing protests against the cost of higher education fees, would be a useful contribution to the field of tuition policy in higher education. This is the gap that this research seeks to address.

1.3 Problem Statement

The limited literature on the discourses around tuition policies in South Africa affects how effective policy can be in addressing the inequalities left by apartheid. It also influences how tuition policies are formulated and what they seek to achieve by addressing issues of access and equality as part of the right to education stipulated in the constitution. It is also important to consider how the discourses around tuition policies in HEIs, power, and the ideologies held by key policy contributors influence the policy process and outcomes. Failure to address these problems within the policies of HEIs may see a continuation of student protests, seemingly without tangible solutions to address the issues at the core of these protests.

1.4 Purpose Statement

This study sought to explore the discourses around tuition policy in historically black and white universities in South Africa. The main aims of the study were to consider these in light of the global shift towards incorporating discourse studies into policy studies, to contribute to the literature regarding the discourses around tuition policies in South African universities, and to understand how different discourses, power, and ideologies may influence policy decisions given the continuous student protests against higher education fees. The study also endeavoured to explore how failure to address tuition issues in the policies of HEIs may see a continuation of student protests, especially if the problems at the core of the protests are not addressed. A critical discourse analysis framework informed the research questions and will also assist in the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the participants.

In seeking to address the issues briefly mentioned above, the following research questions guided this study:

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 What major identifiable discourses influence university tuition policy formation in Historically Black and Historically White Institutions?

Sub question: What are the foregrounded and backgrounded discourses in the tuition policies of HBIs and HWIs?

1.5.2 How does Critical Discourse Analysis explain changes in university tuition policies between 2015 and 2020?

Sub question: How did the #FeesMustFall movement influence discourses around tuition policies in Historically Black and White Institutions between 2015 and 2020?

1.6 Conclusion

This section introduced the study by highlighting the need for incorporating discourse studies into policy studies and discussed the focus of the study by situating it in its appropriate context and providing reasons for its necessity. It also clarified which definition of discourse would be applied to the study since there are various definitions of discourse. The knowledge gap, problem statement, and purpose statement were also discussed, all of which clarify the rationale for the study. Lastly, the research questions that this study aims to answer were provided.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This section began with an examination of policy as either text or discourse. The histories of UJ and Wits, as well as the backgrounds of HBIs and HWIs and the divisions between the two, were also discussed. This led to a discussion of funding in HEIs focusing on the New Funding Framework as well as sources of higher education funding. Furthermore, New Public Management and its associated discourses in higher education were considered. The review also discussed student protests and considered why there is a move towards viewing policy-as-discourse. The section concluded with a discussion of CDA, its characteristics, criticisms, and its application to policy analysis because this paper is centred on discourse and understanding its influence on policy.

2.1 Policy as Text vs Policy as Discourse

Conversations around policy-as-discourse or policy-as-text arise when considering policy analysis and discourse together (Cummings et al., 2020). Although there are distinctions between the two, they are also interconnected. One of the most cited scholars to propose a distinction between policy-as-text and policy-as-discourse is Ball (1993). His work is widely cited in policy and discourse studies, drawing substantially from Foucault's work on discourse (Bacchi, 2000; Goodwin, 2011; Henry, 1993). According to Ball (1993), policy can be viewed either as text or as discourse; however, policy is both because the two are "implicit in each other" (Ball, 1993: 55).

2.1.1 Policy as Text

"Policy-as-text involves the agency side of policy work: texts are (multi)authored, read in a variety of settings, filtered, creatively acted upon and so forth" (Henry, 1993:102). It consists of the multiple ways in which the text is encoded and decoded. These include the compromises negotiated in creating the text and how different people interpret it. Cahill (2015:304) agrees that from a policy-as-text perspective, "texts are negotiated documents produced through consensus and contain the results of negotiated micro-political mediations". Fimyar (2014:8) quotes Ball (1994) and states that policy-as-text includes "representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors, interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context)". The inclusion of context and experiences suggests a relation between policy-as-text and policy-as-discourse because these form part of discourses and are not always portrayed by text. Ralarala (2019:258) considers policy-as-text specifically in higher education and states how "in the literature on higher education, there seems to be little regarding policy analysis that delves into policy-as-text in the South African higher education or in the language policy contexts". This indicates a need for more research regarding the move towards integrating discourse into policy mentioned previously.

Henry (1993) argues that since text and discourse are interrelated, the distinction between the two as suggested by Ball (1993), is curious. Ralarala (2019:259) clarifies that perhaps the distinction lies in that "text analysis (policy-as-text) is an essential part of discourse analysis, but discourse analysis (policy-as-discourse) is not merely the linguistic analysis of texts". Although discourse includes text within it, it is much broader than just viewing policy-as-text and cannot be reduced to text and language. Ralarala (2019) also suggests that policy-as-text can be examined in two ways: by attempting to uncover the effects of policy and the reasons for its establishment, and by considering the content of policy documents on their own. He further states that "although not self-executing, policy texts not only pose a great influence but directly bear on policy implementation and on social action" (Ralarala, 2019:260). Saarinen (2008:720) agrees with the above and advocates for a holistic approach to analysing policy-as-text. The author states that when using a policy-as-text approach, researchers must understand that "policy words are not mere rhetoric; they are policy, or, at the very least, policies are textual interventions into practice". Therefore, if policy texts are seen as interventions requiring social action and not just rhetoric, this requires moving away from a dualistic view where policy is either text or discourse but acknowledging that since language itself is holistic, policy analysis can be applied in a holistic way.

Policy studies have been criticised for focusing on text rather than including the discourses presented by the text, thus falling short of understanding other factors that influence the policy-making and analysis process (Hewitt, 2009). Some criticisms are presented by Ball (1993), who argues that since policy does not always tell people what to do but provides a narrow range of options to those it is directed at, it leaves it open to interpretation based on factors such as comprehension and power. Ball also criticises policy studies for not conceptually defining what policy is. This presents a problem in that policy studies' definitions guide how research is carried out and how findings are interpreted.

Cummings et al. (2020:102) agree that policy-as-text may also fall short because "processes of change are divorced from social actors, history, time and place; that statements are presented as truths; and that they are normative". These factors should all be attended to when carrying out CDA, and this can be done through interpretation and explanation. This view is supported by Liasidou & Symeou (2018), who argue that simply analysing the linguistic elements of policy texts would be fruitless unless the text is situated within its social context. Ralarala (2019) also adds that text and language in policy are purposeful and carry important inferences regarding the advancement of interests and to whom they belong. This also speaks to power relations and their influence on policy, which is discussed further in section 2.7. Moreover, it highlights the necessity for policy to be analysed as and within discourse.

2.1.2 *Policy as Discourse*

Cahill (2015:304) draws on Ball (1993) and defines policy-as-discourse as the place "where power and knowledge are infused with the world. Policy and legislation are negotiated products of people, communities and ideological positions". Policy-as-discourse results from the negotiations between the existing ideologies and narratives of policy makers and those to whom the policy is directed. Goodwin (2011:170) states that policy-as-discourse approaches start from the assumptions that "all actions, objects, and practices are socially meaningful, and that the interpretation of these meanings is shaped by the social and political struggles in specific socio-historical contexts". This is perhaps one of the reasons why policy-as-discourse scholars seek to demonstrate that achieving change is difficult. This is not necessarily due to opposition to the proposed changes, but because the way in which the changes are represented in policy may limit how impactful these changes can be (Bacchi, 2000). Recent developments in knowledge production and the nature of knowledge have introduced new ways of understanding policy, and they problematise some of "the traditional conceptual tools for researching and analysing policy. In particular, there is a growing interest in the role of policy in constructing the world via language and discourse" (Goodwin, 2011:167). This is perhaps why there has been a shift from traditional theories of policy analysis towards viewing and understanding policy-as-discourse.

Various factors prompted this shift towards policy-as-discourse. Looking at the application of theories of discourse to policy analysis, Taylor (1997) identifies one of these factors as the disregard of meaning in policy studies. "Policy studies appear to be methodologically unsophisticated, with issues of language and meaning taken for granted" (Taylor, 1997:24). This is problematic because discourse is dynamic and it changes with time. The context and meanings attributed to certain terms may change overtime. "Differences in terminology reflect the particular historical and cultural context, and have implications for the ways in which particular concepts are used and understood" (Taylor, 1997:28). Policy analysis research should, therefore, seek to include issues of meaning and interpretation which will hopefully contribute to the pursuit of social justice. Another factor contributing to moving towards a policy-as-discourse view is that "some recent policy studies recognise the role of values and competing interests in the shape of policy and policy evaluation. Many have moved on from the model of policy making as rational decision making and planning" (Bacchi 2000:50).

Hewitt (2009) also advocates for using CDA in policy analysis by highlighting four advantages of doing so. Firstly, "discourse is independent of individuals or institutions" (Hewitt, 2009:4). It clearly defines and identifies the roles of actors in institutions, and it also illuminates any present institutional boundaries. Secondly, it brings to the surface any underlying issues that may influence the definition of a policy problem. This helps to address one of the shortfalls of policy studies outside of discourse identified by Bacchi (2000), where policy analysts may see policy problems from an external viewpoint, thus neglecting to acknowledge that policy can be a source of the problems they want to address. Vidovich (2001) found that some of the reasons for the competing discourses evident in Australian higher education policies were due to the oversight that policy can create problems instead of addressing them. Thirdly, it highlights issues around power relations in policy-making and implementation by foregrounding the processes behind policy development as well as "the values and power relations behind them" (Saarinen, 2008:725). This contradicts the criticism raised by Ball (1993), who argues that policy-as-discourse may indirectly shift power by making certain voices authoritative, thus implying that they are more meaningful than others. Ball further cautions against how policy-as-discourse "limits our responses to change and leads us to misunderstand what policy is by misunderstanding what it does" (Ball, 1993:12). Lastly, policy-as-discourse debunks the assumptions of policy-making as a rational, step-by-step process by making researchers aware of the complex issues involved in the policy-making process.

This awareness by researchers in CDA and policy is not only an outward consciousnesses of the policy-making context, it is also an internal awareness. This is perhaps why one of the key criticisms against incorporating CDA into policy analysis is the lack of reflexivity from researchers (Liasidou, 2008; Rogers et al., 2005). "Discourse analysis requires a deeply reflexive approach to recognise the rules of formation, and to understand the patterns of power relations, through self-conscious analytical scrutiny" (Hewitt, 2009:3). Researchers must be aware of the discourses that they bring into the policy process, and they should also acknowledge that CDA alone cannot bring change. This calls for scholars to "go beyond the interrogation of the texts and proceed to the 'interrogation of "self"', something that is crucial to any critical and hence emancipatory endeavour" (Liasidou, 2008:496).

Liasidou & Symeou (2018:151) state that CDA is heterogeneous and is adjusted to fit research goals depending on the social change it wants to achieve/influence. They consider how "the emphasis on policy-as-discourse highlights the ways in which power is enshrined in the dominant discourses as they authoritatively promote 'meaning systems over others'". They demonstrated this by focusing specifically on how bigger discourses overshadow smaller ones. That is, what is foregrounded and what "silences" exist in a text. Their findings indicated that some important discourses could possibly be missing from policy documents, thus highlighting certain perspectives through their failure to address certain issues (Liasidou & Symeou, 2018). This view is supported by Saarinen (2008), who discusses the ability of CDA to foreground and background issues and problematises this by arguing that "policy actors foreground problems, simultaneously narrowing the space for alternative views. And, by doing so, they also perpetuate some political views of social reality" (Saarinen, 2008:719). This ability of policy actors to decide which issues deserve more attention over others again emphasises the centrality of power relations in the CDA process.

2.2 Institutions Selected for the Study

As mentioned previously, the two universities selected for this study are the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Witwatersrand. It is also worth mentioning that because of the changes in the South African higher education landscape, the universities are no longer as different as they previously were. Perhaps the rankings below are one of the ways that their similarities are demonstrated.

University rankings in 2022 showed that Wits is ranked number three nationally and 428th in the university world rankings (out of 2500 universities), whilst UJ is ranked second nationally and 412th globally. This indicates tremendous growth for UJ as "UJ is the only local institution to consistently climb the rankings in recent years – moving up from the 601-650 range in 2018/19, to the 551-560 range in 2019/20, and then into the 501-510 band in 2020/21" (Businesstech, 2022). These ranking systems are often criticised as some scholars feel that they promote marketisation of higher education. They state that these encourage preference of certain institutions over others to those who can afford their fees and the prestige associated with them and should thus be considered with a bit of scepticism.

Dlamini (2016) criticises the ranking systems and argues that while it is understandable that South African universities seek to occupy competitive space globally, they should rather be focusing on crafting and perfecting their own identities which will allow them to compete in these global spaces as themselves, not based on identities bestowed upon them by western standards. Mckenna (2020) supports this view and argues that ranking systems rarely take into consideration how students engage with their communities, who they are, their aspirations and motivations, but are rather concerned about gaining market value.

However, despite this, authors such as Lubacz (2022) argue that participation in university rankings can be positive because rankings serve as an indicator of growth in certain areas such as research outputs, and they improve branding, benchmarking, reputation management, visibility and recruitment. The histories and legacies of the two institutions are discussed further below to provide contextual information.

2.2.1 University of the Witwatersrand

The University of the Witwatersrand originated from the African School of Mines which was situated in Kimberly in 1896. It later moved to Johannesburg and changed its name to the Transvaal Technical Institute in 1904. The university has undergone several name changes since then and was also known as the Transvaal University College in 1906, and then the South African School of Mines and Technology in 1910. As it expanded over the years and increased its departments and offerings, it then changed to University College and was granted full university status in 1922, leading to what is now the University of the Witwatersrand (About Wits, 2022; Murray, 1990).

One of the predominant discourses around Wits and its early years is that it was an open university from its inception. It was considered an open university due to its admission policies being based on meeting academic requirements, and race was not a determining factor where admission was concerned. Because of this status as an open university during apartheid, it has often been framed as anti-discriminatory and accepting of all students regardless of race and allowing them to be in the same classes regardless of the segregatory policies of the National Party (Dugmore, 2012). Wits was one of two open universities during apartheid, the other was the University of Cape Town (Moulder, 1975; Murray, 1990).

Odendaal (2019), however, argues that this is incorrect. The author highlights how starting from the naming of the institution as the University of the Witwatersrand instead of the University of Johannesburg which would have been more geographically accurate, the institution and its founders were highlighting the demographic and geographical areas that it would serve.

"Beyond providing education for a growing urban population, Wits took on the task of creating an ideological bridge that connected communities across the Rand to the developing new, post-Union national culture that included white people with different ethnic and class backgrounds. The name also acknowledged the influence of mining and industrial capital, which was active on the Witwatersrand and played a significant role in funding Wits' establishment" (Odendaal, 2019:45).

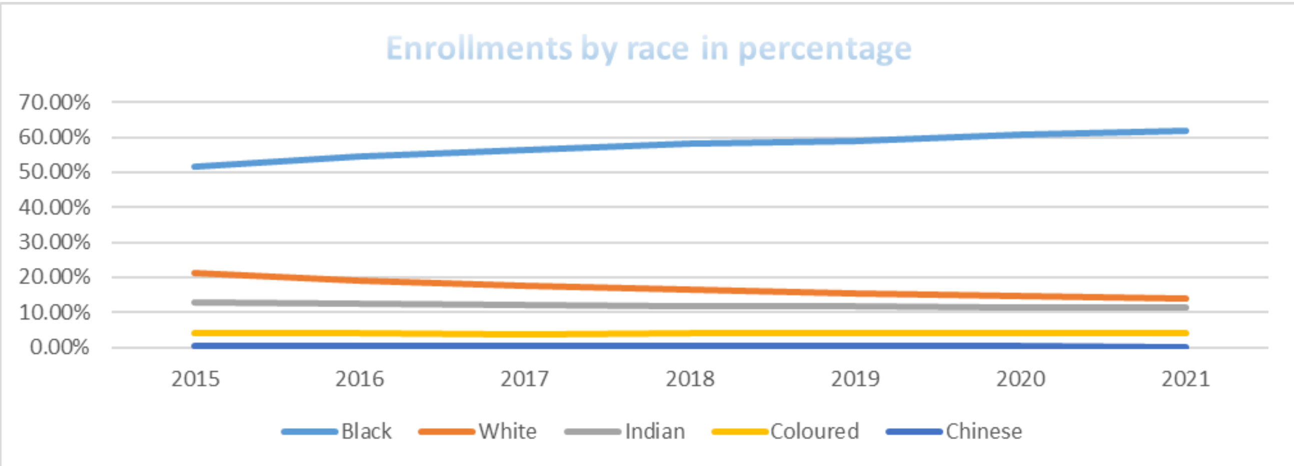
Murray (1990) also argues that the university was never fully open to begin with and that it could not have been more than half open to blacks since certain faculties and programmes did not admit black students. The programmes that excluded black students were dentistry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, fine arts, some engineering qualifications where industry experience was required such as mining engineering because the law prevented black people from obtaining blasting licences.

The legacy of this exclusionary process and the results of framing Wits as non-discriminatory was seen in 1998 when an internal reconciliation process was carried out between staff members at the university's Faculty of Health Sciences. Black staff and students felt that little importance was given to their experiences of discrimination within the faculty, since white staff members held the belief that it was a liberal space of learning and working (Goodman & Price, 2002). The reports of the results proved contrary to this belief since it "stressed the need for the faculty to issue an apology and publicly acknowledge past racial discrimination. Another recommendation was for the faculty to increase enrollment of underrepresented students and to accelerate academic staff development, with special emphasis on racial and gender inequalities." (Goodman & Price, 2002:221).

Furthermore, although the university accepted black students, it did not grant them complete equality. The number of enrolled black students was low and averaged between four to five percent out of a total of 4000 university students. Murray (1990) confirms that there were 297 black students and 4813 white students enrolled at the university in 1959 when the National Party came into power. The universities' policy was one of academic intergration and social segration so the black students at the campuses were limited in terms of the activities that they were allowed to participate in. They could only participate in academic activities, not social and sporting activities and they could not reside in the main residences (Dugmore, 2012). The university's admission of black students changed when the National Party came into power and required black students to obtain special permission from the Minister of Internal Affairs to enrol (Dugmore, 2012; Moulder, 1975).

Previously, decisions regarding the admission of black students were made by the university council and senate bodies, as well as different faculty boards (Murray, 1990). In spite of the National Party's continuous efforts to further their segregation agenda through various policies, including the separate university bill which was later replaced by the Extension of University Education Act (discussed in further detail in section 2.3), there were, however, various student and academic bodies that strongly opposed this leading to tensions within the university as well as with the government (Moodie, 1997). This is perhaps why Wits university has been a site of protest even before the #FeesMustFall.

Although Wits is historically white, it has changed in terms of the number of black students that it has enrolled over the years. Data from 2015 to 2021 indicates an increase in the number of black, coloured and Indian students, while the number of white students declines.



2.2.2 The University of Johannesburg

In 2003, the Department of Education published proposals for restructuring higher education in South Africa. The then Minister of Education, Professor Kadar Asmal announced that higher education institutional mergers would be one of the ways to promote equality and redress in higher education

(Ministry of Education, 2003; Swanepoel, 2005). One of the results of these mergers is the University of Johannesburg. The University of Johannesburg came into existence on 1 January 2005 through the merging of Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), Technikon Witwatersrand (TWR) and two campuses of Vista University. A year earlier, the campuses of Vista University had already been merged with RAU (Asmal, 2002; Du Pre, 2010; University of Johannesburg, 2009).

This was a complex merger because of the differences that existed between the institutions. RAU was a historically white, Afrikaans medium institution, TWR was a historically white English medium institution, and the campuses of Vista University were historically black and disadvantaged institutions located in black communities. RAU was established in 1968 as a university that would serve the Afrikaans community in Johannesburg (Khotseng, 2009). The primary language of instruction was Afrikaans, but this changed in 1997 when the university adopted English and became bilingual. This was because South Africa had become a democratic country and students of other races could enrol at the university. This led to a greater demand for English as a language of instruction because it was no longer limited to serving the Afrikaans community only. Vista University was established in 1982 and its intention was to extend university education into black communities. It had seven campuses in different provinces. The campuses were located in Mamelodi, Port Elizabeth, East Rand, Soweto, Sebokeng, Bloemfontein and Welkom. Vista's focus was more on technical skills and vocational training unlike RAU which was more research intensive. TWR traces its origins to the school of mines in Kimberly in 1895, similar to the University of the Witwatersrand. Before it came to be Technikon Witwatersrand in 1979, it was known as Wits Technical College (1930) and Witwatersrand College for Advanced Technical Education (1967). Similar to Vista University, TWR also had a limited research focus but was geared towards vocational training for white students (this is detailed further in the next section).

The differences between these institutions made the merger complicated because "all three institutions were creatures of the apartheid ideology and had very different institutional cultures and missions. The avowed purpose of the newly established UJ was to redress the educational inequalities inflicted by South Africa's previous apartheid regime" (Barnard & Van der Merwe, 2016:209). Unlike other mergers in other parts of the word where the main intention is commercialisation of institutions, the mergers of South African Higher Educations institutions were different because they had ideological foundations; equality and access for previously disadvantaged people was the driving force (Goldman, 2012). This was not without its own problems as some institutions such as RAU were hesitant to merge because they feared losing their autonomy. RAU argued that merging with TWR would destabilise two already stable institutions, but they were not opposed to merging with the two Vista University campuses (Khotseng, 2009). RAU and TWR proposed the name of the new merged institution, the

University of Johannesburg while Vista University was not so involved in this process (Khotseng, 2009).

As it currently stands, the University of Johannesburg is defined as a comprehensive university where it offers both university and technikon programmes and is considered an example of one of the most successful higher education mergers (Du Pre, 2010). However, this was not an easy task to carry out since, during the period of mergers, institutions were expected to merge with similar institutions. For example, technikons merged to form universities of technology; universities merged and remained universities. UJ would be the pioneer of a new institutional type altogether; a comprehensive university that had no definition at the time. Couple that with the merging of white and black institutions, it was a difficult task to carry out but it proved to be a great success as evidenced by the university's growth in student number, programme offerings and local and international rankings (Barnard & Van der Merwe, 2016).

2.3 Division of Higher Education Institutions

Five years after coming into power (in 1948), the National Party (NP) sought to promote segregation and to prevent black people from getting the same standard of education as white people. This was because qualifications were significant to get jobs, and the government did not want to lose the cheap labour supplied by black people. The NP "introduced the plethora of legislation that systematically entrenched racial segregation at all levels of society, including the educational system" (Mabokela, 1997:423). The Party achieved this by introducing the Bantu Education Act of 1953. This Act intended to divide education according to ethnicity by creating "separate systems of education for Africans, Coloureds, Indians/ Asians, and Whites" (Mabokela, 1997:423). It also led to the shutting down of [1]mission schools because the state accused them of providing black students with quality education, even though the schools' core function was to indoctrinate black students into Christianity and to teach them submission to white people. The state believed that the standard of education offered by mission schools would lead to more independent thinking and political radicalism (Dugmore, 2012). Bantu Education was succeeded by the Separate University Education Bill in 1957, later revised to the Extension of University Education Act in 1959. This Act prohibited black people from being admitted into white institutions and led to the establishment of separate HEIs for them. It also forced the open universities at the time not to admit black students (Raju, 2004). Black institutions were designated to serve non-whites according to geographical location and ethnicity (Muthama & Mckenna, 2017; Mubangizi, 2005). Their intended purpose was to perpetuate and promote a social order characterised

[1] Religious schools tasked with converting black people to Christianity during the apartheid era.

by racial division (Subotzky, 1997). Apart from limiting the number of black students that could enrol at white universities, the Act also intended to:

> "establish new university colleges for blacks: one for Indians, one for the Coloured population, and three for different language-groups among the "Native" or "Bantu" peoples. Of these colleges four (now the Universities of Durban/Westville [UDW], the Western Cape [UWC], the North, and Zululand) were to be newly created and the fifth was to be a transformed Fort Hare designated for Xhosa speakers; all were to be placed under the close administrative control of the government" (Moodie, 1997:6).

The Extension of University Education Act ultimately created HBIs and HWIs (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017; Thompsell, 2020). As mentioned previously, it was this Act that introduced banning students of other races from attending the open universities at the time (Wits and UCT) unless they had ministerial permission and further banned black people from obtaining qualifications from the open universities if the same qualifications could be obtained from university colleges (Moodie, 1997). The open universities opposed this Act and argued that it curtailed their academic freedom, but the state had a different view. The state argued that based on the definition of a university at the time, it was essentially a state function, so they could have input on how it was governed with support from the relevant government legislature. The state also argued that requiring ministerial permission from black people was not prohibitory; it was part of the admissions selection process (Moulder, 1975). It further separated institutions by limiting specific ethnic groups to specific colleges and technikons. For example, the University of Zululand could only service black Zulu students, furthering the apartheid segregation agenda by race, ethnicity, language, and geographical location (Thompsell, 2020).

In addition, the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 empowered the state to control everything in HBIs, including funding, admission, and curricula. This allowed the state to deliberately under-resource these institutions as they saw fit (Mabokela, 1997; Thompsell, 2020). HEIs had little autonomy; most of their functions and governance were the state's responsibility (Raju, 2004). However, there were still differences between HBIs and HWIs level of autonomy in that the open universities had more independence pre-1994 compared to HBIs (Moulder, 1975; Kori, 2016). This has changed as all HEIs (including HBIs) now enjoy greater autonomy to self-govern and self-regulate (Kori, 2016).

This was achieved by introducing various higher education policies since 1994, when the African National Congress (ANC) came into power. The new government began by appointing a National Commission on Higher Education in 1995 and focused on identifying the challenges in the inherited higher education system and developing solutions for them. The commission released a report titled *A Policy framework for the Transformation of Higher Education* in 1996 with recommendations for redress in higher education. The commission suggested that higher education be structured in a single, coordinated way, that the higher education landscape should be equipped to enrol more students, and that social and economic development should not be the government's sole focus. Several policies were developed from these recommendations, starting with the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation published in 1996, which led to the Higher Education Act being amended in 1997. The Higher Education Act's primary focus was on redress, restructuring programmes to better suit the country's socio-economic needs, ensuring access to higher education for all, and contributing to knowledge advancement for the benefit of society. This was also the first Act to acknowledge the need for institutional autonomy within higher education. "The Higher Education Act also proclaimed that higher education institutions should enjoy freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the State within the context of public accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge" (Council on Higher Education, 2022:5). This was perhaps the beginning of the move towards self-governance by HEIs.

2.3.1 Historically Black and Historically White Institutions

Another way in which the post-apartheid government set out to meet its higher education policy objectives was by merging HBIs and HWIs into new, desegrated institutions (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017). Between 2000 and 2005, "the 36 higher education institutions in South Africa were merged and developed into a stratified and differentiated higher education system of 23 higher education institutions in 2012" (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2017:346). Before this, however, they were separated according to the abovementioned factors and referred to as historically black and historically white universities.

The initial historically black universities were: the University of Fort Hare, University of Zululand, Medical University of Southern Africa, University of the North, University of Durban-Westville, Potchefstroom University and the University of Northwest which later merged to form North West University, University of Transkei, University of the Western Cape, University of Venda, and Vista University. Even though they were called universities under apartheid, they did not function like their white counterparts (Bunting, 2006). These institutions were centred around training black people who could be useful to the government by equipping them with skills (such as teaching) directed at the black community, as mentioned by Mabokela (1997). These skills meant that there would be black educators who could teach at black institutions for apartheid to maintain its socio-political agenda while furthering its segregation agenda (Bunting, 2006). Historically black technikons were: Peninsula Technikon, ML Sultan Technikon, Mangosuthu Technikon, Border Technikon, North West Technikon, Technikon Northern Transvaal and Eastern Cape Technikon (Bunting, 2006).

HWIs were divided according to language (Afrikaans or English) and whether they supported the ruling party (the NP) at the time (Bunting, 2006). Historically white universities that used Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and supported the NP were: the University of the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom University, the Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Pretoria, the University of Stellenbosch, and the University of Port Elizabeth. The English medium historically white institutions were the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, and the University of Natal (Ilorah, 2006). These universities viewed themselves as more liberal and were not fully supportive of the NP's education policies, even though they accepted funding from them. This led to a highly ambiguous relationship between the state and them (Bunting, 2006). The early historically white universities, such as the University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch, were premised on equipping and preparing white male scholars to move abroad for further education. These institutions were designed based on European universities and imported the majority of their academic staff from European countries (Mabokela, 1997).

Historically white technikons were aligned with the NP's principles and differed from historically black technikons in that they served as vocational training centres to prepare white students for managerial and technological positions in industry (Bunting, 2006). From the discussion above, the main discourses around the formation of these institutions emphasised race, power relations, and geographical location (Odhav, 2009).

2.3.2 Consequences of Institutional Divisions

Previously, HBIs were seen to provide education that prepared students for unemployment rather than for employment. This is because employers viewed candidates from HWIs as better educated, which was most likely correct as HWIs had always been better resourced and had more diverse offerings than HBIs (Imenda, Kongolo, & Grewal, 2004). However, 30 years into democracy, the effects of the divisions of the institutions are seen in how graduates from HBIs are considered "less qualified" than those from HWIs by potential employers, resulting in a preference for graduates from HWIs (Imenda, Kongolo, & Grewal, 2004). Students also tend to gravitate towards HWIs where it is easier to secure funding, thus leaving most HBIs under-enrolled. This is because most of the population in HBIs consists of underprepared and previously disadvantaged students who are unlikely to pursue postgraduate studies to attract greater subsidy via research, thus resulting in less funding for HBIs (Mtshweni, 2022).

The separation of the institutions also meant that black students had no access to specialised degrees and programmes offered by HWIs, even though they met the admission requirements. Even in the open universities such as Wits where black students could be admitted, obstacles such as the requirement for ministerial permission, geographical location, and mobility restriction laws would make attending HWIs impossible (Odhav, 2009). Apartheid spatial planning, a deliberate segregation tactic by the apartheid government, still has visible implications today. Habib (2016) mentions how HBIs have remained majorly black and states that this could be due to systematic issues or by default. He further argues that where systemic issues are the cause, further deracialisation mechanisms should be considered and where it is simply by design, these should be interrogated. This speaks to how some elements of apartheid influence some institutions today. Those in majority-black, low-cost neighbourhoods are more likely to attract a majority of black people (Ilorah, 2006). "HBUs [Historically Black Universities] are caught in a structural underdevelopment trap, where they have essentially become the educational reservoirs for the children of the most marginalised communities in South Africa" (Habib, 2016:39).

Another consequence of the division between HEIs was seen during the #FeesMustFall protests (discussed in section 2.6). According to Naidoo (2016), students at HBIs had been protesting against increasing fee increments long before 2016; however, their plight had gained minimal media attention until students from HWIs joined the movement. Media attention increased, and Wits University was at the forefront of the protests. Xaba (2017:98) ascribed this to "the close proximity to and the disruption of whiteness". The author further states that students from institutions like UCT, Wits and Rhodes University enjoyed greater visibility and prioritisation from the media versus those from HBIs during the protests. Glenn (2017) also agrees with the sentiments above and added that media engagement increased when students from HWIs were at the forefront of the protests.

> "These new forms of protest raised a series of questions about which citizens' voices get heard in different types of public spaces. Specifically, they questioned how the racialised histories of South African universities have resulted in the accommodation of different types of violence (both physical and symbolic) in line with the historic racial demographics of these institutions" (Odendaal, 2019:8).

This demonstrates that even though there were similar issues at the forefront of the protests and students united for a common cause, certain discourses influenced perceptions and perhaps even the outcomes of the protests. It would not be improbable to consider that these differing discourses may affect policy processes and outcomes differently within these institutions.

A recent example of the implications of the divisions between HBIs and HWIs was seen during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mtshweni (2022) states that the pandemic brought to the forefront how deep the systemic challenges in the higher education sector run and that "COVID-19 has served as a catalyst in revealing these systemic issues" Mtshweni (2022:246). Whereas HWIs were better equipped to adjust to the circumstances presented by the pandemic, HBIs did not adapt as readily. HWIs assisted learners in various ways, including loaning devices to participate in online learning. HBIs on the other hand took longer to move to online learning and in various instances, could not afford to provide learners with devices such as laptops (Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe, 2020). This speaks to the resources and funds readily available and accessible to HWIs, and the lack of these in HBIs (Mtshweni, 2022; Wangenge-

Ouma & Kupe, 2020). New policies in the higher education space should therefore work to bridge the divide between HWIs and HBIs as “this will aid in developing a robust and responsive post-school education and training system as envisaged by the National Development Plan (NDP) and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training” (Mtshweni, 2022:241).

Other effects of the division of institutions are seen in how HEI’s are funded; this is discussed further in the next section.

2.4 Funding in Higher Education

According to Mzangwa (2019), policy promotes redress and a more equal society without favouritism or discrimination. This is why new education and tuition policies were introduced over the years to address funding inequalities.There are vast amounts of literature alluding to how the legacy of apartheid is still evident and how policy interventions have not completely eradicated the inequalities between HBIs and HWIs (Ilorah, 2006; Muthama & Mckenna, 2017; Mzangwa, 2019; van der Berg, 2007). “Given that the apartheid policies continue to have a stranglehold on the higher education sector even after their abolishment, it, therefore, remains imperative that the current and reformed higher education policies respond to and reverse the injustices of the past within the sector” (Mtshweni, 2022:241). The process of reversing past injustices and reforming higher education includes understanding how funding affects different HEIs.

Scholars argue that HBIs are still underfunded compared to HWIs and attribute this inequality partly to the cost-sharing model of funding, decreasing government subsidy and how the government determines subsidies for HEIs (Bozzoli, 2015; Cloete, 2015; De Villiers & Steyn, 2007; Ilorah, 2006; Mubangizi, 2005; Ntshoe & de Villiers, 2008; Styger, van Vuuren, & Heymans, 2015; Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008).

> “Funding is therefore a key determinant of higher education access in South Africa. The existing funding context—declining government funding, regular tuition fee increases and inadequate NSFAS funding—is arguably inimical to wider access and participation and, therefore, the achievement of equity of access in South Africa’s higher education” (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012:836).

As highlighted previously, COVID-19 highlighted how inadequate funding affected HBIs more than HWIs. Mtshweni (2022) attributes this partly to policy failure in post-apartheid South Africa to address the disparities between the two institutional types adequately. “This is evident in that HBIs continue to be poorly funded despite the increased access to higher education. Decades into democracy, the impact of apartheid-era underfunding, and underdevelopment of universities continues to shape the institutional typologies" (Mtshweni 2022:238). It is therefore important to consider the funding formulae from which current tuition policies were developed and their implications for both HBIs and HWIs.

2.4.1 Funding Formulae and Frameworks

Styger et al. (2015) and De Villiers & Steyn (2007) state that South Africa has only had four higher education funding systems since the 1950s. These are the Holloway formula adopted in 1953; the Van Wyk de Vries formula in 1977; the South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE) formula of 1984; its revision in 1993; and the New Funding Framework introduced in 2004, which has been continuously revised in subsequent years. The bases of funding formulae have remained somewhat constant since 1951; they remain based on student intake, graduate output and research output (Moodie, 1997).

The decision to provide frameworks for funding based on formulae was seen as beneficial because it would grant a greater degree of autonomy to universities by enabling them to determine their own funding within the guidelines of the specific formula being used, and it did not prescribe how institutions were to use the funding they received from the government. It also had the added advantage of allowing institutions to proactively plan for the future since funding information was provided in advance, and it promoted fairness and transparency in how funds are distributed (Styger et al.,2015).

The Heher commission established by former president Jacob Zuma in 2015 to consider the funding of higher education amid the #FeesMustFall protests also recommended that the formula-based approach should be retained and used in the future as well (Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, 2015). De Villiers & Steyn (2007:12) state that the potential risk of "any formula-based funding mechanism is that the clients served by the formula will inevitably start to exploit the formula after a year or two by finding loopholes in its composition or in the definition or calculation of the input parameters". To address this, Styger, van Vuuren, & Heymans (2015) suggest using one formula for five years and then changing it after. This would allow for adaptations to be made to the formula based on environmental factors such as inflation and for loopholes to be addressed sooner rather than later.

All these funding frameworks are connected and evolutions of each other to suit changing environments, however, this study focuses on the New Funding Framework seeing as it is the current funding formula in South Africa.

2.4.1.1 The New Funding Framework

A brief overview of the New Funding Framework (NFF) introduced in 2004 was provided by the Ministry of Education (South African Government, 2004):

> "A basic feature of the new framework is that it links the awarding of government higher education grants to national and institutional planning. This funding/planning link makes the new

framework essentially a goal-oriented mechanism for the distribution of government grants to individual institutions, in accordance (a) with national planning and policy priorities, (b) with the quantum of funds made available".

The NFF consists of block grants and earmarked grants. Block grants are "undesignated amounts to cover the operational costs of HEI's linked to the provision of teaching" (De Villiers & Steyn, 2007:33), and earmarked grants are funds allocated for specific purposes. Block grants include teaching and research output grants determined according to the number of enrolled full-time students and the amount of research published by the institution. Earmarked grants include funding through NSFAS, funding for institutional, community and research development, and institutional factor grants such as funding based on the number of previously disadvantaged students enrolled at an institution, the size of the institution, as well as the number of campuses that it has (Styger et al., 2015; De Villiers & Steyn, 2007; Leshoro, 2008; Stumpf, et al., 2008).

From the above, the framework linked funding to the performance of institutions, especially research and postgraduate outputs. This was not necessarily a new development because the previous formulae mentioned above also included research outputs when determining subsidy (Styger et al., 2015). Whereas the previous frameworks differentiated between technikons and universities, the NFF categorised all institutions according to the same rules (Garraway & Winberg, 2019).

This affected HBIs and HWIs differently because while HWIs had the capacity to meet the required research targets for greater subsidy, HBIs were disadvantaged because they enrol many working-class and poor students who were unlikely to proceed with postgraduate studies (Ilorah, 2006). Styger, van Vuuren, & Heymans (2015) criticise the criteria for determining subsidy because it assumes that HBIs are as well-equipped as HWIs to produce the same amount of research and postgraduate students. The criteria do not consider the lack of sufficient resources and understaffing at HBIs (Ilorah, 2006). This formula "would also tend to favour those historically white universities with a vibrant research infrastructure to enjoy the research subsidies within the funding window, whilst technikons will be relegated to playing second fiddle and possibly die a slow decaying death as regards research output" (Jinabhai, 2003:57).

Because the NFF emphasises student numbers and research outputs, Mubangizi (2005) argues that this further disadvantages HBIs and that it is "unfair, unreasonable and unconstitutional" (Mubangizi, 2005:1120). Mapesela & Hay (2009:131) support this view because a "'flat' funding formula skewed to reward postgraduate education, research output, and science and technology fields, areas in which the HBUs were intentionally poorly developed means that HBUs continue to be disadvantaged in the current system". It is evident that HBIs are not equipped to produce the same research outputs as HWIs because of systematic issues. "Currently, the research output of a University of Technology academic staff member is approximately one-third of that of an academic at a research-intensive university" (Garraway & Winberg, 2019:39).

Furthermore, institutional mergers have created greater similarities in the functions of HEIs where more institutions now prioritise research for subsidy maximisation.

> "The distinctions amongst the three university types have been eroded by government interference', using the same funding framework and giving the same directives to transform all the university types in the country. This has resulted in all of them attempting to do the same things to survive financially and politically" (Imenda, 2005:1405).

Garraway & Winberg (2019) criticise the NFF for failing to consider the histories of HBIs and HWIs. They explain how former technikons rushed to offer more postgraduate and research-intensive programmes for greater subsidy, even though they lacked the experience required to do so successfully. As a result, HBIs remain on the losing side due to the development that is required to get them on par with HWIs (Mtshweni, 2022). Greater effort is required from both the government and HBIs to catch up with HWIs because "from their inception, HWIs were in a better position to offer quality education, train students and produce research outputs" (Mtshweni, 2022:235). The geographical locations of HBIs also mean that they are less likely to attract highly qualified researchers, they are not considered the first choice of study for top achieving students, and they are seldom able to develop mutually beneficial relationships with researchers from institutions located in more urban areas (Ilorah, 2006).

Universities South Africa (USaF) states that all revisions to the NFF must be based on the four key elements outlined in the 1997 White Paper (A programme for Transformation Higher Education Transformation) as: cost sharing where tuition costs are borne by both the government and students, HEIs having complete autonomy on determining their fees, funding being linked to academic activities and research outputs and lastly, funding should be used as a steering mechanism towards meeting national and economic development objectives (Higher Education South Africa, 2011).

2.5 Sources of Higher Education Funding

Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe (2020:1) identify "three main sources of funding, namely, state funding, tuition fees and thirdstream income". Over the last 10 years, the income levels generated by each source have fluctuated, as illustrated in Figure 1. The latest report from DHET compiled by Khuluvhe & Netshifhefhe (2022) shows these funding levels in percentage form.

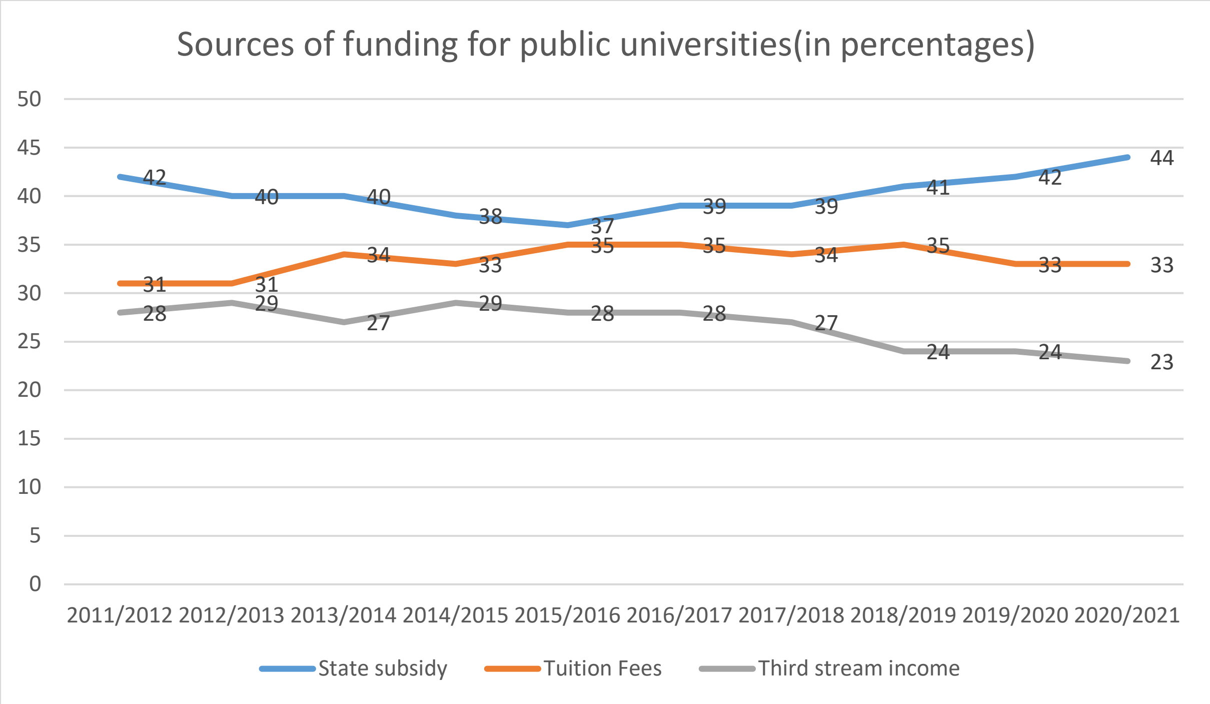


Figure 1: Sources of funding for public universities (in percentages)

The data shows a high level of state funding (42%) from the 2011/12 period, gradually decreasing to 37% during the 2015/16 period. It increased again during the 2016-2018 period, remaining steady at 39%. Between 2018/2019 and 2019/20, state funding increased by 1% each year and by 2% for the 2020/21 period to 44%. State subsidies have remained the biggest source of funding for public universities. The second-largest source of funding is tuition fees. This has remained almost steady at an average of 33,4% over the last 10 years, with the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2018/19 periods generating the highest funding percentages at 35%. These are followed by the 2011/12 and 2013/14 periods at 34%, the 2014/15, 2019/20 and 2020/21 periods at 33%, and the lowest were the 2011/12 and 2012/2013 periods at 31%. Lastly, third-stream income has been the lowest source of funding for universities with an average of 29,6%, and the highest it has ever been was 29% during the 2012/13 and 2014/15 periods, followed by 28% during 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2016/17. 2013/14 and 2017/18 saw third-stream income levels at 27%, which remained steady at 24% during the 2018/19 to 2019/20 periods. The lowest it has ever been is 23%, as seen during 2020/21. This shows a steady decline in third-stream income for universities over the years.

2.5.1 State funding

From the above, it is evident that "state funding forms a large portion of income for most HEIs and plays a key role in making quality higher education available to all students" (Styger et al., 2015:261). In 1995, the late former president Nelson Mandela appointed the National Commission on Higher

Education (NCHE) to develop a policy framework to transform higher education in the new South Africa (Muller, 2018). Part of the transformation process was establishing a stable financial aid programme to assist students. This resulted in the formation of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

USaf (2022) reported that the government currently funds about 63% of higher education students through NSFAS, which has undergone various transformations over the years. It was initially a government loan scheme where students were given money to study based on a means test, and were expected to pay it back once they graduated (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008). However, by 2008 as the scheme grew, administrative problems began to emerge at the NSFAS head office and a few HBIs. In response, the government transformed NSFAS into a government entity without confronting the core issues at HBIs (van Schalkwyk & Cloete, 2021).

Over the past few years, university enrolment numbers have grown substantially. This has placed great strain on the government because more HEIs look to them for greater financial assistance than before (Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe, 2020; Stumpf et al., 2008; Higher Education South Africa, 2011). A report from DHET shows growth statistics between 2010 and 2020, represented in Figure 2 below.

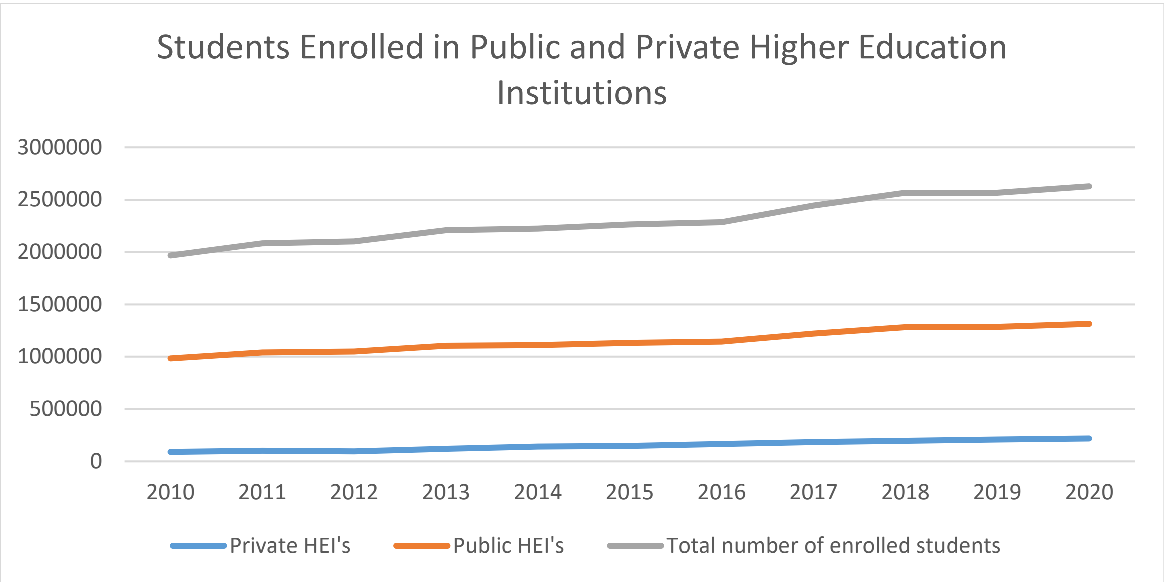


Figure 2: Students Enrolled in Public and Private HEIs.

Figure 2 indicates that students in the higher education sector increased by 33.6%, a total of 330 136 students between 2010 and 2020 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2022). This raised concerns about where the additional funding to accommodate these growing numbers would come from. A comparison of Figure 1 and Figure 2 above shows that government subsidy is not growing at the same rate as student enrolments. Despite the government's interventions, it is evident that it cannot keep up with the increasing costs of funding higher education. Moreover, the institutions that are mostly affected by this are HBIs. "Historically disadvantaged institutions are not financially well off and have not generated sufficient reserves to ensure that they are able to be sustainable in the long term and, as a result, are highly reliant on state funding" (USAF, 2022).

It is, therefore, important to consider ways to fund the higher education sector that will not be exclusionary to HBIs but that can guarantee that "adequate levels of access and quality are maintained to ensure global competitiveness" (Ayuk & Koma, 2019:178). Failure of government-subsidised loans such as NSFAS and rising higher education enrolment numbers have coincided with decreasing government subsidies over the years. This has led the state to look at other avenues to fund students (Ayuk & Koma, 2019).

This is perhaps why there has been a global move towards cost-sharing in higher education (De Villiers & Steyn, 2007). Cost-sharing resulted from increases in student enrolments at HEIs and economic conditions that require governments to drastically reduce public expenditure (Johnstone, 2003). It is focused on shifting from a predominant reliance on government funding towards shared costs with individuals (parents, guardians) responsible for paying tuition fees. The cost-sharing model is currently being used in South Africa. One criticism against this model is that it does not consider the country's context. Given that South Africa is still a highly unequal society, this model should not be based on western applications but should ideally look into what applying it to the South African context entails (Wangenge-Ouma, 2008).

Universities South Africa (2022) suggests that in addition to cost-sharing, there must be a larger amount of private sector interventions when it comes to funding students, and that universities should pursue other streams of income more vigorously (section 2.4.3). They also urge the state to consider focusing more on Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges and preparing them to absorb larger amounts of students to relieve universities. The COVID-19 pandemic also put unforeseen additional pressure on state funding where funds were reprioritised from various departments to offset the amounts needed for pandemic relief efforts. For example, the 2020 and 2021 infrastructure grant allocation was reduced by R500 million, and the block grant decreased by R382.59 million which went was redirected towards pandemic relief (Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe, 2020).

2.5.2 Tuition fees

A university's tuition policy is mainly guided by its needs. The broad aims of tuition policies are revenue generation for university sustainability, and to ensure accessibility for all qualifying students (Boggs, 2009). These two purposes are continuously at the core of higher education funding and access debates. Tuition fees provide income and are a policy instrument to achieve different goals (Dezhina &

Nafikova, 2019). Figure 1 also showed that tuition revenue is the second largest source of funding for HEIs.

As mentioned previously, access to higher education has been one of the key driving forces for higher education policy changes since 1994 (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012; Van der Westhuizen, 2008). This is partly why the government promoted mergers in the higher education sector after apartheid. Mzangwa (2019) argues that the new government (ANC) was too focused on changing the structures of HEIs rather than the core issues that contribute to hindering access, such as tuition fees.

HEIs have had to increase their tuition fees to keep up with increasing inflation, decreasing government subsidies, and a growing student population as indicated in the previous section. Wangenge-Ouma (2012:910) argues that:

> "to 'survive' declining state financial support, South African universities have, in the main, adapted existing economic exchange relationships to address their current resource needs and have also initiated new exchange relationships. The most important economic exchange relationship that almost all the universities have utilised to improve their resource condition is tuition fees".

Johnstone (2003) argues that an advantage of HEIs relying on tuition fees is that it provides relief to the government by allowing the state to cut down on some expenditures. Tuition fees also allow faculty members to "continue with their core teaching functions without the added responsibility of having to work for government grants and subsidies through continuous publishing and engaging in "other forms of faculty entrepreneurship" (Johnstone, 2003:355). This narrow view would only apply to HWIs because, as discussed earlier in the paper, HBIs are greatly understaffed and under-resourced. They also charge lower tuition fees than HWIs, so it would be difficult to survive with fewer subsidies generated by decreased research outputs.

De Villiers & Ntshoe (2013) believe that tuition fees are another barrier to access, and they further disadvantage HBIs. They argue that given that low tuition fees are one of the reasons why HBIs enrol most students from disadvantaged backgrounds, the constant increments work against transformation goals. As Mtshweni (2022:242) explains:

> "Transformation within the institutions of higher learning in South Africa is not limited to investment in infrastructure and financial capacitation of tertiary institutions, but also includes affordable tuition fees. Tuition fees in HBIs are relatively lower compared to the tuition fees in HWIs. To some extent, this has rendered the standards of education in HBIs to be of lower quality than in HWIs. In addition, the high tuition fees in HWIs have structurally served to exclude the majority of the student population from disadvantaged backgrounds."

These exclusionary fees and their constant increments may also result in greater student debt, especially for HBIs where students rely on NSFAS to pay their fees (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008). Wangenge-Ouma (2012) also highlights how universities are likely to keep increasing tuition fees in their attempts to stay afloat because NSFAS has been unable to support disadvantaged students adequately.

2.5.3 Third-stream Income

As mentioned previously, HEIs have had to look to other avenues to supplement their income due to growing enrolment and decreasing government subsidy. Institutions are now considering investments, getting bigger research grants, sponsorships and partnerships with private sector organisations, local and international donations, and other entrepreneurial activities (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008; Badat, 2015). This is referred to as third-stream income.

Whereas HWIs have the capacity to leverage external relationships for extra income, this is not the case for HBIs. De Villiers & Ntshoe (2013) state that various factors determine an institution's ability to generate third-stream income. These include history, geographical and geopolitical location, the programmes offered by the institution, and the relationship with industry:

> "Institutions with an established research tradition and those offering industry-related programmes are thus more likely to engage in joint ventures with the private sector and raise third-stream money, compared to those that primarily provide social sciences and have weak research cultures. Research-oriented schools and divisions form more lucrative partnerships with industry than those that offer the humanities and the social sciences" (De Villiers & Ntshoe, 2013:80).

However, as Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete (2008) clarify, not all revenue from other sources lessens universities' dependence on government funding. They state that universities do not have complete control over income generated from research grants and donations because there are limits regarding what the funds can be used for. Universities do not have the autonomy to cover shortfalls in other areas with funds designated for specific purposes.

Furthermore, unforeseen developments such as the COVID-19 pandemic have also impacted institutions' ability to generate third-stream income. "Universities were already experiencing sustainability challenges pre-COVID-19, amongst them, declining state funding (in real terms), challenges associated with #FeesMustFall student protests, insourcing of services, government regulation of tuition fees, rising student debt, weak economic growth and a highly unstable currency" (Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe, 2020:1). As seen in Figure 1, third stream income sources only accounted for 23% of the income generated by public universities during 2020 and 2021, which is the lowest since

2011. This may be due to issues such as the closure of various industries and uncertainties around sustainability that were brought about by the pandemic.

According to Bruns (2021), there have been suggestions that universities should consider using their own innovations to generate income because third-stream income is insufficient to meet institutional needs. This would result in fourth-stream income. Fourth-stream income would require universities to use their research to enter specific marketplaces for extra revenue generation (Bruns, 2021). However, the cost of this would be great and given all the issues mentioned previously regarding the under-resourcing at HBIs and their inability to compete with HWIs in terms of research capabilities (section 2.3), this would be exclusionary to them. It would rather advance HWIs since they already have the necessary resources and infrastructure, as discussed by Dlamini (2018).

2.6 New Public Management

In previous decades, university governance has been guided by two ideals. The first ideal considers the university as a "republic of scholars," meaning that it governs itself according to academic principles and standards, and the second one considers universities as corporate enterprises (Bleiklie, 2018). New Public Management (NPM), a managerialist ideology that influences policy and other university decisions, has informed the second view.

> "The debate on whether public services should be provided by the government or the private sector became a battle ground of scholarly and policy arguments during the 1980s. This was at a time when the government was accused of being part of the old public administration, and the private sector was argued to be much more efficient in doing work, which was initially the domain of government. Within public administration scholarship, the intensity of this debate was scaled during the era of what has been labelled New Public Management (NPM)" (Basheka, 2018:1).

Donina & Paleari (2019) argue that NPM is the main governance ideology on which higher education reforms are based today. It can be defined as "an instrument for applying private sector or market-based techniques to public services" (Elzinga, 2010:307) and emerged because of the negative perceptions of government. Government was seen as unreliable, corrupt, slow and inefficient versus the private sector which is perceived as efficient, effective and reliable (Basheka, 2018). It is also a result of global reforms in the higher education sector (Bleiklie, 1998). Lorenz (2012:608) summarises the main tenets of NPM as:

> "increasing the breakup of public sector organizations into separately managed units, (2) increasing competition to use management techniques from the private sector, (3) increasing

emphasis on discipline and sparing use of resources, (4) more hands-on management, (5) introduction of measurable indicators".

The ideology that preceded NPM is part of discourses that are oppositional to NPM, where instead of HEIs being governed like a business, they were governed by academic principles and scholars. This ties into the governance perspective which promotes horizontal coordination between various actors such as government, citizens, and private organisations (Klijn, 2012). Other competing ideologies, such as the call towards a decolonised university tailored for Africa have been considered by some institutions, which requires moving from neoliberal stances towards more socialist views (Omal & Afolabi, 2018). This would be contrary to NPM, which is largely based on applying private sector principles to state institutions, thereby prioritising private sector influence above others (Donina & Paleari, 2019).

Some scholars argue that the corporatisation of higher education poses a threat to education as a public service good and that it has adverse effects on academia because it promotes a "culture of compliance", promotes reputation management by universities that want to publish in prestigious journals, and fails to consider how different academic fields work to produce the amount of research deemed to be profitable (Elzinga,2010:328). Bleiklie (1998) and Leišytė (2016) also criticise NPM for blurring university functions, that is, higher education as a public good versus a market-oriented business, thus promoting competition and emphasising performance. Dlamini (2018) argues against the corporatisation of universities and states that universities should remain centres for promoting education as a public good. "The value of knowledge production should outweigh world-class status, corporate power, and market values" (Dlamini 2018:87). The author also highlights how allowing the politicisation of research production in Africa especially holds it back from effectively disrupting colonial thinking. Instead, it fosters marketisation principles which further European agendas instead of the continent's knowledge and skills base (Dlamini, 2018).

2.6.1 New Public Management Reforms

NPM reforms began in the United Kingdom and the United States of America and soon spread globally to both developed and developing countries (Tolofari, 2005). "Moreover, from western countries, NPM was spread to other parts of the world by the influence of the European Commission and international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Rubakula, 2014:85). Liasidou & Symeou (2018) agree that policies by organisations such as the World Bank and IMF influence national policies and argue that these global policy networks impose certain discourses through various ways including language. They consider how the World Bank policies use language to promote neoliberal stances. Talib & Fitzgerald (2016) argue that the language used in a policy can reinforce the status quo rather than achieve change. Through their analysis of the use of metaphors in Singapore educational policy texts, they found that "metaphors (of meritocracy) are put to work as part of the neo-liberal economic discourse and which legitimate inequality and differential access to resources" (Talib & Fitzgerald, 2016:531).

Looking at NPM reforms in Africa particularly, Tshombe & Dassah (2017) identify three phases of reform; the 1960's, 1970's and the latest being 1990's to 2000's which were all characterised by different issues such as decentralisation, privatisation and addressing issues of good governance. They further argue that considering context is important and that "the reality of NPM reform in the continent, specifically in sub-Saharan Africa, needs to be evaluated with caution because of political instability; democratic elections and regime change transform the system of governance" (Tshombe & Dassah 2017:21). This is echoed by Polidano (1999) who considered the application of NPM in developing countries such as Malaysia and Uganda. The author argued that NPM reforms should not be applied in a generalised manner, but should consider the unique contexts of each country. Every country should select the principles that work best for them.

2.6.2 Effects of New Public Management on Higher Education

Cat (2019:57) states that "the practices associated with this policy framework in the public sector, including within higher education, include a growing reliance on short-term labour, strategic plans, performance-linked remuneration". Tshombe & Dassah (2018) add downsizing and outsourcing as part of NPM practices. Part of this was seen during the #FeesMustFall movement, where protestors called for an end to outsourcing. Students and university employees protested against outsourcing services such as cleaning, gardening and catering (Maringira & Gukurume, 2021). This particular demand by protestors indicated a possible inefficiency of NPM as a higher education governance method. The outsourcing of workers by Wits University has been a sensitive topic of discussion. Ntshingila (2016) states that when the university decided to outsource some services, it did not consider the impact this would have on the previously insourced employees. Whereas they previously had benefits such as medical aid, paid maternity leave and scholarships to fund their beneficiaries through university, outsourcing left them with salary cuts and no benefits. Ntshingila (2016) also argues that HEIs have used outsourcing as a scapegoat to avoid attending to workers' grievances and the trade unions they represent. That is perhaps why outsourced workers were also a part of the #FeesMustFall movement in hopes that they would be permanently employed and have their livelihoods restored:

> "Equally, outsourcing makes it difficult for workers to have their voices heard in universities unless 'joint ventures' arise with students and progressive academics within the institutions. Such mobilisation at Wits in late 2015 helped to bring a series of victories to the outsourced workers – ranging from the gradual re-introduction of insourcing by the university to immediate free study benefits for their children" (Ntshingila, 2016: 88).

Another impact of NPM is the dissemination of European discourses to South African HEIs. NPM assumes and promotes certain discourses within the institutions to which it is applied. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what these discourses are and how they interact with and influence the existing discourses in tuition policies in South African HEIs. This dissemination of discourses is perhaps why Dlamini (2018) argues that the move towards corporatisation of higher education is a new form of colonisation because it calls for HEIs to move towards internationalised and European standards of operating, instead of working to develop governance methods suited to the South African context. He views applying the principles of NPM as key players in deepening inequalities, which contradicts what the government aimed to do with the new policies. "While being sensitive to internationalization, universities in Africa should be the key players in knowledge development and production informed by the African context instead of continuously importing Western and Eurocentric discourse" (Dlamini. 2018: 56). The author further cautions against forgetting the historical context of South Africa by pursuing international governance methods. Despite these criticisms, other scholars such as Lapuente & Van de Walle (2020:471) believe that NPM also benefits higher education by promoting "principles such as transparency, competition or agencification".

2.7 Student Protests

In the beginning of October 2015, South Africa experienced one of the biggest waves of student protests post-1994. These resulted from an announcement by Wits University that the tuition fees for 2016 would increase by 10.5% which led to what is now known as #FeesMustFall (Booysen, 2016). Students at Wits decided to protest and argued that the increase was unfair because university costs were already high and exclusionary. They were joined by students from other HEIs shortly after to march against fee increments (Naidoo, 2016). This was not a new demand since HBIs such as Fort Hare University, University of KwaZulu Natal and Tshwane University of Technology had been protesting high tuition and regular increments already (Naidoo, 2016).

Various HEIs joined the movement and the protests achieved significant policy changes in a short period of time. They demonstrated that protests impact university tuition and government policies (Becker, 2010). Some documented changes include fee increases being halted for the next year and amendments by the government to the existing National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to provide more funding to underprivileged students.

> "Following protracted strikes by students in 2015 and 2016 against rising cost of HE, the South African government took a number of short term measures (e.g. tighter fees regulation and increased allocation to NSFAS) aimed primarily at stemming the tides, while the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training (CIHET) was tasked with finding long term solutions to the question of HE funding and related matters (Ayuk & Koma, 2019:178).

The discourses around the missing middle, that is, students who cannot afford university fees but also do not qualify for funding based on the NSFAS means test, were foregrounded by the protests. NSFAS funds students from households earning less than R350 000 per annum, and those classified as the missing middle come from households with income between R350 000 to R600 000 (Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, 2015). The debates around the missing middle date back to 2009 when the Ministerial Review of NSFAS identified students in this group as disadvantaged and was tasked with finding solutions tailored for them. One suggestion was that missing middle students should be granted loans that they would repay at lower interest rates, but this did not materialise (Merten, 2016). Some possible reasons for the neglect of missing middle students include the view that the government has not developed a system to identify and support these students effectively (UCT Research Office, 2021).

However, even though there isn't a national system of funding these students, one of the government's solutions was to introduce the Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP). The proposal for ISFAP was included in the Heher Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training Report in 2015. This bursary scheme was created for students in the missing middle who are registered for qualifications in high-demand industries. Part of the motivation for implementing it was that "if implemented, the ISFAP model should result in broader access for the financially needy, a reduction in debt owed to the universities, and possible improved throughput" (Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, 2015:480). This shows that not only did the plight of students who fall within this group gain attention during the #FeesMustFall protests, but it led to changes to accommodate them at some institutions.

Another example is the Wits hardship fund that students can apply for to settle historic debt and be allowed to register to continue with their studies. This bursary does not fund students eligible for NSFAS funding and those who come from homes with an annual household income above R600 000. Students are granted assistance based on a means test and academic performance (Wits, 2017). These are some of policy changes achieved by the protests (Matshili, 2019).

The protests were received with opposing views. Gon (2016) felt that the protests were extremely violent, and that violence should not be tolerated. The author also argues that the protests were a result of society entertaining young people with "too much knowledge and too little wisdom" (Gon, 2016:2). Gon (2016) also argues that the true motives of the protests were not fees but rather political influence and sides with the universities who decided to get police and private security involved in handling protestors. Maringira & Gukurume (2021) counter-argue and state how student protests have continuously been seen as a threat towards the government and criticise the heavy-handedness of some universities that hired private security on campus. Greeff, Mostert, Kahl, & Jonke (2016) state that during the #FeesMustFall protests, HEIs had to perform under pressure and make budget cuts. They also consider the protests' impact on incoming first-year students and conclude that they were traumatic and forced first-time university students to work under pressure because of the constant disruption of classes. The authors also argue that little attention had been given to the effects of the protests on students, but the focus was on the effects the protests had on institutions. There were differing discourses around violence, equality, decolonisation, outsourcing, political influence and calls for free higher education in the protests. All of these affected policy outcomes at universities and steered the conversation around tuition fees in different (sometimes new) directions.

2.7.1 Free Higher Education

Current debates within higher education spaces include free higher education, which was foregrounded by the #FeesMustFall protests. This call for free higher education was also echoed by the UK student protests and was included in their demands (Coughlan, 2015). The promise of free higher education in South Africa was made in the early 1990's when the ANC prepared itself for democracy and introduced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Amongst many other promises of redress and promotion of a non-discriminatory South Africa, the document included the promise of "10 years of free, compulsory education" (Weber, 2002:276). This sentiment was also echoed in the ANC's policy statement in 1994. This commitment applied to primary and secondary education but not to tertiary education (van der Berg, 2007). The Education White Paper of 2013 also reiterated the DHET's commitment to providing free higher education to poor students, depending on the availability of resources (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014).

One of the #FeesMustFall demands was free higher education. In response to this, former president Jacob Zuma announced free higher education for first-year students who could prove their combined household income was less than R350000 annually in 2017. He also stated that NSFAS would be a fully subsidised government grant. This announcement had various snowball effects, including DHET issuing a 0% fee increment for 2018 and the national treasury adjusting their budgets (Ayuk & Koma, 2019; Fengu, 2018). However, this has not translated into reality, as other university protests have occurred after this announcement.

Some scholars argue that the demand for free higher education is unsustainable because the state has limited resources which are contested for by other equally important departments such as health, security, and basic education (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008). Wangenge-Ouma (2012) acknowledges that free higher education was a reality in some African countries but argues that instead of redressing the inequalities caused by colonialism, it inadvertently reinforced them in different ways. "Free higher education reproduced and reinforced colonial and post-colonial inequities with regard to the distribution of schools and privilege and therefore beneficiaries of FHE" (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012:837). Another shortfall was that primary and secondary education was not always free, so students who could not complete the pre-requisite levels of study would not benefit from the free higher education policies (Wangenge-Ouma, 2012; van der Berg, 2007).

Badat (2015) speaks against free higher education and argues that “unless the government provided the benefits, the funding shortfall that universities would experience, based on free higher education for all, South African universities would collapse”. Badat (2015) further suggests that the government should focus on improving NSFAS and academic development programmes to offset funding for disadvantaged students. An article from The Conversation (2021) supports this view and adds that "even before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has increased financial hardship for families, several analyses showed that fee-free higher education would put unsustainable pressure on the country’s public finances, especially as enrolments grew”.

Questions about who would bear free higher education costs have not been addressed. Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou (2005) argue that higher education is not free. The authors studied 3000 new undergraduate students across universities in Greece where the constitution states the higher education is free. Their findings indicated that although students are not expected to pay tuition, they still bear the costs to enrol at the university such as the compulsory university entrance exam, transport, accomodation, and food. They criticise the free higher education model for offering the same options to poor and rich families and suggest that socioeconomic status should be considered and more financial support should be given to low-income families (Psacharopoulos & Papakonstantinou, 2005). The consensus seems to be that other avenues should be considered to improve funding since free higher education would not be possible due to the limitations of government funding.

2.8 Critical Discourse Analysis and Policy

The study of CDA dates back to the early 1970’s and has its roots in various critical studies such as psychology, linguistics and social sciences. Its current focus on language and other semiotic choices is inspired mainly by linguistic studies that were used to uncover underlying ideologies, analysing the context in which meaning is created, as well as how this meaning is created (van Dijk, 2001). Foucault, perhaps one of the key figures in the field of CDA, began contributing to the field in the early 1970’s and provided important ways of understanding it and useful models for applying it as a research method. However, it is important to note that CDA is not a prescriptive research method (van Dijk, 2001), this is a key element of CDA that some scholars disagree with (Cummings et al., 2020).

CDA argues that ideology, power and the interests of those they serve influence meaning-making. “Fairclough talks about different types of power. He argues that there is power to, power over, and power behind. He contends that CDA can help us figure out how these types of power manifest themselves through social and political practices” (Orelus, 2017:3). Another central feature of CDA is language and how it can be used for positive or negative purposes. Language is part of societal practices and can influence power, politics, and status issues.

CDA can also identify foregrounded and backgrounded ideas and discourses. This specific characteristic is highlighted because one of the research questions is based on revealing foregrounded and backgrounded discourses. Foregrounding refers to giving salience to certain issues or concepts. It is when emphasis is placed on certain ideas over others (Hutchkin, 1997). Du Toit (2020) also suggests that foregrounding provides thematic prominence; the recurrence of certain themes within a text. Backgrounding is the opposite of foregrounding and refers to de-emphasis or omitting certain ideas, issues or information so that attention is not drawn to them. In an article published on ThoughtCo, Nordquist (2020) summarises these two concepts as: "foregrounding refers to a prominent portion of text that contributes meaning, contrasted with the background, which provides relevant context for the foreground".

More key characteristics of CDA include revealing underlying power structures and ideologies in a text and explaining power relations in language. It analyses how vocabulary, images, videos and other semiotic choices create meaning and reveal underlying discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 1994; Cummings et al., 2020). CDA considers "how social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 1994:352). Fairclough and Wodak also summarise the main precepts of CDA as:

> "CDA addresses social problems, power relations are discursive, discourse constitutes society and culture, discourse does ideological work, discourse is historical, the link between text and society is mediated, discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory, and discourse is a form of social action" (van Dijk, 1994: 353).

These tenets of CDA can be used to guide research using it as a methodological tool since CDA does not have prescribed steps to follow (Cummings et al., 2020). This is because CDA is heterogeneous and is adjusted to fit particular research goals depending on what it wants to achieve (Liasidou & Symeou, 2018). However, other scholars, such as Graham (2005), argue that this lack of a set methodological approach supported by Foucauldian scholars may discourage researchers in more practice-oriented fields from engaging with this type of research.

Notwithstanding the above criticism against CDA, the popularity of applying it to practice-oriented fields such as policy analysis has grown over the years, as demonstrated by scholars such as Mulderrig, Montessori, & Farrelly (2020). They argue for integrating CDA and critical policy studies called critical discourse policy analysis. Bacchi (2000) agrees that discourse can be useful to policy studies because it may identify the reasons why certain policy objectives have been difficult to attain. Taylor (2004) advocates for using CDA as a policy analysis tool for combining both linguistic and social analysis even in "new times". The author argues that CDA applied to policy analysis remains relevant because of "its emphasis on the discursive construction of power relations and its commitment to progressive social change" (Taylor, 2004: 14).

The elements of CDA that were applied to this research referenced the four-phase research process proposed by Cummings, de Haan, & Seferiadis (2020:102):

> "The first phase involves the selection of a research topic that relates to a social question that can be productively approached by a focus on language and, specifically, texts. The second phase involves the identification of a suitable text as well as an analysis of pre-existing discourses in the policy or academic literature. Once an appropriate text has been identified, the text is analysed. The third phase considers how the text has been developed and how this relates to the discourses identified. For example, which actors were involved in developing the policy and how this relates to the discourses. The fourth phase is based on the identification of possible ways past the obstacles or problems identified by the use of discourses, narratives and arguments".

Since interviews were a key part of this study, new texts (interview transcripts) were considered as part of the four-phase process described above.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature review highlighted the merits of policy-as-text or policy-as-discourse and argued for a move towards policy-as-discourse. It also offered a historical overview of UJ and Wits, the backgrounds of HBIs and HWIs, and how these affect the two institutions today. It further included discussions around higher education funding and examined how the sources of funding are continuously changing to suit the current climate. Additionally, the review included a discussion of how funding formulae have evolved over the years as well the loopholes in the current funding framework, and considered how these could be a possible contribution to the ongoing student protests. Furthermore, the review considered how the discourses associated with New Public Management influenced higher education institutions towards a corporatised governance system where universities are no longer governed as a public institution but as a business. Lastly, the characteristics and criticisms of CDA and its application to policy analysis were discussed, and the predominant argument was for a policy-as-discourse view because issues of power and underlying ideologies were prevalent in higher education policy formulation and analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research design and paradigm adopted in this study, the selection of the sample, the data collection and analysis process, and the limitations encountered during various stages of the research process.

3.1 Research Design

According to scholars, quantitative and qualitative research are the two most common research approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Cummings, de Haan, & Seferiadis, 2020; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Quantitative research is mostly concerned with confirming assumptions and theories. It is deductive and begins by identifying a theory or phenomenon, formulating a hypothesis, collecting and analysing data, and then using the data to decide whether a theory can be accepted or rejected. It usually follows a step-by-step process and rarely deviates from it. It is also expressed in numerical data, graphs and statistical form and is used to test hypotheses and theories. Quantitative research values objectivity and has fixed research methods (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This is different from qualitative research, which is flexible and subjective in nature. It enables researchers to understand concepts, experiences, and their meanings. The primary data in qualitative research is words, and it can be used to gain greater insight about a topic and explore ideas. Unlike quantitavie research, qualitative research can be used to create a theory rather than to confirm an existing one (Braun & Clarke, 2013; du Plooy, 2017). It also does not place one research method over the other but acknowledges differences in data, allows flexibility, is less systematic and is inductive in nature (Shanthi, Kean, & Lajium, 2015). These characteristics made a qualitative research design better suited for this study. This study followed a qualitative research design based on the ontological assumption that reality is subjective (du Plooy, 2017).

> "Qualitative research claims to describe life worlds 'from the inside out', from the point of view of the people who participate. By so doing, it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns and structural features" (Flick, von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004:1).

These characteristics of qualitative research enabled the investigation of the meanings and experiences of those involved in tuition policy formation and to understand the different realities and assumptions they bring. Mohajan (2018) lists some of the strengths of qualitative research as its potential to leave room for the discovery of new evidence that may not have been considered initially, to uncover "possible relationships, causes, effects, and dynamic processes, and to provide a rich picture of social phenomena and in its specific contexts" (Mohajan, 2018:20). This was particularly applicable to this study because it centres contexts and incidents with the intention to potentially uncover relationships between the historical and current contexts of HBIs and HWIs and how these may impact tuition policy.

Furthermore, this study adopted a multi-case study design. Case studies involve a thorough analysis of cases, and they enable “researchers to conduct an in-depth exploration of intricate phenomena within some specific context” (Rashid et al., 2019:1). Case study research tools include interviews and existing texts, which were the data collection methods used in this study. A case study design in conjunction with CDA allowed participants to share their understanding and experiences of reality and situate information in its relevant contexts. This assisted with exploring the discourses attached not only to what was said but the context in which it was meant to be understood as well. This was beneficial in addressing the identified knowledge gap as well as in answering the research questions.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Shanthi, Kean, & Lajium (2015) state that the research paradigm influences how research is conducted and guides the selection of tools to be used. This is why it was important to define it before moving on to other stages of the research process. This study is situated within the constructivist research paradigm, also known as interpretivism. This paradigm encourages conducting research in natural settings by interpreting the meanings people attach to certain issues and looking for patterns within specific data sources. Data sources include interviews, reviewing documents and observation of participants and phenomena. Constructivist or interpretivist paradigms are usually associated with studies that adopt a qualitative approach where the emphasis is placed on studying social issues that evolve around people's lives. It involves “studying things in their natural setting, attempts to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Shanthi, Kean, & Lajium, 2015:161). From this definition, this paradigm involves understanding meaning, which connects it to the centrality of meaning in CDA. It also supports the characteristics of qualitative research mentioned above, making it relevant for this study.

3.3 Sampling and Population

Non-probability sampling was used for this study, specifically purposive sampling. This method allows the researcher to draw a sample using their own judgement and can also be referred to as judgement sampling (du Plooy, 2017). Purposive sampling also allows the researcher to select a sample through specific “criteria like the availability, geographical proximity, or expert knowledge of the individuals you want to research in order to answer a research question” (Nikolopoulou, 2022). As mentioned previously, the reasons for selecting the two institutions involved in this study was their proximity to each other, their participation in the #FeesMustFall movement and their differing histories and formations. Wits represents a traditional HWI whilst UJ is a merger of both HWIs and HBIs, making it a distinctive location of inquiry. Furthermore, access to both institutions was another reason for using purposive sampling. As a staff member at Wits and former student and employee at UJ I was able to get access to participants based on my understanding of the academic and governance structures in both institutions.

The study sought to interview 11 participants, and managed to do so succesfully. The original participants selected for the study were members from the Registrars office, members of the Council, members of the Senate, a senior manager from each university's finance department, a representative of the University Education Branch at DHET, a senior member from the CHE, as well as a senior member from the South African Union of Students.

Furthermore, snowball sampling, that is, sampling based on the recommendations of the original sample (du Plooy, 2017) was also used to determine the relevant people to interview. This was because some members of the sample had to be changed due to unavailability. Some members were reluctant, and some felt that they were the incorrect people to speak to. However, they referred me to more relevant people through snowball sampling. Despite this, the sample was still representative of the original members in that it achieved interviews with council, senate, finance/governance members from the two universities and representatives from SAUS, DHET and CHE. Representatives from senior members in the Registrar's offices at both universities were interviewed due to their roles as a link between university administration and university executive management. They could provide richer information about the protests from an administrative viewpoint and from the perspective of policy formulation since they sit on both universities senior executives teams and councils. A senior manager in the finance division and a faculty dean as a senate member were also interviewed from Wits. From UJ, four members were interviewed. These included a member from UJ's business school who also serves as a member of the Senate, a senior director who sits on the university council, a senior member in the governance and revenue department and a senior member in the office of the Dean of Students. All these participants helped provide richer insight into the policy-making process at the executive level of universities. Furthermore, senior representatives from DHET and CHE were also interviewed as part of the sample to provide insight into university policies and the processes around them from a national governance perspective. Lastly, a senior member of SAUS was interviewed to represent the student councils at these universities. Their perspectives on university tuition policies and how they shape higher education discourses benefited the study.

The study originally sought to include the council minutes from both UJ and Wits as part of the sample, however, this was not possible because I was not able to get these from UJ. The minutes I received from Wits were incomplete because the Registry office removed some sections and sent the pages that they felt were applicable to my research. It would have been an incomplete analysis to consider the minutes outside the context of the full meeting, and it would have been unfair to analyse minutes from one university only.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection instrument. These interviews allow flexibility even though they follow a set of questions by the interviewer. This flexibility allows participants to possibly raise issues that the researcher may not have foreseen and thus provide richer insight. The interviews consisted of a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, with mostly open-ended questions to encourage open discussions and to build rapport with participants. Adopting a semi-structured interview allowed me to ask follow-up questions where further clarification is required (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The interview questions were centred on the research questions this paper sought to answer. These include tuition policy formation, #FeesMustFall, and the discourses around these in historically black and white institutions. The questions were introductory, specific, and general in nature. Two sets of interview questions were drafted for different individuals in the sample. They were divided according to universities and those from outside organisations. The questions for university members were directed to members of the registrar's office, council and senate members, and representatives from university financial management/governance departments. The questions for those outside the university environment were directed to the Department of Higher Education, Council on Higher Education and the South African Union of Students representatives.

Before any analysis could be carried out on the data generated from the interview transcripts, the documents were coded, and themes were highlighted.

> "A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, drawings, artifacts, photographs, video, Internet sites, e-mail correspondence, literature, and so on" (Saldaña, 2013:3).

Complete coding was done, i.e., coding that considers all of the data and not specific sections of it to have a deeper understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Coding adds value to carrying out analyses because it requires the researcher to be involved in interpreting data from its smallest unit. Coding is, therefore, analysis because the theoretical lens influences how the researcher looks at the data (Saldaña, 2013).

The data was coded through Atlas.ti, a coding and analytical software program. This shortened the time it would have taken to do manual coding because there were large amounts of data emanating from 11 interview transcripts that lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. Braun & Clarke (2013) state that some of the benefits of using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software are that these programmes are useful for managing large data sets, they facilitate better data organisation, they enable researchers to search and file data faster, and they make it easier to generate visuals from data. They can increase the efficiency with which the coding process is carried out. These authors also warn against certain disadvantages of using software programmes to code, such as the high cost usually associated with these, the length of time it takes to master the programme (it may delay the process and ultimately cause delays in completing the research), and they can promote procrastination by providing a false sense of ease which may lead the researcher to think they can work faster than reality suggests. They may also promote certain types of analyses over others.

After the data was coded, recurring patterns and themes were identified. Braun & Clarke (2013:224) state that "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". A theme differs from a code because it is much broader and encompasses more dimensions than a code. Whereas a code captures a single idea, a theme consists of different ideas organised around one concept (du Plooy, 2017), and "codes combine to form themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2013:224). Some advantages of applying themes are that they reduce coded data to manageable amounts to allow for accurate reporting, foreground salient information in the data, and allow for easier interpretation of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The themes identified from the interview transcripts were analysed through the various CDA mechanisms suggested by Machin and Mayr (2012) and other authors such Cummings et al., (2020), Mohajan (2018), and van Dijk (2001). Firstly, the semiotic choices were analysed to determine the creation of meaning. "The process of doing CDA involves looking at choices of words and grammar in texts in order to discover the underlying discourse(s) and ideologies. A text's linguistic structure functions, as discourse, to highlight certain ideologies, while downplaying or concealing others" (Machin & Mayr, 2012:26). This is why lexical analysis was used to determine the kind of vocabulary used in the texts and included considering the words that are used and those that are not used, connotations, quoting verbs, overemphasis, and salience which all assisted in identifying the issues that were foregrounded and backgrounded (Machin and Mayr, 2012). The text was analysed at the level of "individual words and phrases, how the words and phrases relate to each other in the text and the priority given to different themes", as proposed by Cummings et al. (2020:104). A thematic approach was also undertaken in the analysis of the interview transcripts.

3.5 Research Tools

Most of the questions from the interviews were the same for both groups of the sample, that is, those within UJ and Wits and those from organisations outside the universities. However, additional questions were specifically aimed at CHE, SAUS and DHET, which slightly differed from those directed at representatives within the two universities. These are attached as Appendix B and C.

3.6 Limitations

Various limitations have been identified in qualitative research, and the most commonly mentioned is the issue of reflexivity and subjectivity (Etikan, 2015; Starks & Trinidad, 2007). My position as an employee of the University of the Witwatersrand and as someone who experienced the #FeesMustFall protests on campus was constantly interrogated to avoid including my biases in the study. Constant reflection throughout the research was also carried out to make the findings as accurate as possible.

Another limitation is that I could not access all the members initially selected for the study, as mentioned previously. However, I was able to replace them through referrals. The recent COVID-19 pandemic also posed a potential limitation in that the interviews were not face-to-face but were done electronically. I cite this as a potential limitation because, ideally, an interview setting that allows for the observation of other non-verbal communication cues, such as body language, would be helpful in gaining more than just verbal, overt information.

Because the interviews were done electronically via Microsoft Teams, internet connectivity issues and electricity issues due to load-shedding also presented challenges. Some interviews had to be rescheduled for different times, extending the period set aside for concluding the interviews. Another factor that influenced the time taken to conclude interviews was the lack of response to interview requests, and numerous postponements by some respondents.

3.7 Ethical considerations

To adhere to the ethical expectations for the study, all the material (documents, articles, websites) was referenced accordingly. For the interviews, respect for the participants' positions within the universities, student, and government departments was maintained throughout the interview process, as well as understanding that there may be certain information that they could not divulge to me. Participants were referred to as respondents in the study, with no names or other markers used for identification purposes. All the requirements for ethics clearance were met as demonstrated by appendix A.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter explained the methodology used in the study. It explained why qualitative research was selected as the research design and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research, its differences to quantitative research and its applicability to the study. Furthermore, an explanation was given for selecting a case study approach which led to discussion of the constructivist research paradigm adopted for this study. The sampling method and the population were discussed, and justification was given for why the sampling method and specific population were selected. An explanation of the data collection and analysis process, the steps involved in them as well as the tools used to collect and analyse the data was given. Lastly, the limitations encountered during the processes mentioned above and all ethical considerations were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analysed the data collected in the previous section. Before the analysis could begin, respondents were anonymised by changing their names. Respondents from Wits University are identified as Respondents 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D. Respondents from the University of Johannesburg are identified as Respondents 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D. Respondents from SAUS, DHET and CHE are identified as 3, 4 and 5 in no particular order. To further guarantee the anonymity of respondents, additional identifiers such as job positions, gender pronouns, and names of people that were mentioned are omitted from direct quotations.

During the analysis, specific elements from CDA were applied to the data. Firstly, the semiotic choices used by respondents were analysed. "Through the individual semiotic choices that they make, authors and designers can encourage us to place events and ideas into broader frameworks of interpretation that are referred to as 'discourses'" (Machin & Mayr, 2012:20). Furthermore, lexicalisation was applied to uncover meaning; legitimisation to consider power structures and socio-semantics of location and extent were applied to account for context and specific periods. These elements were applied to the themes discussed in this section.

4.1 Themes

The themes and subthemes that were identified in the transcripts are demonstrated in table 1 below and explored in the next section.

THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Funding	• Higher Education Funding Sources • Funding Frameworks • Inflation Rates- HEPI/CPI • Third-stream Income • Transparency • Funding for Postgraduate Students • Student Performance
Student Wellness	• Increased Sensitivity to Student Issues • Environments for Student Success
University Autonomy	• Fee Caps • University Sustainability

Missing Middle	• University Interventions • NSFAS Shortfalls	
Classifications- HBI, HWI, comprehensive	• Transformation of Demographics • Graduate Employment Rates	

Table 1: Themes and Subthemes

4.1.1 *Higher Education Funding*

Respondents agreed that funding is important to HEIs. Beginning with higher education funding sources, respondents mentioned various elements of higher education funding and gave examples of how these were applied to institutions. However, there were two dominant voices in this section which belonged to Respondents 3 and 4. Other respondents were backgrounded especially in the discussions about funding frameworks. A recurring theme in this analysis is that certain voices were more prominent when discussing particular topics. This may be due to their job position, areas of expertise, years of experience, or beliefs. Respondents 3 and 4 agreed with Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe (2020:1) that the three main sources of university funding are "tuition fee income, the state subsidy and third-stream income," discussed further below.

4.1.1.1 Government Funding

Respondent 4 estimated that the majority of funding for universities comes from the government:

> "On average institutions are getting about 40% of their income from the state subsidy, about 35 to 40% from tuition fees and of course in many institutions, those tuition fees are now being paid almost entirely by the state because NSFAS is funding approximately 62% of undergraduate students".

Respondent 4 also added that funds were reprioritised from other government departments towards higher education since 2018:

> "We had a massive increase in 2018 in the NSFAS budget when the fully subsidized model was introduced. At the same time, we had a substantive increase in the university subsidy budget, which was was part of the same announcement made by President Zuma, which was to say we're trying to get university subsidy to reach 1% of GDP. So, for the years 2018 and 2019 in the budget, there was substantial additional funding in the vote for universities".

However, due to inflation (section 4.1.1.3) and the COVID-19 pandemic, the government had to decrease their subsidy allocations to universities. Respondent 4 elaborated on this below:

> “2020-2021 we had COVID, we had cuts across government and of course that was then reversed, but certainly in 2018-2019 universities had substantial additional increases. Which was also a part of compensating for the fact that tuition fees had to be kept at reasonable levels. So, there’s a big tension in the system at the moment where the subsidy budget was supposed to be increasing, but it's now under constraint. The sub student funding budget is continually growing and being reprioritized from other priorities, and it's not affordable, not sustainable”.

The declining government subsidy was already a challenge before the pandemic as argued by Wangenge-Ouma & Kupe (2020). This is perhaps why most respondents (10 out of 11) acknowledged that the current funding framework, which relies mostly on government subsidy, had to be supplemented by additional sources of funding. The respondents attributed this decline to growing university enrolments and the shortage of sufficient funding from sources other than the government.

Whilst discussing the most prominent discourses in their university around funding in relation to the decline in government subsidy, Respondent 2C stated that these were “the international context, the national context, the problems with funding from government that's diminishing” and that “if we can get government to not keep on decreasing the funding, it would be good while we get our economy sorted and our politics sorted to freeze the increases or keep it at a minimum”. The same sentiment was echoed by respondent 4 who stated the following:

> “…obviously enrolments were growing significantly, and you can see that between sort of 1994 and 2015 that enrolments in higher education had doubled. But essentially, the concomitant increase in the budget going to universities and so therefore the unit costs of going into the state subsidy had essentially not kept pace with the growth of student numbers”.

Another challenge is that the subsidies that institutions receive are different because of the subsidy determinants discussed in section 2.4.1. These include allocating subsidy according to student population, and research outputs by institutions. Respondent 3 stated that “funding depends on your own teaching inputs, what is it that you offer students and how do they fare in those, like your outputs kind of thing, and of course your research and other factors for the institution”. There were mixed reactions to these differing subsidy levels because some respondents felt that the formula was fair, others criticised it and others felt that it did not benefit HBIs. Respondents drew on differing discourses to substantiate their views.

Respondent 3 defended the current funding formula by arguing that it aimed to distribute funds equally and fairly. The respondent stated that:

"Well, that's what we fought for. That there's a single, coordinated higher education system in those early debates that culminated in the White Paper, and then the Act, because the divided system was not workable. Then a different formula had to be worked out, which is based on the CESM categories, so it is fair for institutions to be treated equitably. If you leave the history aside, there's nothing that stops the university from saying I want different programs now. So, it doesn't matter whether your history was a privileged one or a disadvantaged one".

This implies a discourse where the inequalities perpetuated by apartheid have been effectively eradicated in higher education funding, and the onus is now on institutions to be proactive in finding ways to secure more funding from the government. This contradicts Mtshweni's (2022) argument that the legacy of apartheid still has a stranglehold on the higher education system. It is worth noting that Respondent 3 did not condone apartheid but seemingly felt that enough work had been done to minimise the differences between HBIs and HWIs in terms of funding. This conclusion is drawn because the response was given to a question about the fairness of applying the same funding criteria to the two institutional types. The respondent added, "it is fair to treat all institutions as equals regardless of the history, because we have had an opportunity now to correct some of the things". In response to the same question, Respondent 5 was of the opposite view that "basically, the current policy framework that is in place, it's still favouring the historically white institutions. It's not addressing the imbalances of the past". This view is in agreement with Jinabhai (2003), Mubangizi (2005) and Styger et al. (2015), who argued that certain elements of the NFF reinforce rather than eradicate the legacy left by apartheid, especially the requirement of high research outputs for greater subsidy.

4.1.1.2 Funding Frameworks

Funding formulae are intrinsic to discussions of government funding as demonstrated in section 2.4.1. Respondents 3 and 4 spoke about funding formulae and alluded to how these were applied currently in both HBIs and HWIs. Respondent 3 acknowledged that HBIs and HWIs were funded differently before, but introducing formulae helped to equalise the two:

"When we had this division of universities. The historically black universities as they were called at the time, HBU's, and later what you call HDI's and the historically advantaged institutions and so forth. So, the funding of universities at the time was kind of like differential in a sense that the so called Black Homeland type universities were funded not the same as the University of Pretoria or Wits, UCT and Stellenbosch and so forth. And the funding formula at the time was called SAPSE, you know South African Post-Secondary Education. And then this evolved into the funding based on HEMIS".

Respondent 3 further elaborated on how the CESM categories introduced by the SAPSE formula do not favour HWIs over HBIs because the groupings are based strictly on programme offerings and resource requirements. The respondent stated that:

> "The HEMIS is obviously based on the CESM categories that you have which are the more expensive fields of study and the less expensive ones. For example, if you take history or you take psychology, it would not be the same as funding a program in, let's say veterinary sciences or medicine or engineering or things like that, because of the tuition arrangements, labs and stuff like that".

This places all institutions on the same level and is inclusionary because according to Respondent 3 still, the differences were caused by the unfair dispensation of funds by the apartheid government. The NFF has corrected that to an extent:

> "If you look at the facilities at Wits, you look at facilities at Pretoria and you look at facilities at Walter Sisulu University or University of the North or Limpopo now. They are not the same because the state was pumping in money for these in a different way because it was an apartheid dispensation. But since then, all institutions are funded the same based on the HEMIS formula".

Respondent 4 added that the current funding formula is not a cost-based model and provided an elaborate description of what it is made up of and how it is applied to institutions:

> "So we have a funding framework which is differentiated. The vast proportion of the funding framework is made up of a block grant. The block grant differs, but it's approximately 80 to 85% of the subsidy. And that goes to institutions based on a complex formula that includes teaching inputs, teaching outputs, research outputs. And then there's an institutional factor grant that looks at issues like the number of black students in the system, but also looks at institutional size. So, for example, if you're a very small institution, then there has to be some compensation for that as well. And so, the block grant is key and the tuition inputs and outputs are based on CESM categories. So CESM categories of course sort of group areas of study into particular high and low costs in four areas.

Even though these two respondents explained the practical applications of funding formulae in universities today, they seemingy differed in their views of their practicality and fairness. As previously stated, Respondent 3 stated that the funding formula and its application was fair, whilst Respondent 4 agreed that although it was a good system which could possibly change over time, one of its weaknesses was that it is not cost-based. This weakness made it harder to determine the money required in a specific field to produce graduates, which would lead to a better understanding of the exact costs required to run the higher education funding system in a fairer manner. Despite this, the prevalent discourse is that the NFF is reasonable. It has its advantages and disadvantages, but it is a necessary system that allows for fair allocation of resources to institutions.

4.1.1.3 Inflation

To further explain the decreases in subsidy, respondents explained how external factors such as increasing inflation, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) influence costs. These were discussed as factors of concern within the previous funding formulae that the NFF sought to address. Firstly, there was an acknowledgement that the costs of running a university were higher due to HEPI and the CPI. Respondent 3 elaborated on HEPI and stated the following:

> "What had happened is that given the history before the fees must fall, all institutions would work out a basket of all the elements that go into it, of variables to actually arrive at the tuition fee increase. And much of that was above inflation because of what we call HEPI in higher education. That is about 2% more than your normal inflation because of all of these factors, exchange rate and research and things like that".

Respondent 2C also explained how, in their discussions, the CPI often came up in relation to driving tuition fees higher, but also included how unforeseen events like the war between Ukraine and Russia also influence inflation:

> "So, the key conversations every year and we've just had that conversation is two things. What's the current inflation and the inflation going forward, what are we expecting inflation to be in the coming year. And then the second thing is the CPI. So those two things really drive any sort of price for module increase, you know per module increase. So, the tuition fees are honestly driven by that. There are external factors, the one is international things like who would have thought that the covid pandemic would… that was a big disruptor, we didn't totally expect it. Although it was as unexpected as the Ukraine, Russian war".

Respondent 4 spoke in detail about HEPI and the CPI, and how they affect universities. The respondent also criticised universities for seemingly using HEPI as a scapegoat to keep increasing tuition fees beyond the agreed percentages:

> "2017 and 2018, we had a compact, which was that no institution could increase their fees beyond 8% increase. So, there was an agreement on what the maximum increase percentage would be on the tuition fees. In 2019-2021 and this year (2022) we've had a big compact which is based on CPI. So we've had a CPI linked increase in the tuition fee and a CPI +2 in accommodation fees given that the costs of accommodation fees are higher. The other thing you should look at is this

whole Idea of HEPI which is high. It's called higher education price index, which is an idea that higher education has a slightly higher inflation rate than other areas, and partly what drives that is the cost of you know, for example of resources that one has to buy in foreign currency, like expensive research equipment, library materials etc. So institutions used to use that a lot to argue that higher education needed above inflation increases. The difficulty with that is if you talk to National Treasury they will say well every sector can make those kinds of arguments. So, for example, in transport they can make those arguments because the fuel price is based on international demand and supply and foreign exchange rates etcetera. And there's a lot of sectors that are involved in that way. So, the discussions around inflation and what that means in different sectors is a big issue".

Respondent 2D argued that the "inflation for higher education is above the normal CPI due to the escalating costs of just running a university," especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondent 1B agreed with Respondent 1A and Respondent 2D, and added the following:

"I think one of the things that universities experience is that we have, I mean, I don't think it's only universities, but I think everybody has a different kind of inflation or a different kind of a cost structure. And as a university our cost structures are not a normal inflation cost structure, we actually have a higher cost structure because we actually have quite a lot of water bills and electricity bills. You have students running around on campus, so those costs are there. And those don't go up with inflation, they go up with much higher things. So, there's a majority of our costs that actually we don't have control over. So, if you look at our costs, you can see that they're going up more than what our revenue goes up".

From the above, inflation remains an area of concern because it was also identified as a loophole in the formulae preceding the NFF. However, as mentioned by some respondents, it is not exclusive to higher education and affects other sectors as well.

4.1.1.4 Third Stream Income

Respondent 2C reflected on the policy changes in their university over the past five years and how third-stream income had become an increasingly important addition to their funding pursuits:

"I think the one thing that I would say has changed in the last five years is a discussion around where's the money gonna come from and so, third stream income has become critical as an important source of funding where we are getting less from government. So that is a change. And so, the there's a big drive to bring in bigger grants, to make some money with short learning programs, and to maybe get government contracts that's over and above the block grant".

Respondent 2A embraced the discourses presented by New Public Management (section 2.5) such as key perfomance areas (KPI's) and a greater role of private sector involvement in universities. The respondent further explained UJ's commitment to partnering with the private sector to find solutions to the funding shortages:

> "And that's why they partner with all this private sector. UJ believes in funding. In fact as part of our KPI's, over the years funding has been such a big thing in KPI. So, we make sure we bring in money to the institution and it's because of subsidising operations and when operations are subsidised, if I don't have to ask UJ for funding for postdocs for example, then UJ can use that funding for something else and then tell students that your fees can be sliced by maybe 30% or 40% or something".

Respondent 1B sated how Wits has also had to pursue third stream income more actively because they could no longer decide on their own tuition increases:

> "So, we've had to think out in a different way to say are there no other ways of earning income. So, we've had to go to third income, I mean Wits always had third stream income, but it's never really been a major focus. It's always been there on the side and it's a nice to have but now it's become a strategy where Wits is saying we need to focus on third stream income to help sustain the institution for the way forward. To make sure that we bring in other funding to help pay for the normal operations of the university as such. And we know in the next few years that our block subsidy is going to be quite flat with minimal increases".

Respondent 1A acknowledged that a mixture of private and public sector funding could be beneficial to funding students. This was despite their criticism of the government for failing to carry out their responsibilities:

> "And I think that politically they didn't want to look at a private-public mix. I mean, I'm surprised to hear myself say this because I've always said that one must never let government off the hook and government should take the responsibility. But I do think that there's probably some space for a private-public mix in terms of funding".

Furthermore, Respondent 1A argued that even though the government should ideally be responsible for funding students, students could also contribute through giving back to the system:

> "I do think that all of us who have benefitted from the system should be paying back into the system So, I think that students are really good at needing when they students, and they're less good at paying back when they are employed. And there's a particular culture shift that that

> needs to happen. That all of us who benefited from higher education should in some way be putting money back into the system, you know, paying backwards, as it were".

This view goes back to the ideology that founded NSFAS, where students would be funded and expected to pay back money for other students to study as a way of paying it forward. It was later discarded when NSFAS became a bursary and no longer a loan scheme. Respondent 1A seemingly endorsed the cost-sharing method of funding that was introduced by the SAPSE formula and requires both the state and the public to share the costs of higher education. This method was supported by Johnstone (2003) while Wangenge-Ouma (2008) criticised it for not fully acknowledging that the inequalities in South African society make it harder for certain demographics to carry the costs of higher education. Respondent 4 warned that even in this cost-sharing model, fees should still be kept affordable " for families and the state who's funding 60% of students, so that fees don't increase beyond the capacity of people to pay them".

Respondents 1D and 2B suggested that the private sector should compete to fund top-performing students. They argued that since private organisations recruit these students after graduation, they should invest in them while they are still in university. Respondent 1B agreed with this view and added how companies benefit from higher education, and that "bringing in those students, supporting them, and then employing them, they are actually developing their own employees from scratch". Respondent 2B emphasised that this would be the "noble thing to do" and suggested that if companies were publicly recognised for their efforts, there would be some competition between private organisations for student sponsorships:

> "I think corporates, private sector guys that are that are within the confines of the economy they're making huge profits to step into educational space. Universities must be willing to give them awards as well and recognition right to say oh we recognize XYZ, I don't wanna mention bank names now, XYZ companies for sponsoring 1000 students. The other company that wants to compete now comes as even me, I want to sponsor 1500, so turn it into kind of like a like an auction. Auction these students and say "here is Simphiwe and here is the profile, Simphiwe is broke, which bank are you?"

This is another influence of NPM which promotes competition as part of its principles. Bleiklie (1998) and Leišytė (2016) warned against how competition and market-orientation would errode the function of universities as a public good.

Respondent 1D criticised private organisations for taking advantage of the higher education system without adequately giving back to it:

> “If companies like Standard Bank (I’m not picking on Standard Bank I’m sorry) and others rely on the university system to produce quality graduates for their own enterprise, because their success and the future of their companies depends on them recruiting quality graduates then they are simply, to put it quite bluntly and honestly, they're leeching off the system. That's what they're doing. They're doing very little to produce these folk, but yet they benefit greatly from recruiting. So, has this has been quite hostile to South African society as far as I'm concerned. So, they've got to come to the party”.

The respondent further touched on a racial discourse by implying that perhaps black people in more senior positions are not doing enough to help their own:

> “Traditionally, ironically, Nokwazi, in the past during the apartheid years, many of the corporate firms were heavily involved in undergraduate student university support. And we're not getting that today. And we've gotta ask ourselves the questions. Many, many of our major companies like Standard Bank are headed by black folk. Folks who understand these questions and yet they're not doing what we recently could expect. I mean, you could say that most of the white students benefited that’s probably true. Not probably true, that was true in the past, but why can't we have the situation where companies set aside some bursaries for student support, because the university cannot provide any support”.

Respondent 2A offered a different viewpoint where instead of solely focusing on private sector interventions for assistance, universities themselves could be sources of third-stream income. Respondent 2A explained how NSFAS is “planning to take over accreditation of privately owned student accommodation because they would want those accommodations to be more affordable for students under NSFAS”. The respondent then highlighted how a similar approach by universities could result in greater income for them, and criticised universities for their contradictory approach to residence where they employ stricter guidelines for private accommodation but not for themselves:

> “But you know, institutions of higher learning -UJ, Wits, everybody, we are creating our own competitors. We are creating our own enemies. Let me give you an example. How do you have a residence on campus which is of a low standard compared to private owned student accommodation? Obviously, you are unintentionally driving students away from your accommodation to off-campus. And what does that imply? The income of the university through residence fees is going down because now we are paying privately owned student accommodation. Many universities, they do not provide refrigerators for students, you know all those particular things. But we have policies that say privately-owned student accommodation must provide refrigerators. And this privately-owned student accommodations have got modern buildings because some of them are recently built. Some of them have got gyms. So, we are

creating our own competition and in the long run, if we do not watch, it's gonna affect us seriously and negatively so".

Respondent 2C also alluded to improving and modernising university residences to generate more income. The respondent added how their department often talks "about how expensive it is to live on campus and that our amenities are not as good as off campus and that that is why students do not stay in the res, although it is cheaper in res". This would perhaps benefit HBIs more because as stated by De Villiers & Ntshoe (2013), HBIs are limited in their ability to generate third-stream income because of their history, geographical and geopolitical location and their relationships with industry. Because this intervention is internal, HBIs may be able to leverage it successfully.

4.1.1.5 University Transparency

Another subtheme from the transcipts was transparency around tuition fee determination. The process that universities follow to determine their tuition fees for individual courses and degrees was questioned and highlighted as a policy concern. Respondents discussed the benefits of universities publicly stating what goes into their tuition fees for each year. The responses varied from a defensive stance where some felt that transparency would be used to placate students, and others considered the implications of what a non-transparent tuition fee meant in terms of addressing the imbalances between HBIs and HWIs.

Respondent 4 stated that a key discourse in their space is "the issue of what is a transparent tuition fee". The respondent drew on their past experience as a student at both Wits and UCT and explained how their fee statements would include additional costs outside of tuition such as photocopies, transport fees for the bus, gym fees and other charges:

> "So, what UCT did at some stage and I'm not too sure exactly when they did that and other universities have done this but not many, is to put a comprehensive fee structure in place so that when you do a particular degree you know that that's the cost you're getting and in that, are built all of these additions. Now of course, the question is what should go into that? There's lots of nice to haves, but obviously also the basic costs around you know what it costs to run a library and what it costs to produce materials for certain courses should be built in. So ultimately what we want is a more transparent tuition fee. UCT will argue that their fees are so high, and everyone knows they are one of the most expensive universities, is because they've got a comprehensive transparent fee. Whereas at other universities other costs are hidden, and they come as you go through the year. So, part of the tuition fee regulatory process is to try and get a bit more transparency as well".

Respondent 5 agreed with Respondent 4 and argued not only for transparency, but for fees to be aligned across higher education institutions and for government to control how subsidy is spent:

> "My interest currently is to initiate an alignment in terms of the fee structure in the sector. There must be an alignment in terms of the fee structure in the sector. And of course, this must be informed by the contribution or by the grants that the state is giving to institutions. It can't be that the state is giving billions of rands to institutions, and then it has no say in terms of how it's structures are being constructed because the resources that government gives them are the resources to operate those institutions".

Respondent 4 also agreed with Respondent 5 regarding alignment, and highlighted how their department was already considering ways to align fees across similar programmes:

> "We do have a draft agreement, we're busy just cleaning up some of the data and getting better data from the institutions because part of what you need to do that is to compare like with like. So, obviously you can look at all the medical programs across the country and it's very interesting to see how different fee structures are. But we need to compare common degrees, like the General Bachelor of Science. And obviously, when you're looking at universities of technology, you have to look at particular diplomas and others. So we need to look at kind of comparable data across the system".

Respondent 5 further questioned why similar degrees are charged differently depending on the institution and questioned the fairness of this:

> "HWIs such as UCT and Wits and others. Where they are situated, you would find out that firstly, their fee structure is not aligned to the HDI's. The very same course of BCOM Accounting that you will do at UWC for 45,000 you get to UCT, you get to pay 70 or 75,000. You get to argue the issue of your accommodation. They are being charged around 80,000 per annum and when you come to it, I will see your student is only paying 40,000 to stay in the in the student accommodation. So I'm saying it can't go as normal Nokwazi. Something has to change because when we speak about government coffers or government funds, it can't be that there are first borns in the sector and then there are last borns in the sector, we ought to treat all institutions equally and there ought to be an alignment in terms of how these things are being done".

Respondent 2D highlighted some factors to consider when deciding on what constitutes a tuition fee:

> "I think as universities, we need to start understanding what goes through as cost of studying. There are very few universities that really has gone into detail to cost each subject that they are offering. So, you almost doing an activity-based costing on modules. Then you will be able to

see how much exactly is my fees and you'll be able to tell also whether you fees are overstated because that's the problem that we are having at the moment. So, we have started with that exercise here at UJ and we call it a distribution model. So, what happens is that we are trying to understand the fees better going forward to say when we say we have a new qualification, we need to really understand what exactly constitutes what we are charging to the students. And by that we can be either able to save the student money or also be able to respond to students in terms of why does it have to cost this much and this modules and so forth because I think at the rate that the fees are increasing at the moment we might find ourselves outpricing ourselves. And when I say ourselves, I'm talking about the higher education sector, pricing ourselves out of the market where higher education is just unaffordable in South Africa".

An added benefit of transparency is that it may lead to fewer student protests according to Respondent 1C. The respondent stated that by explaining what goes into a tuition fee, students may understand that the universities do not increase fees baselessly:

"We think through it, and we don't just go with say for example, we decided we're going to raise tuition fee with 20% without having thought through it and decided, OK, these are the reasons why we need it. Because I think if you've got that in at least you can go back and say now, but we need this, and these are the reasons because you've got to actually show that what you are doing with it. If you don't have that then you're going to be in trouble and you'll have a fees must fall".

This was also the view of Respondent 2D who explained how transparency plays a big role in their relations to student leaders when discussing tuition increase policies. Respondent 4 added that transparency would lead to better identification of the inequalities in the higher education funding system, enabling government to formulate new fee policy frameworks:

"So, my aim would be that hopefully we do get this policy framework in place and that over time, and I'm probably talking a good long period of time, probably over 6 to 10 years, we begin to see some of these inequalities and some of this lack of transparency shifting as a result. And then we know that when you send someone to Fort Hare and UCT for a similar qualification. You know, we need to understand as the public why we have to pay so much more at one institution than another. So, it's also about sort of accountability of the system to their public".

There were evidently differing discourses about what transparency would mean for different institutions and from the above, respondents felt that more good would come from universities being open about their costs, and that it would ultimately benefit students too.

4.1.1.6 Postgraduate Funding

Discussions around postgraduate funding were raised as one of the NSFAS shortfalls that disadvantage students and universities. This was attributed to the current NSFAS framework, which only funds undergraduate students. Respondent 2A clarified that "NSFAS funds for one qualification per student so if you are going to do your second qualification or your postgrad, you do not get funding from NSFAS". Respondent 1B added that "unfortunately, at the moment, what's happening is that NSFAS is having to cut programs because they can't afford all the programs and they're only sticking to undergraduate degrees".

Respondent 1D was one of the prominent voices in this section. The respondent emphasised how NSFAS failed postgraduate students, and that they were generally overlooked when it came to funding. Respondent 1D further suggested that postgraduate students were not foregrounded in funding discussions due to their invisibility in student politics:

> "The one thing about NSFAS and the worry for me is that if I back up a little bit, I think when it comes to politics in this country, you find that undergraduate students are a lot more vocal. The SRC's right across the country are dominated by undergrad students, it's not postgraduate students. Then you find these folk really hold the university and the broad system to ransom so you know when they kind of create havoc and everybody's trying to appease them".

Respondent 1D also argued that there was a lack of mature discourse around funding and attributed this to undergraduate students dominating discussions in the space:

> "And I think that is a real problem because now what has happened is the amount of money that's available from NSFAS is for undergraduate studies. But that money, you're not having a focused attention in the postgraduate chain. You should ideally have more support for postgraduate students and the postgraduate students are not as well organised, they're not as vocal. They're a little more mature as I've said, so they sit back and get probably more intimidated by this environment and just don't you know, they just switch off, so I worry about that. You talked about discourse earlier. I mean, we're not having a mature discourse about what our needs in South Africa are, because for all intents and purposes, undergraduate studies at university is pretty much an extension of our failing high school years. The high school is not delivering on the quality of the students that we want, so undergraduate is not the way it should be. What you really are doing is playing catch up to a great extent. The programs are diluted I'm afraid, right across the board you will sense that. And this is where we're putting most of our money".

Respondent 1B acknowledged the gap in postgraduate funding and argued for greater corporate participation to address this:

"I think we need to make sure that there's enough funding to sort them out for undergraduates. I think there is a postgraduate gap in terms of money in some areas, and we think that maybe we need to get government to start thinking about more funding there and we do have NRF, but NRF recently has taken away quite a lot of our funding which is not helping a lot, but also you know, I mean we've got quite a lot of corporate sponsors for our students, and maybe that is somewhere where we need to say, guys sponsor these students".

Respondent 4 stated that the lack of a comprehensive funding solution impacts missing middle and postgraduate students negatively because there isn't enough money to cater for all students:

"One of the negative impacts is that we don't have a comprehensive funding solution. We have a funding solution for some students, but there's a lot of students who can't afford higher education and can't access commercial bank loans and we don't have anything for those students. Well, there is quite a lot of private funding, to be honest. We've done some research on this, but it's not enough, you know? So there are students that deserve to be in higher education but don't meet NSFAS criteria and are unable to get it, and we have a limited funding for postgraduate studies. So there's a lot of gaps in our system and we need to try and address those".

Respondent 1D also argued that because postgraduate students are more mature, they are a better investment than undergraduate students and should be prioritised for funding:

"So, at the undergraduate level, I think that we do need fee paying students. And at the postgraduate level with the student already has learned, the person's more mature, that's helpful in this context because we have a lot of undergraduate kids that think they are grown up, but they can behave very childishly I think. But at the postgraduate level, I think there's sufficient number of mature students that are upwardly mobile. They are really understanding what it takes to study and the uniqueness of being serious about their studies and so on because they've been through the system. I think that they have more to contribute to the university".

This view by Respondent 1D maybe shortsighted in that postgraduate students can only come from undergraduate students. If there are no undergraduate students that complete their studies successfully, then greater investment in postgraduate studies may not yield the respondent's desired results.

4.1.1.7 Student Performance and Funding

Some respondents argued that student funding should be based on student performance. Reasons for this included the unfairness of underperforming students receiving funding while they do not graduate on time, lack of passion from students, and ungratefulness for the opportunity to study further. Respondent 2B emphasised that funding should be dependent on student success:

> "I would like to say if a child is bright enough, I want us to stop wasting money on children that don't want to study. So Nokwazi the problem is also 2 sided. A child is telling me "pay my fees" and I look at the marks and seeing 35%. I don't think any child doing well deserves to not have money to continue. This is one thing that I think we all agree on, so I don't care if NSFAS is paying for you. Your marks, you need to pass the modules".

The respondent also added that some students are entitled and do not put effort into their studies, while expecting to be funded:

> "They come to varsity, they think I have NSFAS, I'm getting grocery money, I just have to go to Kitchener's in Braamfontein and party my life away. When it's a day to the exam, that's when I'm going to study. Then the guy gets some supplementary exam and then he fails again and fails again, and we keep pumping money into that. That's bad business for the government. Why? This person will not graduate".

Respondent 3 shared Respondent 2B's view and added that "looking at inflation, looking at our costs and all the other inefficiencies of students who fail, many students don't finish within the prescribed time. And that's a wastage in the system". However, the respondent also acknowledged that additional coaching is required to promote student success.

Some respondents mentioned their interventions to assist well performing students. Respondent 1B mentioned that they have a fund to help students, and emphasised how students also had to play their part.

> "We have implemented a hardship fund, which we assist students with on an annual basis to help them to register when they've got outstanding debt. I mean, we've implemented a whole lot of things to try and assist them, and I think one of the things that we are still quite clear on is that students need to still perform. It's great for us to help them and try and assist them and yes, tuition fees need to get paid, and we will try and assist them to do that. But students need to at least be passing and need to be progressing. And you know, we cannot keep on assisting them and helping them to do these things, but they keep failing and they don't bring their part. Because it is a combination process, and we should all do our bit to do the things we need to do".

Respondent 2D stated that when it comes to assisting students, it is their institutions' "culture to say that no academically performing student should be excluded financially for as long as they are performing. They will be assisted". This view was also shared by Respondent 1D who stated that "what the country really needs is a cohort of students that are aiming for the highest levels and not just any student. We want to invest in students that are academically capable".

Respondent 1D was firm in their position that only academically deserving students should be funded, and suggested that universities should increase their admission requirements to filter out poorly perfoming students:

> "I think we increasingly now need to be quite selective about our students, because university education is very, very expensive. So those students who are able to succeed or have the potential to succeed should be given all of the chance to do so. And if money is the problem, then it makes no sense for us, from my point of view, to exclude talented students in a country that really needs it. So, if you ask me, the single most important thing that concerns me are students who are talented who are able and capable, but don't have the resources".

The respondent also felt that their university needed to tighten academic standards and not accommodate underperforming students at all:

> "At the undergraduate level, I want to say, though, that Wits is far too lenient with the poorly performing students, I think that the students that cannot make the grade should be shown the door. I'm going to be very brutal about this. Now look, I've always had the view that an excellent student who's unable to pay should be supported and I think it's just strengthened my view. And I think that we do need to hone in on excellence. And once we find that we need to find a way to support the students. If students are unable to pay, then we need to find the support. But equally if somebody's not excellent, I think we need to be quite brutal about it as well".

4.1.2 *Student Welfare*

Another theme arising from the interviews was student welfare. Respondents advocated for welfare to be included in policy and funding discussions. This theme emerged when participants were asked about the less-discussed discourses around tuition policies. Some respondents felt that student welfare was not explicitly stated in the tuition policies of both HBIs and HWIs. Respondent 2A mentioned that student wellness had become key in their policies and added the below:

> "Student wellness now informs us in formulating or reviewing policies and also funding. It has got elements of your mental and physical health. It has got elements of student welfare. By student welfare I'm referring to provision of meals to students who cannot afford daily meals. So, we spent 20 million rand a year on supporting those who cannot afford their own meals".

Respondent 5 indicated that a holistic approach was required in policy, not just a focus on tuition and funding:

> "We've also started now to work into the launch of the national campaign around the issue of the mental health. Because mental illness now is, we've seen that it is amongst the biggest challenges that are facing us in the sector to a point where students are taking their lives, to a point where students are dropping out to a point where they are causing all these funny things around campus and all that. So, we're saying we can't focus on these few things. Let us be holistic and let us be deliberate about this issue so that we're able to have an education system that is going to be responsive not only to its opportunities but also to its challenges that are faced by the participants".

Respondent 2A also shared similar sentiments with Respondent 5 about student wellness, and highlighted some of the interventions that they had made:

> "For UJ, in order to comprehensively address what informed the funding and the policies, one, and particularly because I'm responsible for that strategic objective, it is an enhancement of a student friendly environment for learning and living. But, to summarise it with regard to the current terms being used, it's we develop policies and also create funding platforms to enhance student wellness. And to enhance student wellness, it's because we see student wellness as an enabler for academic success and in fact, also for development of our students".

Respondent 1C stated that student welfare was a backgrounded discourse but later seemingly contradicted themselves when trying to elaborate on their point about the university's role. Respondent 1C is quoted saying, "I suppose, the most important, well from where I sit, I think it is the social welfare of the students" but later on in the interview, they imply that students expectations were set too high: "you find these days that the students want everything, because they didn't have it at home, so they want to come to campus. They want to have the yoghurt that they don't have at home".

As Machin and Mayr (2012) explain, lexical analysis considers the vocabulary used in a particular text. These word choices can potentially reveal underlying discourses within texts, making lexical analysis helpful in identifying explicit meanings and revealing implicit meanings. For instance, in the quotation from respondent 1C above, the references to the "yoghurt and Wi-Fi that they do not have at home" implies a level of lack and entitlement from the students. In this case, using the word "want" instead of similar words such as "would like" indicates entitlement and is more resolute. Furthermore, universities are not spaces that are known for their provision of foods such as yoghurt. The potential assumption drawn by the respondent is that the students who do not have it at home come to the university and want to be comfortable by being provided for. This implies that even though the respondent mentions that student welfare is the "most important" backgrounded discourse, there should be limits to how much the university must do to increase welfare.

4.1.2.1 Sensitivity and Conducive Academic Environments

Respondents 1A, 1B, 2C and 5 indicated that one of the results of the #FeesMustFall protests was an increased sensitivity to student needs within their institutions. Respondent 1A added that they were likely to "maintain this sensitivity" and that they are "much more sensitised to the need to consider financial exclusion, and it absolutely comes up in our discussions on admissions, on readmissions, on fees, on who gets to be in res". Respondent 2A shared this view about the impact of the protests and added that:

> "Fees must fall helped a lot, and of course I'm not justifying what was outside the acceptable scope of the demonstrating or protesting, but it changed the mindset of government. It changed the mindset of institutions, particularly the institutions that are ranked highly- Wits, UJ, UCT and also Stellenbosch. So now student wellness is at the centre of each institution to say no student would be excluded on the basis of no money, unless if that student is not performing academically, of course".

Respondent 1B added that "the awareness of the student need has really been something that has being brought to the forefront" and has encouraged them to consider additional ways to assist students. The respondent also added that the protests "opened a lot of people's eyes. And the government's eyes as well and understanding the need. And it has made us think differently". Respondent 2C stated that there was now a holistic approach to assisting students beyond academia in their institution, and acknowledgement of the social roles that students also play:

> "I think there's a bigger sensitivity to the needs of students, how little money students actually get and what students' responsibilities are at home. Because you, you don't just come here as an individual. You come here as part of a family and your obligations don't stop".

Respondent 2A also mentioned student's societal roles and the issues they face. The respondent further highlighted how universities are more than academic spaces; they have become places of refuge and safety for students:

> "Universities to some students are places of safety, they are running away from abuse in their community, abuse in their homes. Hence, you'll find once they get admission, whether the university closes or not, they remain on campus. They remain in residences where they stay, and this should not be just by implication. I want across all universities we do it intentionally. Universities are no longer only for education. They also attend to societal problems, breakdown

of families, divorces, and all of that. Because let me give an example. When, in an unfortunate situation a student commits suicide and you get the note that the student has left behind to read, you realize that they are not committing suicide because of anything at the university, but it links back to the societal problems; their homes, their villages and all that. So, what I would want to see second to that one I've discussed of autonomy, is the intentional program incorporated in our Higher Education Act that as much as we would want universities to promote education, universities should be supported to take care of societal challenges of students".

In the literature, student welfare was explicitly mentioned in relation to the SAPSE formula which was the first funding formula to acknowledge students' autonomy as the best judges of their own welfare and their suitability to decide on the types of programmes that they wanted to enrol for (De Villiers & Steyn, 2007). The interviews revealed that welfare was not necessarily discussed in direct correlation to funding formulae but rather as a secondary discourse to what adequate funding would enable institutions to achieve, i.e., they could go beyond simply supplying tuition and provide more support to the student. This was supported by Respondent 3, who references their own experiences of having the opportunity to study abroad and how additional support is key to student success:

"And something very strange happened because I was not the brightest of students around here. But I was top of the class in that country. Everything else was there, you know, you name it, it's there. Support this, that, and the environment. And then we don't have that even as we charge these tuition fees, the students don't have that kind of a supportive environment to actually excel, and we blame it on them".

Respondent 5 also spoke of how the student environment contributes to student wellness considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

"And of course, now the pandemic came in. It brought some new challenges, and it brought another pandemic which is called GBV, which has which saw us now shifting our focus and also starting to understand what is it that that we can do to create a conducive environment, conducive higher education environment for our sisters, young sisters and our brothers who are in the LGBTQIA community and all that".

Respondent 1D focused on the wellness of postgraduate students and emphasised how treating them well could result in greater benefits for higher education:

"I mean, the moment a student is not worrying about the roof of their head, they're going to be more productive. They're going to be happier. The most important thing particularly at the PhD level is your happiness factor. I see so many students at this level letter just genuinely depressed, or rather worried about their future. They put in such a huge effort, it's taking such a long, long while to get here and families back at home are having these huge expectations of them to deliver and there's a lot of sort of unease that they've been at the University, I don't know, for more than 10 years. So the moment you change that and create a happier or more content environment, I have no doubt about it that the student will be more productive. Productive in terms of the research, producing a publication that earns the university grant, graduating, the moment you graduate on time what happens is that the university produces more subsidy".

Respondent 2A argued for academic precincts where students could learn and develop safely, and called on the government to consider legislation regarding this:

> "I would want where there is more than one institution, and they are about 20 kilometres away from each other, government to declare those areas as academic precincts so that we do not allow certain businesses. Next to UJ, next to Wits are bottle stores and I'm not saying drinking is wrong, but when you have student whose mental state is disturbed some start going to drink themselves out of problems. You end up having street kids and all that. So government must take a bold decision to create academic precincts where whatever business is around there it is to promote education and our students from UJ can walk without worry to Wits, because of the level of safety and security. So, I think there's serious things to be done by our government and of course, by ourselves also. But we need a bold decision. The same bold decision of increasing tax by 1%. We need a bold decision to safeguard our academic spaces".

4.1.3 *University Autonomy*

Discussions around university autonomy generated differing responses from respondents. Respondent 4 stated that ultimately, universities are autonomous institutions when speaking about the type of governance system that South Africa pertaining to HEIs: "But we have, in fact, this is a really good example of cooperative governance, but we have essentially a cooperative governance system, but we have institutions that are autonomous so the councils of institutions actually have the ability to set tuition fees".

Respondent 1A had a different view from Respondent 4 and discussed how the current governance system limits universities and may affect their autonomy. Respondent 1A stated that:

> "I think that to some extent government has now decided that it will decide on fees. I think that puts the university in a quandary. Not specifically around fees, but in terms of autonomy of universities. And I think that one wants to be very careful about giving government too much power because, I work all over Africa actually, all over in six other countries, and I know there that there is no university autonomy, and I can see how problematic that is. And that there's something very important about having institutions that are independent irrespective of whether

> they get government money, that are independent and allowed to make independent decisions around everything, including fees".

However, this had seemingly been addressed because institutions now have more autonomy and self-governance than previously (Kori, 2016). The discourse around this is perhaps the fear that although the Higher Education Act of 1997 introduced greater freedom for universities, government's determination of fee increases is contradictory to what the Act wanted to achieve. Respondent 3 mentioned discussions with the minister of education regarding problems that could be presented by institutional autonomy:

> "So, what has changed is that outside the Act, and we keep telling the minister that he needs to fix this thing because you gonna cause problems now. Institutions are being given, well, some kind of a direction or a request or whatever compact if you like, not to exceed inflation or whatever it is, and the ministers would say, well, please charge so much for tuition and so much for residences and other institutions just ignore that. I know Stellenbosch doesn't waste time, you know, they just charge what they charge".

Respondent 2A argued that even though universities have autonomy, it was clear that the levels of this autonomy were decreasing, which has resulted in confusion for institutions:

> "But I have got one main issue. Our system, what I would want to be changed, particularly from the Department of Education covering higher institutions. Our system is very confused. You say universities are autonomous, but you don't give them space to exercise their autonomy. For example, the example I've given you of prescribing the maximum increase fee. That indicates that the level of autonomy of institutions is diminishing. So, I would want this in the next five years to be clarified".

This presents a discourse around power struggles and the idea that there needs to be clear delineation of who holds this power, and what the expectations are from those who are subject to it. As mentioned by Machin & Mayr (2012), power and those who hold it are key to understanding discourse. In this instance, there is an inference that political ideology by the ones who hold the power influences how the decisions regarding fee caps are made. Respondent 2A demonstrated this by comparing South Africa to China in how the higher education sector is run:

> "You will know, for example, in China universities are not autonomous, they are controlled the way here in South Africa schools are being controlled. DHET does not want to tell us upright that they would want autonomy to diminish. You see by introduction of some programs that no man, these guys want to take over the running of institutions, they want to do as China does. And

mind you, China is a communist country hence it is working in that manner. Our Minister for Education is a communist. So, you will understand why that's so. I would want them to be more clear on that issue of autonomy. Whether they want continue with it or they are doing away with it, because now we have got a very confusing system".

The request for clarity regarding universities' autonomy was also raised by Respondent 2C, who felt that the government were irresponsible in their use of the power they have over universities:

> "So, universities are really in the hands of government at the moment because of the framework that we operate in. And I think government is irresponsible by curtailing funding to universities because otherwise they must let us do our own thing, in which sense we would then restructure the way that you could put a degree together".

This view ties into not only maintaining the autonomous status of universities, but also highlights how universities could be more proactive by pursuing other avenues for funding without government interference.

Respondent 4 felt that universities were autonomous enough. However, the respondent argued for more responsible applications of this autonomy and more accountability by universities:

> "Because as much as institutions are autonomous and people have different institutions, the policy is very clear that we think institutional autonomy is a very important part of what a higher education system should be. But of course occasionally where terrible things happen in institutions like we see all the time people get really angry and they say let's take over the institutions and start hiring and firing VC's. And of course, that's not what we want in a system. But what you want is a strong accountability model where institutions are held accountable for what they do. But that they're not run by the state".

Respondent 4 also did not view the state's involvement in universities as something that needs to be limited. Respondent 3 shared this view and added that "the state has given us that leeway to govern ourselves to do what we are supposed to be doing". Respondent 2C also seemed satisfied with the level of government's involvement in universities and stated how their institution had been responsive to the regulations and caps set by the government:

> "We have been consistent, and we have really not changed drastically. You will know that from 2018 the Higher Education Department decided to regulate tuition fee increases. So, as UJ, we didn't go above what higher education recommended. So, whatever that they've announced or recommended, we implemented according to their recommendations. So, we've been in line with what they have suggested".

Respondent 2C's views were similar to Respondent 1B's, however, Respondent 1B acknowledged that the fee caps presented a challenge to universities.

> "I think what we are feeling the challenge of at the moment is that that government is having to cap the increase in intuition fees. So, we are restrained in our annual increase- in what we are allowed to increase our fees by. But I think our fee increases have very much stayed in line with the departments' regulations. And I think that's the only thing that we've actually had to change because we've been required to. Previously we determined our fee increases by our budgeting process. It didn't technically balance the books but it was about how affordability came in. But now we look at what's inflation because that is what the department normally indicates we allowed to use".

Respondent 5, however, was against the autonomy of universities and argued that "when you speak about the issues of policy, like the one of the tuition, we ought to challenge the issue of the institutional autonomy as a whole". The respondent felt that it was this freedom that led to differences in tuition across the different institutions, and that it greatly disadvantaged students:

> "One of the major challenges that we face in the sector is the issue of institutional autonomy. Institutional autonomy is the biggest flying elephant in the room in the sense that universities have power over certain things in terms of their operations and all that. So they make their own rules and they have their freedom in terms of their own academic progression and all that. So now the biggest issue that we are having is around the issuing of academic certificates. When students are owing, they are not allowed to access their academic qualification. Well, of course, under the Ministry of Naledi, Naledi believed it was incorrect for the university to do that. But even though she said universities should issue these certificates, she had no power to go and enter into these institutions and say issue these certificates because they have their policies that are governing them in terms of if you are owing us, this is what we're going to keep from you so that we are able to get control over you".

Respondent 5 further argued that this disadvantages students because if they cannot get their transcripts, they cannot get jobs to pay the university what they owe. Respondent 5 also felt that unlike the views provided by Respondents 1A and 2A, it was government who was at the mercy of universities because even though they provide directives regarding fee increases and fee caps, not all institutions adhered to them:

> "Even the tuitions, the department can only influence the department to release a cap to say the institutions can't increase the tuition more than the inflation rate. As much as that cap is being released, you will find councils who will want to approve the tuition increment which will be

beyond the cap which is being released. So, it's something that we have been raising very sharply with the Minister to say it can't be that we enter into a discussion, and we agree as progressive forces and there's a majority in the sector to say that this is the direction that should be taken by this. And then we have institutions that will want to behave as if they are special in the sector, then they disregard what has been the advice of the department and then they do as they wish".

Respondent 3 agreed with Respondent 5 that there were some HWIs who deemed themselves different, and they charge tuition outside the fee caps set by government:

> "So, others are doing their own thing like Stellenbosch. They come from a rich province, rich people, rich kids and they prevent blacks from going there and then they charge tuition fees that are much higher and then you go to other universities such as yours (Wits), you know you charge anyway. They don't care what you say and UCT, they want large deposits to start the year. And then they go to TUT, and they say just come here. It doesn't matter. We'll get money from NSFAS".

Respondent 5 went on to discuss the interventions that their institution had made to address the issues around university autonomy:

> "And in that regard, we've started to move well because we've managed to convince the portfolio committee of Parliament to have a colloquium to have a conversation around this matter. The colloquium was held in the beginning of April and many ideas came to the table and very soon we'll be having another colloquium to follow up on the discussions that we had. So that when we reach a point where we say this is now the direction, we expect all institutions to take it. So that becomes the position of the portfolio committee that is going to be presented into Parliament, so we don't have a situation where institutions are doing the doing their own things outside the policy framework, particularly the one that has been endorsed by the government".

Respondent 4 acknowledged the pressure that universities were under. The respondent also highlighted that future policy discussions would be imperative to ensuring that the government does not limit university autonomy, and that universities do not abuse their autonomy:

> "Fees are sort of in this, if you look at it positively, you could say cooperative governance, social compact. If you look at it negatively from the university point of view, universities are having to remain static in terms of how they deal with their fees, and then you've got this huge fiscal pressure going on. So, I mean the decisions that get made around future student funding policy are quite key. Whatever we manage to put in place in terms of a fee regulatory framework will also be key because one of the other things about keeping the student funding budget stable is

> also knowing what the fee increases are gonna be, so that you don't have this kind of runaway costs that you can't plan for".

From the above, there are differing discourses about how autonomous universities should be ranging from no autonomy, to somewhat autonomous with accountability mechanisms, to completely autonomous. In the literature, the levels of autonomy that universities have has also changed over the years, and this is perhaps why there are different views regarding this. For example, the 1997 white paper included how universities could charge their own tuition fees, and since 2015, the government has decided on fee increase percentages. The context has understandably changed since 1997 with #FeesMustFall and its associated discourses, which also considered decolonisation of the curriculum as part of institutional autonomy, not limiting it to funding only (Kori, 2016).

4.1.3.1 University Sustainability

Respondents mentioned university sustainability as one of the focus areas of university council and senate committees, as well as government departments such as DHET and CHE. It was mostly mentioned when discussing university autonomy and funding. Some respondents agreed that ensuring sustainability was one of their core functions within the relevant universities and external departments. The most prominent discourses were around finding ways to ensure that as much as students are funded, there was also consideration of how the economy was affecting university functions; how universities require money to operate successfully; and attempts to balance the needs of students with the operational requirements of the university.

Respondent 2B elaborated on what was included in the costs of university operations and stated that:

> "So, cost of running the university is quite broad -the facility itself, infrastructure, the lectures halls, providing Internet, security on campus, laboratory facilities for the guys in STEM. When COVID happened, the university had to make many adjustments as well. It meant that any investor that did not have a reserve was going to probably not be able to pay their staff members, for example. So, the institutions are required to have reserves where they can always dig. So, I think operational costs and personnel, human resource for the investors to keep it running at least to attract the best minds as well. So yeah, I think the university needs to sustain itself".

This view was supported by Respondent 2D, who added that part of what makes tuition fees important is that they contribute to the sustainability of the university because "universities use income received from tuition fees to fund operational costs, infrastructure development and research development as well". Respondent 1B also shared this view and added that when it comes to tuition, "it's more about university sustainability more than anything. Because we know that revenue stream is an area where the only way you're gonna get more is if you increase student numbers, because then you'll get more revenue". Respondent 1D felt that when discussing funding, the sustainability of the university should also be considered and not just student funding in light of the #FeesMustFall protests:

> "I think that fees must fall has basically been quite a dramatic kind of intervention into this conversation that's kind of skewed the conversation in a particular way, seeing to some very particular stakeholders, but not considering the broad well-being of the university. I think there's been very little appreciation by all concerned about the needs for our universities to be properly resourced, so we can't have it only very strongly lopsided this discussion. The universities say the well-being of the universities are important".

The Respondent further added that universities disintegrate quickly when they are under-resourced and was speaking for both HBIs and HWIs. In the literature, however, this discourse relates to HBIs only where HBIs were still struggling to catch up with HWIs. Furthermore, Respondent 1D suppressed the possibility of free higher education because "someone still has to pay for the running of universities".

Respondent 1C clarified that the current economic climate was making it unsustainable for universities to do more than what they are already doing to assist students:

> "I think for me, we need to look at the economic climate we find ourselves in. And I do think that, like I've said to you before, is that sometimes we want to give too much. You know, we want to please everybody. So, we wanna pay for everything. And that's also not sustainable as a university. So, I think we need to really keep in mind what is sustainable for a university. So, when we look at any of those policies, we need to look and see what we can do and what we can't do".

Respondent 1A agreed with the above and stated that "you have to balance the short term and the long term, and you have to balance meeting individual needs with the sustainability of the university". The respondent also added that ultimately, the decisions that are made by the different university executive structures are to ensure the "the long-term sustainability of the university". Respondent 1A also reiterated that it was hard to balance the needs of constituents and the needs of the university, which often led to compromised positions:

> "When you're in the position I'm in, you're not there to represent a body. You certainly take that constituency in mind when you're there, but you are there to protect the university, to manage, to oversee the university. And I suppose because I've worked in policy for a long time, I know that the decisions that you land up taking are often compromised positions".

Respondent 1B stated that the government is trying to help students by ensuring that fees are affordable, but they also have to ensure that universities are still sustainable:

"I think government and the Department of Higher Education are very adamant that, yes, they've put a funding mechanism in place to assist students with a bursary scheme but that's one part of it. The other part is, is that they want to make sure that universities are both sustainable, but also that students should not be charged a fee that is unaffordable to an extent, the fee charges shouldn't become uncontrollable".

Respondent 1B also added that universities need to ensure their sustainability because the need for funding will always be there.

"I mean, it is a difficult one because you always going to have need and you always going to have financial hardship. And for me? You know, you've also gotta have institutions that are sustainable and you've also gotta have institutions that can give the service and do the things that they need to be done. So, you have to have a compensation for that".

4.1.4 The Missing Middle

One of the results of #FeesMustFall was the foregrounding of students who have been categorised as the missing middle. The discourse around this group of students had underlying tones of sympathy, where respondents agreed that these students had to be accommodated as much as possible and mentioned how they had intervened.

4.1.4.1 University Interventions

Respondent 1A emphasised how at the height of the protests, their university was "very involved in looking at the issue of the missing middle and there were members, in fact, who put forward proposals and actually got involved in trying to find solutions for the missing middle". Respondent 2B spoke about the involvement of UJ and explained how they were funding students in the missing middle before the protests had begun:

"And then, after that we engage in a fundraising project so that should they not get any bursary or any money to pay for tuition, at least we are able to help. And that fundraising, it is under our concept called missing middle. While you were toy-toying at Wits and UCT, we were busy formulating policies and setting up systems that can help those who cannot afford. So, we started around that time in terms of this funding policies because the missing middle was a serious issue".

Respondent 2D also confirmed that UJ had begun missing middle interventions prior to #FeesMustFall:

"Look, it's something that has always been there. We practiced; we practice that even now. We have what we call a missing middle initiative, where for those missing middle students we go out there to fundraise for student bursaries and we've been quite successful in every year we bring about 200,000,000 (200 million) for those students and you will see that during our tuition fee increases or protest our university is always really, the last to be hit by student protests or anything because of that intervention that we've made".

Respondent 5 stated how their organisation was in discussions with the government to increase the current NSFAS requirements from R350 000 to R600 000. The respondent argued that the qualifying amount should be increased so that it can cater for missing middle students:

"That is, of course informed by the missing middle which we have made mention of because we have realised that students who are in the missing middle do not qualify as much as they attempt to apply. But the challenges that they're facing does not allow them to be able to pay for themselves for their fees. So, it's more like an injustice to expect them to pay while the commitment that their parents in terms of what things that they must pay from their salaries does not really give them and allow them that leeway to be able to pay for their fees. So, the government seems to be buying in on that, but it's an ongoing discussion. But we're hoping by before the end of this year, we'll be making that pronouncement in terms of increasing the cap from 350 to 600,000".

Respondent 2D also added that their institution was considering additional ways to continue funding students in this gap by engaging with the government:

"There's currently a ministerial task team that's looking at missing middle and postgraduate students funding. And the task team has submitted the report to the Minister in July, which we hope that it will be discussed in Parliament sometime this second semester. And once that has been finalised, I think you know the missing middle there might be some solutions. Might not necessarily be funding coming from government, but it might be a mix of corporate-private funding and government funding as well, so we are hoping that something will come out of it".

Respondent 4 mentioned how various higher education professionals had implemented initiatives to assist the missing middle:

"I mean you also had in 2016 a massive piece of work done by Sizwe Ngxasana, who chaired a ministerial task team on future funding models for poor and missing middle students and that that resulted in a pilot scheme called ISFAP, which you probably know now. It's kind of a private missing middle student fund, but ISFAP grew out of a government task team that Sizwe chaired. And so, we've also been going back to that work to look at that".

Respondent 1C felt that some of their interventions, especially the hardship fund, have increased the missing middle gap instead of shrinking it:

"I think it's made that gap get bigger actually. So, there's more students where they said well, you in the missing middle and all that. You don't fit in anywhere, so you don't get any funding. I think, I mean we've changed. We've brought in the hardship funding. So, I think there's other stuff that we've been trying to do which we haven't done before so that's something that also came in from the fees must fall, but I just think that the need has just gone bigger and bigger every year. You'll see with hardship funding< there's more and more students that apply for it. So, you just actually can't give it give to everybody anymore".

Respondent 4 also mentioned that missing middle students were supported from 2017:

"So, there's another thing that happened. 2017, 18 and 19 we had what was called a gap grant to pay for the difference between the 2016 fee increases that had been agreed on in the sector for students all the way up to the 600,000 family income mark. So essentially poor and missing middle students. So, if your family income was in under 600,000, the fee increase for those years was paid by the state. So, we had and that grant that has now been phased out because most of those students have moved out of the system. But so, there was a in a sense, an extra subsidy to support missing middle students and poor students".

4.1.4.2 NSFAS Shortfalls

The issue of students who fall within the missing middle gap can be directly attributed to NSFAS. Some of the NSFAS shortfalls mentioned above are that NSFAS looks at the overall household income, but does not consider the number of dependents the income has to support. Adding onto their comments regarding the missing middle, Respondent 2A stated that NSFAS may require proof of income to consider funding one student in a family, but "finding the reality that in that family there are about 6 children who are in higher institutions of learning". Respondent 4 explained how their institution has had to cover the inadequacies in the NSFAS funding structure:

"So last year was the biggest shock because what happened is we cut 6.4 billion Rand of funding from our own budget to fund the shortfall at NSFAS. So, if you qualify financially and you have a place to study, you are eligible for funding support and of course, the numbers of students that are eligible for funding support have got larger and larger and therefore, the original budgeting for the scheme, which was done in 2017, is no longer relevant. So, there's a whole very big policy discussion going on at the moment about how to get to a more sustainable model. But at the same time, we have this fully subsidized, extremely expensive scheme, which we have to keep reprioritizing. And in the 2022 budget 7.7 billion was reprioritized from other government departments to support the shortfall at NSFAS".

Respondent also 4 clarified that part of the problem was the historic debt that came when NSFAS was transformed into a bursary whereas it was a loan scheme previously:

> "When we talk about historic debt, we are talking about the previous NSFAS regime where students had to pay a family contribution. And where they didn't get fully subsidised support and therefore, they ended up with debts on their student fee account. And so, there's been several processes over the last 10-15 years of clearing that debt of NSFAS students. So essentially that is kind of additional money on top of the student funding budget".

Respondent 2A was also concerned because "most of our students in undergrad, about 20-something thousand, are dependent on NSFAS". Respondent 1A highlighted how their institution pushed for changes to the NSFAS structure because it was previously not beneficial to students:

> "I think we as well as university management played quite an important role in for example, pressurising NSFAS to give proper grants because there was a period when NSFAS was not giving grants that were good enough for students. So, they could cover some of it, but then still leave students not being able to cope. And I think that the transition to NSFAS giving more comprehensive grants, there was support both from management and our department.

Respondent 2A however felt that some of these shortfalls have been improved after #FeesMustFall:

> "As I have indicated student accommodation and its management and funding, and also the criteria has been changed, and also the amount given to students also has increased, and the also the meal assistance which NSFAS gives to its students. You would have noticed that that meal assistance allowance has increased. The major thing that also has changed that maybe people do not know, if a student is staying at home, not in an accommodation or residence, NSFAS still pays allowance money to students who qualify for NSFAS, even if they stay at home. It might be money for travel from where they stay to campus, and that we never had before, you know. So those are the results in terms of the funding of higher institution through NSFAS".

4.1.5 University Classifications

Both institutions' designation as either an HBI or HWI was discussed during the interviews. Respondent 1C acknowledged that the institutions were different but emphasised that Wits had transformed to represent the South African population despite its history as an HWI:

> "So, you know, I don't see Wits as a HWI, I must be honest with you if you say that to me, I'll say to you I see Tukkies and Stellenbosch as HWIs, but not Wits. I don't see Wits as historically white. Because even when I got here, and if you look at our student body, its always been that we've had more African, Indian, and those race groups are growing".

Respondent 1A also shared this view and added:

> "You know, at present I think at Wits, we are pretty much representative of the South African demographic. So, I think that we have transitioned in that way, and I think everyone is pleased about that in the student body. I think that the government has a difficult terrain to manage with historically white and historically black universities because they are different, and no one can deny that".

Respondent 1B drew on the discourse that Wits has always been inclusive and stated that "Wits is one of the very first institutions that supported mixed race institutions, and we actually got pictures and all those lovely things showing our profs walking the streets and protesting and doing all those things with the students". The respondent also added the below:

> "It's not as black and white because when you say that we are still called a historically white institution, that must be from a very long time ago because my knowledge of Wits as an institution is that we have always been a very multiracial institution. I mean we've always had ever since I've been here, more than 75% black students. So, I don't think in my history at Wits that we've ever had a thinking of white versus black. Ever. It's always been a very multiracial environment. And I think it was more about… for us, it was about financial hardship and about affordability of being able to study, it was not about whether you were white or black, gold, pink, purple or whatever the colour was".

Respondent 1A spoke of the advantages of differentiated HEIs and agreed that there should be greater investment in HBIs, but not to the detriment of "good institutions" i.e., white institutions. The respondent also mentioned how it would be "a disservice to black students, black staff, a black vice chancellor if Wits is always seen as an historically white university".

> "But I think that if our good institutions go, there's trouble for the society going forward. And so, it's quite possible that investments could and maybe should be made into non historically white universities to the potential disadvantage of historically white universities. And I would support that if the universities were well managed. I don't mind if we invest in historically black universities, but I actually think that in every country there's a differentiated higher education system and I think they're advantageous to that, and there are good reasons for it. And I think it's a pity we still cannot reach the point where we aren't talking about differentiated higher education system that isn't about historically white and historically black, and maybe that's just naive on my part because you know how long does it take to repair? But I think we have to recognize institutions and their value, and we have to invest in there based on their value to society as a whole".

Respondent 1D also added that “the historically white label of Wits university is really a historical label now. At UP, I wouldn’t say it's a historical label. It still remains very skewed in terms of the history, but I think we've really transcended a lot of that history now”.

Respondents from UJ defined their university as a comprehensive institution because of the mergers that led to its formation. Respondent 2A explained why UJ is neither HBI or HWI and stated that:

> “We have got vocational training. We also have got your pure academic training. And what makes it to be comprehensive? It's because, you know you can consider it as historically black or historically black plus a part of historically white. TWR when we came to merge with it, it was a black Technikon, but you know when it started it only had white people. And RAU, which is also part of the merger before democracy, it was just a white institution and particularly in Afrikaans, and part of Vista, which we incorporated the campus from Soweto, it was historically black. So, it has got a… I would want to put a linear answer and say it is considered to be, but these dynamics they make it difficult to say it's considered white or black. So, we just say it's a comprehensive institution, but it has got those elements of white and black in in their history of the institution prior to merging them to become UJ”.

Respondent 2A also added how this designation was positive for the university because they could leverage it for greater subsidy:

> “Remember the subsidy that we get from government, they look at whether your course is contact, your courses is vocational and all that so. I would say the advantage we have; we get monies if the government wants to give. For degrees, we are there, for diplomas, we are there”.

Respondent 2D explained how their student demographics might make UJ lean more toward HBI status:

> “So, whichever the designation, because interestingly we merged with Rand Afrikaans University and with TWR, which is largely black students. So, you could say that it was a mix of both. But in in terms of influencing the tuition fee policy, it's the institutions appreciation that almost 93% of our students are black now and I think that's what matters at the moment”.

Respondent 2C highlighted the composition and politics of the universities that merged to form UJ:

> “So, we were really the merger of a Afrikaans, although it was very English already, so of a historically Afrikaans- but focused on poor white Afrikaans speaking kids. That was the origin of RAU. But 2005, because of the demographics and because of changes in the country, we were already quite different. But it's not taking away that the managers and the staff were from RAU, and then you had TWR- a very different type of situation. I would say more left-leaning in their…so you have the more conservative RAU, mixed with the more left-leaning TWR with Vista, who's completely black”.

Some respondents briefly highlighted the challenges facing both institutions. Respondent 3 felt that issues affecting HBIs especially could be explained by maladministration, not their history or designation:

> "Yeah, but you see I don't buy that argument quite easily. And I'm saying it with all due respect, as a black person myself. Who has gone through, you know, I look at these people, they talk of poverty lately on, like, really... So, the fact of the matter is this now. It's very easy for us to say look, things are not fair. And there's a history behind this and so on and so forth. We all know that. And the fact of the matter is what are we doing to change things ourselves. For these institutions. What are you doing? What I see in some of these institutions is collapse in governance of universities, people clash, people create problems, people do all sorts of things, people steal money, people take very bad decisions. And it's OK. Blame it on the history. But what are we doing that is basic to look after these precious resources".

Respondent 4, however, felt that the management at HWIs had it easier than those at HBIs, which may be a contributing factor to the problems at HBIs:

> "If you can look at social media, right? And you can see what Mamokgethi Phakeng and Zeblon Vilakazi and Tshilidzi Marwala and Tawana Kupe are doing on a daily basis. And if Xoliswa Mtose and Sakhela Buhlungu and others were on social media as much as those guys are because they are meeting international partners and fundraising and whatever building funding agreements. And then Professor Mtose and Sakhela Buhlungu are dealing with hardcore day to day issues like, you know, student protest and no water in the institution. And I'm not saying that all institutions don't have those challenges, but you can get a sense of the kinds of things that those institutions are having to face".

4.1.5.1 Transformation

Respondents also considered transformation as an indicator of the changes in status as HBI or HWI. Respondent 2C mentioned how UJ has worked to transform itself and to elevate black talent in the institution:

> "And so, when you had that merger, you had potential for a disaster. And it is a miracle and hard work from everybody's sides, to very quickly transform the university into a preferred university for Africans. And we have many programs that we can't get into now to fast track young academics to try and transform our staff because the staff is not very transformed, particularly senior members of staff, you can't just fire them. So, you have to wait for some of them to retire or to leave. But I think we've done reasonably well there. What we've done very well with is

some of the fast-tracking programs like supporting young academics to get PhD’s and to become professors”.

Respondent 4 highlighted the transformative work that had been done to dispel certain discourses plaguing HBIs. The respondent stated that:

> “10 years ago, well, this is my area of study is around early career academics, 10 years ago there was a very strong discourse that young black people didn't want to become academics, right? And that universities couldn't change the Academy because young black people had families to look after. And they had to go and be employed. And they didn’t wanna be academics because academic salaries are not high enough etcetera. That's not the same anymore at all. That's changed a lot. We are actually seeing, of course it's the slowest area of change in the Academy, but you are now seeing that the demographics of who are academics and who's teaching and who's researching have changed and are changing”.

Respondent 5 however, felt that there was little transformation especially in terms of the number of black academics:

> “We can't have an education system that is not going to respond to the challenges that we're facing as a country and on top of that, how do we go about ensuring that the system that we're having in South Africa is the system that is designed to produce the very low black academics that were having in the sector. Because the current system in terms of how academics are being produced, is still favouring the white academics and all that. How can we ensure that the system that we're going to have encourages that we have more blacks who are going to participate in the academia because if NRF still expects students to have 70% average, it's still not possible for our Blacks to be able to get NRF because they're coming from the poor schools. It's difficult for them to achieve those marks and all that. So how do we then ensure that we have an inclusive system that is going to encourage the participation of our blacks into the system?”

Respondent 1D spoke of transformation with an emphasis on changing staff and student demographics:

> “I mean right now, from a transformation perspective we have a situation where majority of students are black and then the majority of professional and administrative staff are black, so we just still have challenges in the academic environment, and we have a program I think that is working. We are focusing on transformation as well as quality, right. I mean we've appointed the first- the only black African A rated mathematician. And I mean that's magnificent. So, we are addressing our transformation goals within the framework of excellence”.

4.1.5.2 Graduate Employability

Respondents also mentioned the employability of graduates from both HBIs and HWIs. Respondent 3 agreed with Imenda, Kongolo, & Grewal (2004) that HWIs have higher employability rates than HBIs. The respondent stated that:

> "Very few institutions, they're few and I'm talking UCT, Wits, and UP, these three institutions. The employability of graduates, you know, there's a turnaround of six months at least. The rest of the institutions the students graduate, they don't find jobs, and then they decide to study further or things like that. And it speaks to how we relate to the quality of training and interaction with the market, alumni and all of those kinds of things".

Respondent 2A was of the opposite view and argued that the comprehensiveness of UJ's programmes and their inclusiveness of vocational training makes their graduates more employable:

> "Of course, some of the vocational diplomas were doing away with, for example, like your engineering diploma, which would be mostly vocational, we have built up that to also fit into our degrees, but we still have some that we are still conducting. Why we've also done this apart from, I know people might misinterpret it as this will close out many black kids who cannot afford to degrees, but at the same time we wanted any qualification we give to a black child or even to a white child should be relevant to the societal needs and status. You should not just qualify, and they said now he is not working, or he has no ability to be an entrepreneur because of the type of education he received. So, we are balancing that. And hence our employability, it's very high out there. Of course, I'm not comparing to Wits. I'm just saying UJ's employability is very high. So, so this comprehensive concept has opened channels for UJ and its students".

Respondent 2B mentioned how low-performing students affect graduate employability as well. The respondent stated that "even when they graduate with 50%, they only have 50% of the knowledge and the competency. So, they are not employable. They are not innovative. They're not entrepreneurial". Respondent 2C mentioned how UJ had to reposition itself to change the perception that it was offering inadequate degrees:

> "And so not only do we think about our students because we're not a very expensive university, if you compare it to others and you know we had very interesting a few years ago, it's now 10 years ago, we had a massive price hike because we were so cheap that the argument was people will not value UJ degrees if we stay being so cheap".

This implies that although UJ is described as a comprehensive university, some of the challenges faced by the institution are characteristic of HBIs. As seen in the literature, HWIs have always had positive perceptions and are preferred institutions for those who can afford them. HBIs, however, are often stereotyped as inadequate and offering inferior education to HWIs. Because of such discourses, HBIs have had to increase their efforts to change their image as described by Respondent 2C.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the data collected from the previous section. Themes were identified and discussed under their relevant subheadings and were further analysed by through the characteristics of CDA discussed in chapter 3.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This chapter summarises the findings from the study. This study set out to explore the discourses around tuition policy in historically black and white universities in South Africa. The intention was to explore these considering the global shift towards incorporating discourse studies into policy studies, to contribute to the literature regarding the discourses around tuition policies in South African universities, and to understand how different discourses may influence policy decisions given the continuous protests against higher education fees. The study also sought to explore how failure to address tuition issues in the policies of HEIs may see a continuation of student protests, especially if the problems at the core of the protests are not addressed. The research questions below guided this exploration, and they are answered in this section under their relevant subheadings:

- What major identifiable discourses influence university tuition policy formation in Historically Black and Historically White Institutions?

    Sub question: What are the foregrounded and backgrounded discourses in the tuition policies of HBIs and HWIs?

- How does Critical Discourse Analysis explain changes in university tuition policies between 2015 and 2020?

    Sub question: How did the #FeesMustFall movement influence discourses around tuition policies in Historically Black and White Institutions between 2015 and 2020?

To answer these questions, this study embarked on a literature review to understand the current discourses in the higher education space and to identify potential gaps relating to tuition policy and discourse analysis in HBI and HWIs. Furthermore, data was collected through semi structured interviews with 11 participants. These included participants from UJ, Wits, DHET, SAUS and CHE. The data was analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis tools provided by Machin and Mayr (2012) which assisted in answering the research questions.

5.1 Discourses Influencing Tuition policy in HBIs and HWIs

The analysis reflected slight deviations from the literature regarding the prominent discourses in the higher education space. Whereas free higher education was identified as one of the major discourses in the higher education space in the literature, respondents did not mention it as an area of concern. However, less discussed discourses such as student wellness, university autonomy and sustainability, as well as transparency around tuition were added as popular discourses. The themes identified in the interview transcripts highlighted the major identifiable discourses around university tuition policy in HBIs and HWIs, as well as the foregrounded and backgrounded discourses. The major identifiable discourses that were highlighted were around the following themes:

- Higher Education Funding
- University Autonomy and University Sustainability
- The Missing Middle
- Student Wellness
- Classification of Universities

The first discourse was around higher education funding. Both universities indicated some frustration with the decreasing government subsidy and what this meant for their operations. There was consensus from both institutions that the decline in subsidy meant that they either had to increase tuition fees or pursue third stream income to supplement their operations. Furthermore, all respondents agreed that tuition fees should not increase beyond sustainable levels. There was also a general acceptance about the role of third-stream income and how this had to be prioritised so sustain universities. Respondents also reflected on the efficiencies and shortfalls of funding frameworks, and how inflation affects their operations as well.

The second major discourse was around university autonomy and university sustainability. This generated passionate responses from respondents. Respondents from universities were conflicted about the levels of autonomy that they have because of the fee caps that are set by government since 2015. Some responses indicated frustration because it was unclear if the government wanted to take away university autonomy, others accepted that this is the new way of operating, and others were completely against the idea of university autonomy. Respondents from universities also felt that lack of autonomy would disrupt their sustainability initiatives, whilst SAUS argued that universities wanted to operate outside of the government, especially HWIs. Respondents from DHET and CHE acknowledged university sustainability and were confident that the government had given universities enough autonomy to govern themselves, the onus was on universities to use this autonomy responsibly.

The third discourse was around the missing middle. This included how discourses from #FeesMustFall highlighted NSFAS' failures to address students within this gap. Respondents also mentioned the various interventions that had been made since 2015. The missing middle was also foregrounded in the literature review and there is seemingly no comprehensive solution that has been found yet. Respondents from universities agreed that their interventions were helpful, but they also fell short because of growing student populations, and insufficient funding for them.

The fourth discourse was around student wellness. Respondents reflected on how the protests had encouraged them to consider holistic ways of assisting students. Furthermore, at the beginning of this study, the Covid-19 pandemic had not yet reached South Africa. Its arrival changed the context and presented additional disruptions to the higher education landscape. In the spaces where the dominant discourses were student protests, politics and funding, the pandemic unveiled the depth of the inequalities in HEIs. This shifted the focus towards more than financial assistance, and perhaps foregrounded the need for more investment into student wellness. Some respondents mentioned increased sensitivity to student issues and considered the university more than an academic space. These discourses may have been influenced by the challenges some students faced from being away from university and being in spaces that were not conducive to their academic performance.

The last discourse was around the classification of the universities as either HBI or HWI, and how this affects both institutions. Respondents from Wits did not acknowledge it as an HWI but drew on the discourse that Wits has always been inclusive of other races since its inception. Most felt that the HWI label was indeed historic and was no longer applicable. Respondents from UJ acknowledged that they had elements of both HBIs and HWIs but defined UJ as a comprehensive institution. This implies a discourse where UJ has successfully built a new identity for itself, even though one respondent mentioned how some people still refer to its biggest campus as RAU. Other respondents felt that the HBI or HWI labels were applied as scapegoats for poor performance especially in HBIs, whilst others felt that these were accurate descriptions.

5.1.1 Foregrounded and Backgrounded Discourses

From the major discourses mentioned above, there were also backgrounded and foregrounded discourses which are demonstrated in Table 2 below and discussed further in the next section.

FOREGROUNDED DISCOURSES	BACKGROUNDED DISCOURSES
• Interventions	• Effects of Funding Pressures
• Funding Formulae as Equalisers Between HBIs and HWIs	• History of Funding Frameworks
• High Inflation Rates	• Inflation as a Historical Loophole in Funding Formulae
• Third-stream Income	• Impacts of New Public Management
• Benefits of a Comprehensive University	• Majority Black Student Population
• Wits as an Open University	• Historical Programme Exclusions

• High Tuition Fees at HWIs	• Government Favouritism of HWIs over HBIs

Table 2: Foregrounded and Backgrounded Discourses

Respondents eagerly foregrounded the interventions that they had made since #FeesMustFall to finding sustainable solutions to the funding crisis. There was a common observation that all these institutions understood the pressure that the lack of sufficient funding places on the higher education system. There was, however, a backgrounded discourse of what the effects of these pressures look like in universities because this was not explicitly mentioned. Depending on their current and previous positions, respondents appeared defensive of their institutions. For example, the respondent from SAUS defended students and was mostly critical of university management, government and NSFAS. Senate and Council members spoke more on university sustainability and autonomy, financing the university and the financial problems faced by students. Respondents from DHET and CHE were more vocal on governance, quality assurance and higher education financial planning issues in the long term. This may present slightly skewed conclusions because the silence from other participants on certain topics gives the impression that the more prominent voices are correct, as raised by Ball (1993). Ball criticised policy-as-discourse for its ability to make certain voices appear more meaningful than others simply because they are the most dominant.

Another foregrounded discourse was around how funding formulae are accepted as a solution to eradicating the differences between HBIs and HWIs because they distribute funds equally. There is, however, a backgrounded discourse about how the existing framework is an adaptation of old formulae that were exclusionary to HBIs. The NFF is based on the same principles as the previous formulae which is not explored as an area of concern by respondents. If funding formulae were meant to place HBIs and HWIs on equal footing, perhaps the high research component for subsidy determination would be addressed considering the problems mentioned in the literature. Furthermore, the foregrounded discourses regarding the impacts of HEPI and inflation on universities and how these impact tuition policies were discussed as ongoing issues. However, the previous formulae were also not immune to these, they all had increasing inflation as a loophole. It is concerning that since the 1950's there has been no solution to address this inadequacy. The implications are that tuition fees are most likely to continue increasing unless future tuition policy addresses this flaw.

The foregrounding of third-stream income de-emphasises the influence of New Public Management on HEIs. The foregrounded intention behind private-public partnerships is to grant more students access to universities, and to alleviate pressure on the government. Respondents did not necessarily acknowledge the discourses that make NPM an area of contention as a governance method in HEIs. NPM principles include perceptions of the government as unreliable, inefficient, and corrupt amongst others, whereas the private sector perceptions are more positive. The backgrounded implications could be that government is failing to address funding issues, but also, respondents did not consider what greater involvement of the private sector implies for South African HEIs.

Foregrounded discourses around funding at UJ deviated slightly from literature. The literature emphasised how HBIs were disadvantaged by the subsidy determinants, and that they enrolled a high number of middle class and poor students who depend on the government for funding. Respondents from UJ acknowledged that most of their student population is funded by the government but due to their comprehensiveness, they could leverage more subsidy since they offer more diverse programmes than traditional universities. The foregrounded discourse is that their student numbers are growing because they are more accessible than other universities in terms of tuition fees.

Respondents from UJ also foregrounded a discourse that UJ has managed to implement student assistance programmes better than HWIs. Along with placing emphasis on the financial interventions that they had made on behalf of students, they emphasised how their students rarely protest. Respondents credited this to their assistance programmes and did not consider the backgrounded discourses associated with HBIs. The literature showed that students from HBIs get less media attention than students from HWIs, and some come from circumstances that would not allow them to risk being excluded from university because, as mentioned in the literature, most students at HBIs are still disadvantaged. This may indicate a blind spot when it comes to understanding the issues that drive student behaviour.

There were also noticeable silences regarding why most of UJ's student population is black. This was not raised as a matter of concern regarding transformation or perception. Habib (2016) mentioned how HBIs have remained majorly black and stated how the cause of this could either be systematic or by design. The literature also showed that HBIs are likely to attract poor black students, and reputation matters when wealthier students consider places to study. A respondent from UJ mentioned how the perception that they were offering poor quality degrees because they charged less fees led to them increasing their fees drastically to shift perception. UJ is a comprehensive university, but it is affected by discourses that are associated with HBIs.

Respondents from Wits foregrounded how their university is not an HWI. This could be because Wits was considered an open university that accepted students from all races during apartheid. Respondents used the popular parts of Wits' history (such as its open status and protests pre-1994) to justify why it is not an HWI. However, the backgrounded discourse is that even though all races were accepted, there were programmes that were exclusive to white students. Respondent's views were based on their experiences in the university and did not consider the history before they were employed at Wits. Taylor (1997) stated that discourse is dynamic and changes over time to reflect context, history and how certain terms are understood, suggesting that the meaning associated with words may also change over time. Perhaps the reluctance to acknowledge Wits as an HWI is due to the historical meaning associated with the apartheid ideologies attributed to HWIs. However, over the years, the term has become less of an apartheid-related term but is applied as a descriptor of previously advantaged institutions.

Furthermore, there was a resigned acceptance that HWIs charged higher tuition fees and did not adhere to the government regulations according to respondents outside of Wits. This was seen in how respondents referred to Wits as an example when issues around fee caps, transparency around tuition, and university autonomy were discussed. The backgrounded discourses are around favouritism, where HBIs are expected to follow the rules and HWIs are not. This was also foregrounded in the discussions around alignment of degrees across institutions. Respondents from UJ, DHET, CHE and SAUS saw this as a problem because HWIs could seemingly justify why they charge more for their degrees, whereas the same degree would cost lower at an HBI. Respondents from Wits were backgrounded on this point and did not mention it.

5.2 Changes in University Tuition Policies according to CDA

CDA explains the changes in university tuition policies between 2015 and 2020 by contextualising the circumstances that led to the changes being made. The #FeesMustFall protests were the most foregrounded event when respondents mentioned this timeline, especially the concessions and interventions that were implemented during that period. The discourses around students' financial struggles were prominent in academic spaces, the media, and government discussions. Respondents alluded to how hard it was to separate themselves from the prominence of issues around student funding when there was constant exposure to them.

According to the characteristics of CDA mentioned in section 2.7, individuals' views regarding the protests also influence their position on tuition policy. Some respondents mentioned how in their roles, they were caught between management and student demands, and often had to take compromised stances. It was also evident that the respondents each had an area they were passionate about. For example, Respondents 3 and 4 were mostly vocal about the longevity of HEIs regardless of their historical status and were more concerned about how policy has evolved to address the problems in higher education around funding. Respondent 1D strongly felt that postgraduate students should be prioritised, and that academic performance should be the key determinant for funding. Respondents 2A and 2D were invested in better engagement with student representative structures to drive wellness and safety projects for students, although Respondent 2A also showed greater investment in the politics that drive government decisions and policies. Respondent 5 was anti-establishment and focused on calling out university management for their decisions. The respondent was especially critical of how HWIs seemingly did not adhere to government regulations and could operate more autonomously than HBIs.

Respondent 1A was also critical of the government, especially regarding its involvement in universities. Respondent 2B was passionate about students taking the opportunities given to them and advocated for using coaches to assist students succeed. They also advocated for funding to be linked to student performance. Respondents 1C and 2C were quite diplomatic in their responses and often exhibited unsureness of whether they were giving the “correct” answers. Respondent 1B seemed to align with the status quo around funding from the government and from within their institution, but also sympathised with students and their challenges. As mentioned previously, an awareness of the discourses that policy role players bring into the policy process is key, as well as an acknowledgement that these may lead to biased stances that affect policy outcomes either negatively or positively.

CDA also considers the discourses around power and ideology. This was revealed in the theme around university autonomy and how much influence government should have. These viewpoints showed that different departments want to hold power in certain areas, and to control how it is used. The frustration from universities around this may come from the ideology that freedom to govern is a right which was given to them, but now has been taken away. However, respondents from both UJ and Wits did not state how greater autonomy would be beneficial to universities outside of the allowance to determine their own tuition fees. Their arguments were largely based on how they had to manoeuvre around financial planning but did not extend into other areas of the university.

5.2.1 #FeesMustFall Influence on Discourses

The discourses from #FeesMustFall were evident throughout the analysis in Chapter 4. Respondents often referred to how it had changed their perceptions and agreed that those discourses influenced policy decisions. Some respondents also agreed that the discussions raised by the protests would influence their thinking around funding and accessibility for a long time.

Furthermore, the discourses from #FeesMustFall highlighted the differences between HBIs and HWIs. HBIs were not as foregrounded as HWIs, even though they had been protesting before the movement gained media attention. Respondents from HWIs had changed perceptions about the needs of their students. The discourse that students at HWIs were better off than those in HBIs was dispelled because it was an HWI at the forefront of the movement. In HBIs, there was seemingly an easier acceptance of why students were protesting and as the respondents from UJ emphasised, they addressed the need faster by referring to their existing assistance plans. However, in HWIs, respondents indicated the protests were traumatic, and some felt that students were attempting to manipulate the higher education system. Despite these views, there was a seemingly greater understanding of interventions that were required to help students.

The theme around student wellness can also be directly attributed to the protests. This has been a conversation in academic spaces as highlighted during #FeesMustFall, where part of the students' demands included addressing mental health, gender-based violence, and gender inclusivity. The greater sensitivity to student's wellbeing was foregrounded by respondents and some directly attributed it to the issues raised by students during the protests. #FeesMustFall was the thread that linked all the discourses mentioned above, and its influence was directly responsible for some policy changes as seen in the previous chapter.

5.3 Conclusion

Ultimately a critical discourse analysis approach was effective in uncovering the discourses that influence tuition policies in HBIs and HWIs. Incorporating discourse analysis allowed a deeper understanding of how both institutions see themselves, it gave insight into the broader debates in government and other higher education spaces about the fairness of tuition policies, it highlighted the accommodations given to both HBIs and HWIs, and it considered less highlighted discourses that form part of policy processes even though they are not foregrounded. This would not have been possible through rational theories of policy analysis and supports the move towards incorporating discourse studies into policy analysis.

By identifying the foregrounded and backgrounded discourses, the study successfully demonstrated that key policy players in the higher education space may also have blind spots, especially when it comes to the less discussed discourses. This is perhaps where the focus should be when it comes to addressing tuition related protests, because the foregrounded discourses and interventions have not prevented student protests. Attending to these may effectively address the failures of policy to curb future student protests while attending to its main objectives of redress and equality. This is particularly important because the discourses presented by #FeesMustFall and other related protests were the connecting factor throughout the discussion in Chapter 4 and they were also the foundation for most of the prominent discourses such as student wellness and missing middle interventions.

The classification of UJ as a comprehensive university instead of a traditional HBI presented some challenges because the literature was clear on what constitutes an HBI. As mentioned in Chapter 1, UJ's composition of both HBIs and HWIs made it a distinct location of inquiry and yielded more discourses that were not present in the literature, especially around graduate employability and how the university views and governs itself. However, it was also clear that its comprehensive status did not eradicate all the characteristics of HBIs that are applicable to it, even though significant strides have been made over the years. A key takeaway was that even though UJ is defined as a comprehensive university, it still has most of the characteristics of an HBI. This could present a gap for further exploration in terms of how its policies could be amended to reflect its comprehensiveness so that is does not lean more towards HBI status.

Overall, the results from the study highlighted the different discourses that influence tuition policy and the importance of considering these in policy discussions. If tuition policy in HBIs and HWIs is going to address the issues at the core of student protests, there must be acknowledgment of the historical discourses associated with both institutions, as well as increased awareness of how personal ideologies and power can influence policy decisions. The results therefore strongly suggest that a reflexive, discourse orientated approach in the policies of HBIs and HWIs could assist in understanding each institution's needs to customise solutions that work best for them. This may ultimately decrease the frequency of tuition related protests and make tuition policy goals more attainable and effective.

5.4 Recommendations

From the above analysis and findings, I would recommend that firstly, the loopholes in the current funding formula are addressed because there is likely to be a continuation of the issues associated with it. For example, inflation has been a highlighted as a cause of concern amongst all the funding formulae and failure to find a sufficient solution to this problem will mean that the current and any future funding formulae will be subjected to the same limitations. Furthermore, HEIs should consider pursuing third-stream income more robustly and not view it as a reflection of government failures but rather as a way to further contribute to the enrichment and betterment of society. Lastly, being ignorant of the discourses that affect policy formation may lead to instances where we can call new institutional types such as UJ different names whilst ignoring the existing historical disadvantages (such as the characteristics of HBIs) that are associated with them.

APPENDICES

Appendix A- Ethics Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG | WITS SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE
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03 December 2021

Dear Nokwazi Maseko,

Title: An analysis of tuition policy discourses in Historically Black and White South African tertiary institutions.
Student Number: 782210
Degree: Master in Management in the field of Governance
Ethics Clearance Number: *WSG-2021-54*

All candidates must satisfy the University's ethical standards for research. Your ethics application has been received and reviewed by the Wits School of Governance Human Research Ethics Committee.

Your ethical clearance has been approved subject to you getting permission to conduct research from all sites where research is conducted. The letter(s) of permission to undertake research must be submitted to the WSG Research Office and kept on file with your final proposal and other ethics documents.

You may commence your data collection under the guidance of your supervisor. In the event that the scope, methodology or nature of the research changes, you are required to submit another ethics application reflecting the changes.

The onus is on you as the candidate, with support from your supervisor, to ensure your research complies with university human research ethics policies and protocols at all stages of the research process.

It is recommended that you keep this letter in a safe place as you are responsible for ensuring you have proof of ethics clearance and have lodged the ethics clearance / protocol number with Faculty before final submission of your research report. If you do not have an ethics clearance number, you are not permitted to graduate.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely,

Rekgotsofetse Chikane

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Appendix B- Interview Questions for University Members

1. What do you understand by discourse?
2. How long have you been working at this institution?
3. How would you define your input towards tuition policy formation at your institution?
4. In your current role, what would you say are the most prominent discourses influencing tuition policy formation and higher education funding at your institution?
5. What other less discussed/highlighted discourses would you say influence tuition policy in your institution and what do you think has been the driver behind these policy changes?
6. What would you say are the key changes in tuition policy in your institution over the last 5 years?
7. Have these changes impacted how you view tuition policy changes or how you contribute towards policy discussions in your institution?
8. What was your overall opinion of the Fees Must Fall discourse and how it impacted tuition policies?
9. Given your position within your institution, how did you handle the discourse from the fees must fall movement? That is, did you consider it when making decisions or view it as an issue outside of policy formation?
10. Would you say that the Fees Must Fall movement has had a lasting impact on tuition policies? Please elaborate.
11. Given the various discourses and debates that were part of the Fees Must Fall movement, are there any specific discourses that may have changed your thinking around tuition policy formation at your institution?
12. In your view, does discourse influence the way policy is formulated in your institution? For example, consider policy formation before and after 2015, did the discourses stemming from the student protests influence your stance on tuition policy discussions differently than prior to the protests?
13. Considering that your institution is considered as historically black/historically white, what do you think this designation implies from a policy perspective?
14. What other policy changes do you think can be considered to curb tuition policy related protests in the future?
15. What tuition policy changes would you like to see implemented in higher education institutions over the next five years?
16. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this discussion?

Appendix C- Interview Questions for CHE, DHET and SAUS

1. What do you understand by discourse?
2. How long have you been working at this institution?
3. How would you define your input towards tuition policy formation at your institution?
4. In your current role, what would you say are the most prominent discourses influencing tuition policy formation and higher education funding at your institution?
5. What other less discussed/highlighted discourses would you say influence tuition policy in your institution and what do you think has been the driver behind these policy changes?
6. What would you say are the key changes in tuition policy in your institution over the last 5 years?
7. Have these changes impacted how you view tuition policy changes or how you contribute towards policy discussions in your institution?
8. What was your overall opinion of the Fees Must Fall discourse and how it impacted tuition policies?
9. Given your position within your institution, how did you handle the discourse from the fees must fall movement? That is, did you consider it when making decisions or view it as an issue outside of policy formation?
10. Would you say that the Fees Must Fall movement has had a lasting impact on tuition policies? Please elaborate.
11. Given the various discourses and debates that were part of the Fees Must Fall movement, are there any specific discourses that may have changed your thinking around tuition policy formation at your institution?
12. In your view, does discourse influence the way policy is formulated in your institution? For example, consider policy formation before and after 2015, did the discourses stemming from the student protests influence your stance on tuition policy discussions differently than prior to the protests?
13. Given the distinctions between historically black and white tertiary institutions, do you think the current policies are sufficient to address the differing needs of both types of institutions sufficiently? Please elaborate.
14. Please describe what you think are the key discourses influencing tuition policy formation at HBI's and HWI's.
15. What tuition policy changes would you like to see implemented in higher education institutions over the next five years?
16. Is there anything else that you would like to add to this discussion?

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