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THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

SCHOOL OF GOVERNANCE

EXCLUSION AND ACCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management,
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in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The democratisation process of higher education in South Africa commenced in 1994, with the refrains of 'widening access, broadening participation' and 'the doors of education and culture shall be opened'. The deep structural and systemic deficits in the apartheid education system restricted access to higher education based on race, while simultaneously deepening inequalities in the schooling system. Education reform as the transition to democracy commenced, required seismic policy and systemic shifts widely described as an agenda to transform the higher education system. Thus equity of access and success reverberate in the policy documents and reforms undertaken by the government. This research study examined the policy texts and state instruments used to steer the system towards the goal of widening access. Using the conceptual model of Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) it explored the role of universities in re-interpreting policies, while at the same time focusing on the difficulty of 'widening access' given the treacherous legacy of the past. The focus was on a 16 year time-span from 1994–2010, tracing the journey of policy reforms and analysing the quantitative data at the national level of the higher education system. The researcher sought to understand the enormity of the education system problems, while taking into account that changing the course for the country is a major task which would require deep transformation that would not be feasible in a short period. Findings of the research conducted are analysed and discussed during the course of this thesis. The thesis also recommends the adoption of an evaluative framework that would enable government to measure progress in relation to stated goals and inculcate greater accountability by universities.

Key words: access; higher education; policy reforms

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of D Phil at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____

Kirti Shashikant Menon

October 2014

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents, Shashikant and Sita Dhupelia, who inspired me to value education and who loved unconditionally.

It is with pride and affection that I dedicate this to my late grandmother, Sushila Gandhi, who remains my role model and inspiration.

Achutan Menon, my late father-in-law, would have been proud.

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My passion for higher education has been nurtured through my work at the Council on Higher Education, the Department of Higher Education and Training and the University of the Witwatersrand. I believe that widening access to education is an imperative for our country and trust that in some way this thesis contributes to deepening our understandings of the complexities of our fractured past and how we as a country can move forward.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	:	Association of African Universities
ABET	:	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
ANC	:	African National Congress
BBC	:	British Broadcasting Corporation
BLSA	:	Business Leadership South Africa
CDE	:	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CEPD	:	Centre for Education Policy Development
CHE	:	Council on Higher Education
CHET	:	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
COSATU	:	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSHE	:	Centre for the Study of Higher Education
CTP	:	Committee of Technikon Principals
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
DHA	:	Department of Home Affairs
DHET	:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	:	(former) Department of Education
DoL	:	Department of Labour
DPRU	:	Development Policy Research Unit
DST	:	Department of Science and Technology
EU	:	European Union
FET	:	Further Education and Training
FFC	:	Financial and Fiscal Commission
FTE	:	full-time equivalent
GEAR	:	growth, employment and redistribution
GER	:	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GET	:	General Education and Training
Go8	:	Group of Eight
HDI	:	historically disadvantaged institution
HE	:	higher education
HEI	:	higher education institution

HEMIS	:	Higher Education Management Information System
HEQC	:	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQF	:	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HESA	:	Higher Education South Africa
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
HSRC	:	Human Sciences Research Council
HWI	:	historically White institution
MUT	:	Mangosuthu University of Technology
NCHE	:	National Commission on Higher Education
NCV	:	National Certificate Vocational
NEET	:	not in education, employment or training
NMMU	:	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NPC	:	National Planning Commission
NPHE	:	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	:	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	:	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	:	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NWG	:	National Working Group
NWU	:	North-West University
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PME	:	Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation
PQM	:	Programme Qualification Mix
PUCHE	:	University of Potchefstroom
RDP	:	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RU	:	Rhodes University
SA	:	South Africa
SACS	:	South African College Schools
SADC	:	Southern African Development Community
SANGOCO	:	South African National NGO Coalition
SAPSE	:	South African Post-Secondary Education
SAUVCA	:	South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association
SET	:	Science, Engineering and Technology
StatsSA	:	Statistics South Africa
SU	:	Stellenbosch University

TBVC	:	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TEFSA	:	Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa
TIMSS	:	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UCT	:	University of Cape Town
UFH	:	University of Fort Hare
UFS	:	University of the Free State
UJ	:	University of Johannesburg
UK	:	United Kingdom
UKZN	:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UL	:	University of Limpopo
UN	:	United Nations
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIBO	:	University of Bophuthatswana
UNISA	:	University of South Africa
UNIVEN	:	University of Venda
UNIZULU	:	University of Zululand
UNRISD	:	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UoT	:	University of Technology
US	:	United States
USA	:	United States of America
Wits	:	University of the Witwatersrand
WSU	:	Walter Sisulu University

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CHAPTER 1
THE ACCESS CONUNDRUM

> *And so we must, constrained by and yet regardless of the accumulated effect of our historical burdens, seize the time to define for ourselves what we want to make of our shared destiny* (Mandela, 1994).

1.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter introduces the research problem. Access to higher education in South Africa (SA) was identified as one of the objectives and goals of higher education policies, structures and systems at the dawn of democracy in 1994. The analysis commences in 1994 when the denial of access to higher education on the basis of race, as a legislated characteristic of apartheid structures, systems and policies, was dismantled by virtue of the new democratic dispensation. The research will focus on analysing policy reforms in the form of government legislation, plans, and instruments developed to manage the higher education sector and funding allocations to higher education. This chapter provides a brief overview with the intention of sketching the extent of the problem of access to higher education and placing in context, the deep-seated issues that hampered access to higher education. The focus is on the critical period from 1994 onwards taking into account three key areas which are firstly, the policy environment inherited in 1994 and developments after that, the policy agenda set by the democratic government encapsulating all shifts and focal points adopted over the years, and finally, the reforms in higher education that have emerged over the last 16 years.

1.2. RATIONALE

The advent of democracy in 1994 and the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996 signalled the end of restricted access to higher education on legal grounds. However, it will be seen that the prolonged impact and reach of the apartheid state's policies, institutional arrangements and unequal distribution of education resources profoundly affect access pathways into higher education. The complexity of access to higher education is such that it has to be acknowledged that outcomes and outputs would be delayed or lag significantly between the time of state intervention and impact. In 1994, as a party in waiting for elections, the African National Congress (ANC) issued a comprehensive *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (ANC, 1994). It interrogates the enormity of

the apartheid legacy of education and provides a coherent policy statement albeit with contradictory tensions in terms of the pursuit of goals of equity and development. The document states that the:

> *… fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system has had profound effects on the development of the economy and society. It has resulted in the destruction, distortion or neglect of the human potential of our country, with devastating consequences for social and economic development* (ANC, 1994:2).

It advocates the pursuit of equity and access as being of paramount importance and signals quite clearly that the adverse effects of apartheid education clearly needed to be addressed. Some critics of the time, such as Bunting, pointed out that in the early ANC statements, equity, accountability and a broader definition of development all play a role that has the potential to impede implementation (Bunting, 1994:229). Critical analysis of the period under review will demonstrate that the simultaneous drive to dismantle and undo the racially skewed higher education sector as well as pursuit of the goal of widening access to higher education especially for the historically disadvantaged, was a major task. It will be demonstrated that the resources required to 'redress' past inequities and the deeply entrenched nature of the racially divided education system were both grossly under-estimated.

In order to understand the education legacy inherited, it is important to set out how higher education evolved in the country along racial lines, leading to clearly unequal power relationships that translated into society and the economy (Wolpe & Unterhalter, 1991). The history of higher education in SA is a narrative that highlights sharply the extent to which race and ethnicity informed the establishment of universities and erected barriers to access. The depth of the impact of the race based educational structures was not easy to dislodge, despite legislative changes introduced post 1994. The first universities evolved from colleges, with a clear definition of purpose and mission and identification of the student population served, location and language of instruction. The genesis of higher education and the elaborate governance arrangements is a narrative that is exclusively South African as it mirrored and reflected the separate development architecture. Reddy (2004) sketched the history of the establishment of universities in the early part of the 20th century revealing starkly, the lack of institutional access for Africans, Indians and Coloureds. The value of studies that have explored the histories of higher education institutions is the contribution to the understanding

of the devastating impact on access to higher education for historically disadvantaged groups. The distortions produced have filtered into the nature of the labour force over the years, the race-based distinctions between skilled and unskilled and finally, class determined by race.

The University of Cape Town evolved from the South African College Schools (SACS) in 1918, Rhodes University in 1920 and the conversion of Victoria College to Stellenbosch University in 1918. This was followed by the School of Mines in Johannesburg becoming the University of the Witwatersrand in 1922 followed by the autonomy granted to colleges previously affiliated to the University of SA in the next decade. These colleges became known as the Universities of Natal, Pretoria, Potchefstroom and Free State. The University of Fort Hare was established in 1916 and provided a form of access to higher education to Africans, Coloureds and Indians. This was followed by institutions developed in the 'homelands' or TBVC[1] states: the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was established in 1959 for Coloureds and the University of Durban-Westville in 1972 for Indians. The Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2004b:22) characterised this period as one in which apartheid ensured reinforcement of 'rigid sets of distinctions and divisions' that created 'a higher education system that was highly fragmented and uncoordinated; that was fundamentally inequitable; that was effective only in terms of rigid categorizations imposed by the state; and whose duplications rendered it profoundly inefficient' (CHE, 2004b:24).

It is not intended in this chapter to provide a comprehensive history of higher education institutions (HEI), but to flag the significance of the development of a sector along the lines of separate development. This is central to understanding why access is a priority goal for this country, as the social exclusion agenda adopted by SA prior to 1994 manifested itself in institutions built along racial identities, limiting access with devastating consequences resulting in deepening inequalities. Complementing the policy of racial segregation, the Nationalist government embarked on the establishment of universities based on racial and in some cases narrowly defined ethnic lines.

Spanning all levels and spheres of the education and training system, the Bantu Education Act, No 47 of 1953 delineated the educational opportunities for African people and limited participation by establishing a Black Education Department housed in the Department of Native Affairs. The Extension of University Education Act (No 45) of 1959 restricted access

[1] Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei.

to White HEIs for Africans, Coloureds and Indians[2] and made provision for the establishment of separate universities. The Freedom Charter of 1955 signalled the defining feature of the struggle against apartheid in the refrain 'the doors of learning and culture shall be opened'. Thirty-nine long years would pass before the dawn of democracy, and the commencement of dismantling apartheid policies, structures and systems.

A focal event in the history of South African higher education was the transition from the apartheid government to democracy (Cooper & Subotzky, 2001; Kraak & Young, 2001). This transition necessitated a major overhaul of policies that perpetuated exclusion on the basis of race, gender and class from higher education resulting in skewed patterns of enrolment and graduates. Access to higher education has dominated the discourse in policy analysis and has underpinned several policy reform initiatives. Despite post-1994 policies that have targeted access constraints to higher education, analysts still point to the lack of sufficient enabling conditions and problems with policy frameworks that have prevented widening of access to higher education in a meaningful way (Barnes, 2006; Jansen, 2001).

1.3. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of the research was to assess the extent to which the policy goal of widening access to higher education has been achieved. Definitional issues pertaining to access were dealt with to provide a platform for this research. The research focused on state policies developed in relation to access and the interpretation of these policies by the higher education sector, which comprises 23 public universities.

The intention was to develop an evaluative framework that could be used as an instrument to assess the extent to which the policy goal of widening access to higher education has been achieved or not. The instrument would seek to identify the criteria and indicators that could be used to evaluate access to higher education taking into account the policy context, implementing agencies and other influences.

The key research questions explored for this thesis are:

(i) What is the relationship between policy implementation of the state and the goal of access to higher education?

[2] For purposes of this thesis, the descriptor 'Black' will be used to refer to African, Coloured and Indian, except where specific racial categories are required.

(ii) What is the role of the HEIs in the public sector in relation to the goal of access?

(iii) What is the relationship between events, policy choices and implementation in relation to the goal of widening access to higher education?

(iv) What are the other factors that have impacted on access to higher education?

(v) What are the criteria that could be used to evaluate the extent to which the goal of access has been achieved?

There are three major areas that were prioritised in attempting to establish whether or not access has widened. Firstly, the focus was on the development of criteria within an evaluative framework. The criteria were then linked to the goal of access. Criteria and indicators were developed by reviewing international practices in evaluative frameworks for public policy. Secondly, as a preliminary to the development of a framework, an analysis was undertaken to focus on whether or not the policy environment in higher education has enabled achievement of this goal. No evaluation of access can be performed without taking into account the quantitative data available for the period 1994–2010. In some instances, where data was available, the period extends to 2012. Thirdly, the criteria development needed to ensure the appropriateness of the evaluative framework and determine fitness for purpose of the policies at both the national and institutional levels in relation to the goals. The value of the evaluative framework would reside in its long-term utility value for government, HEIs or any future research into access.

The rationale for selecting the policy goal of widening access for scrutiny was premised on the historical legacy of the apartheid period, with the state circumscribing and controlling access to higher education. Since 1994, the state has prioritised access as a goal (amongst others goals), developing legislation and regulatory frameworks aimed at widening access and rearranging the landscape of higher education institutions in order to achieve the goals set out in the policy documents (DoE, 2001). More than any other goal set out in the White Paper (DoE, 1997), widening access to socially excluded categories has been singled out as having the maximum transformation potential in terms of both the higher education sector and society. Despite the goal of access being foregrounded since 1994, the current dropout rates and low graduation rates have proved very costly for the South African system. This has created a perplexing problem for the country, with access not translating into outcomes defined in higher education, as graduate output, throughput rates and completion on time data. It is estimated that more than a billion rand of the ten billion rand allocated to higher

education is wasted because access is not accompanied by success (Badsha, 2004:1). A fuller understanding of the wastage or what can be termed as the inefficiencies of the education system, is yet to be undertaken as research.

The impact of globalisation and rapidly changing economies increasingly has required a further interrogation of the purposes of higher education and has redefined the way higher education institutions work (Castells, 1999). Sketching the terrain in which higher education is located right now in the 21st century provides a perspective on the key debates and influences on access that are prevalent. Both the National Commission on Higher Education (1996) and the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) are pivotal in shaping understandings of access and the purpose of higher education. The agenda for the transformation of higher education outlined the need to 'redress inequalities of access, participation and success' and 'expand SA's competitive participation in the global context' (CHE, 2004b:24). The pursuit thus of the redress agenda and simultaneously ensuring that the higher education institutions in SA retain a competitive edge, have made the allocation of resources from the state to universities a battleground.

The debates on access to higher education have shifted and been reshaped in the last decade. With rising unemployment rates, persistent poverty, the realities of widening class divides and a perceived slowness of transformation of societal structures, higher education is viewed as a panacea for all problems. At the same time, higher education is perceived to be a problem in itself. Currently, policy instruments are differentiated in terms of rewards and targets based on addressing the issue of exclusion to higher education and logically, aimed at promoting inclusion. The extent to which these have been successful or not is discussed in Chapter 3.

For purposes of this thesis, access is defined as physical or formal access to higher education, as opposed to epistemological access to curricula or institutional cultures (Jansen, 2001). It is asserted in this thesis, that despite the focus on formal or physical access to higher education, the policy debates have invariably linked access to success implicitly confirming the need to discuss epistemological access. It is argued that, given the deeper social exclusion in society and the labour market, splitting access in terms of the interlocked dimensions will not be sustainable throughout the research. In order to circumscribe and define the parameters of the research, the focus was primarily on formal access. Critical therefore was to interrogate the necessity of having multi-dimensional definitions of access, when provision of formal access,

without accompanying epistemological access, undermines the attainment of access and provides a suite of attendant problems that begin to occupy centre stage in the policy arena.

1.4. DEFINING ACCESS

The rationale for undertaking this research study was to examine whether or not the policy initiatives since 1994 have triggered widening of access, impacted on exclusion on the basis of class, race and gender and contributed to a diverse student population. Critical to this research was the positioning of the issue of access in relation to other transformative issues and to redress goals and develop an evaluative framework that will go beyond focusing purely on an increase in student numbers. The concept of access to higher education has to factor in the enabling factors and inhibiting barriers to entry into institutions of higher learning, as well as determining measures of success in higher education linked to access-success in the broader society. The latter access-success debate is closely aligned to reform initiatives that address conditions that would enable post-higher education economic activity. Simply stated, the success of a graduate could be determined by corresponding success in either the labour market or any other economic activity.

Admittedly, the term access has been subject to constant redefinition, both by government and by analysts. This research study focused on tracing the varied definitions of access and how these definitions have changed within policy frameworks and the discourse. In this thesis it will be demonstrated that in the early 1990s access meant massification. In SA, this was broadly understood to mean increased student enrolment numbers at higher education institutions, specifically aimed at widening access to those previously excluded on the basis of race, gender and class. Massification of higher education was not a phenomenon specific to SA, as the trend was observable in the United States (US), Europe, Australia and the United Kingdom (UK). Altbach and McGill Peterson (2007:3) referred to 'massification as a process by which academic systems enrol large numbers – and higher proportions of the relevant age group – of students in a range of differentiated academic institutions'. In the South African context, it is argued in this thesis that, since 2001, the introduction of policy initiatives has stressed planned growth, which is contrary to the 'massification' referred to in early policy documents (NCHE, 1996). The shift from elite to mass education internationally has created pressure on: the ability of governments to fund higher education; the capacity of universities to absorb higher numbers of students and to guarantee success; and taking cognizance of the fundamental debates on the nature, role and functions of a university (Readings, 1996; Trow,

1974). Trow's (1974) categorisation of higher education systems into the following three categories (determined by participation rates in post-secondary education) is useful in understanding the massification debate:

- Elite (under 15%)
- Mass (between 20% and 30%)
- Universal (above 30%).

Arguably, the goal of widening access in SA reverberates with policy discourse in other countries. However, the SA context, with a participation rate currently at 16 percent or thereabouts, falls squarely into Trow's (1974) classification of 'elite'. This categorisation is useful as a confirmation that the SA higher education system is 'elite' and that despite the rhetoric and good intentions underpinning policies and reforms, 20 years later it remains a struggle to increase participation rates. Debates and the polemic in SA have required a redefining of: the purpose of higher education, inclusion of efficiency and effectiveness in policy instruments; interrogation of the notion of responsiveness of higher education to the needs of society and the economy; as well as constraints placed by diminishing state fiscal allocations to fund higher education. This has resulted in limited resources to support widespread expansion of higher education. The strain on resources has been experienced differently depending on the socio-economic and political context of countries. Equity of access to higher education was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a goal to be pursued by developed and developing countries linked to Article 26.1[3] of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO, 1998:6-7).

Social exclusion, as will be discussed in the context of higher education, will also draw on the definition offered by Gore, Figueiredo and Rodgers (1995:2) that focuses on 'social rights of citizens … to a basic standard of living and to participation in the major social and occupational opportunities of the society'. The starting point in defining social exclusion in higher education has to take into account the participation rates of Africans, Coloureds and Indians in drawing correlations between race, as a distinctive marker, and access to higher education. Class comparisons for a longitudinal study will have to rely on data available from

[3] Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

the National Student Financial Aid Scheme in the absence of information from universities on measurement of class. In order to explore this linkage, social exclusionary practices at other levels in education formed part of this research, as did some of the determinants of exclusion (race, gender, class, rural). There are difficulties in applying the concept of social exclusion to a developing country that is constructed in categories of race, class and gender. One of the primary difficulties relates to defining 'access for whom' and to explore the obligations of the state in relation to provision of access to higher education. There are huge challenges in SA that must be considered, as the critical right of access to good quality schooling has still not been resolved, despite this being enshrined in the constitution.

1.5. THE CONTEXT

The focus on access for success has largely been limited to analysis of national data on enrolment patterns in higher education, graduates produced, as well as to cohort studies. Information was accessed from the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). In addition, information on funding of higher education was accessed from the DHET. Anecdotal evidence suggested that increased access was largely driven by institutional intention to increase input funding, especially when the old funding formula (1994–1999) was still operational. The critical question for this research was whether or not policies took into account and promoted the conditions for ensuring 'access for success'. This would entail broadening the focus on access to take into account other related policies in terms of quality schooling, the number of students qualifying for entry into the higher education sector, curriculum issues and others. A broader approach would allow for discussion, based on the literature reviewed, of conceptual issues, given that equity and access are often conflated. It must be stated that while there has been a shift to access for success, the political element embedded in access to higher education has largely focused on formal access. Central to any discussion on access, is to ask the question as to what does it mean to increase access. A narrow interpretation would be physically entering a higher education institution and registering for a qualification. There is an assumption that this physical entrance is either facilitated by a loan or bursary or alternatively, the student paying the required fees. This thesis explores the rising costs of higher education and the pressure on government to provide loans to students. The physical entry or formal access does not guarantee success at university. The struggle for improvement in student performance measured by graduation rates is analysed through the examination of enrolment and graduation patterns across the

higher education sector for the period 1994 to 2010. It will be demonstrated that a continual focus on physical access without exploring other dimensions such as institutional policies on admission, institutional culture, affordability, selection of the programme based on a student's competencies and abilities, will lead a cycle of failure in higher education.

Inequitable access to higher education prior to 1994 was taken up as a critical redress goal to be placed on the national agenda.[4] It is appropriate that access received this priority as the apartheid structures, systems and policies were meant to exclude certain racial groups from higher education. Thus, literature on higher education in SA is replete with references to the apartheid structures and systems in higher education and the neglect of opportunities for access to higher education for the historically disadvantaged population groups (NCHE, 1996; DoE, 1997; CHE Annual Report, 1998/1999 and others). The early debates on massification and predictions of rapid growth of the higher education sector (NCHE, 1996) and the White Paper set out clearly an important policy position on redress, equity of access and most importantly, equity of success.

> *The principle of equity requires fair opportunities both to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them. Applying the principle of equity implies, on the one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities which are the product of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage, and on the other, a programme of transformation with a view to redress. Such transformation involves not only abolishing all existing forms of unjust differentiation, but also measures of empowerment, including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for individuals and institutions* (DoE, 1997:1.18).

Widening of access is a consequence of a commitment to equity defined in the White Paper as "fair opportunities both to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them" (DoE, 1997:1.18). It is necessary and logical to ensure that any discussion on access must take into account success. This research study has critically evaluated whether or not higher education policies and related instruments have promoted equity of access and success. The White Paper stresses both identification of existing inequalities and the need for both government and institutions to initiate and sustain transformation processes to achieve the principle of equity

[4] The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 created separate universities for different race groups and inhibited access of Black students to White institutions, specifically in relation to the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand.

amongst other goals. There is a conflation of the terms equity and equality in the White Paper and an avoidance of the *equal to what* question.

The research for this thesis has drawn from Amartya Sen's writing on social exclusion, 'since the real merit of using the language of exclusion is to draw attention to the relational features in a deprivation, it is crucial to ask whether or not relational deprivation has been responsible for a particular case of starvation or hunger' (Sen, 2000:9-10). Appropriating the term 'relational deprivation' as a mechanism for discussion on access to higher education is useful, as pre-democracy restrictions on access to higher education were formally legislated. This could be referred to as a form of active exclusion, in that policies in the pre-democratic order were targeted specifically at ensuring that access was defined as 'limited access' to higher education. Sen's notion of 'relational deprivation' enabled the policy analysis to be undertaken in this research to interrogate whether or not post-1994 policies have taken into account the structural and systemic features of exclusion and the impact of new policy development on ameliorating access. New policies were to have foregrounded redress and ensured that there would be a broadening of opportunities for groups that were previously excluded.

A corollary is that active denial by legislation of the right to access higher education for the Black people in this country is equivalent to social exclusion from participation in higher education. The deeper impact is that denial of education opportunities creates unequal opportunities in the workplace with a perpetuation of unskilled labour being race based. Government policy in the post-1994 period recognises this exclusion and identifies various measures to address this, although with sufficient riders that point to the deep-seated problems of society structures, policies and systems that have an inter-related effect on the ability to rectify and alleviate the deprivational status. It will be demonstrated in this research that despite recognition and identification of the problems salient to the education system as a whole, the restrictions in terms of actual resources that could be utilised by the state hampered progress. Secondly, there had to be a reality check that change or transformation would not occur overnight and would require time. These related factors that forcefully impact on the realisation of the goal of provision of access, are dealt with substantially in the next section. It is clear that any discussion of the problem of exclusion from higher education must take into account the inter-related variables and that a short-term fix in the form of reform measures will not be viable. Social exclusion in higher education in SA has been exacerbated by the

apartheid legacy. This is evident in other sectors like health, social security, the labour market, ownership of land, access to basic amenities and the list is endless. Amartya Sen's (2000) distinction of active and passive exclusionary practices is useful in understanding deliberate exclusion on the basis of government policies that have contributed to massive unequal access to basic education and, logically then, to higher education. Thus, the negative outcomes of the apartheid policies are the primary reasons for present day policies to pursue active inclusion.

The literature on access often conflates access with equity and does not clearly nuance usage of the term. For purposes of this thesis, access is used in the narrow sense of physical access to higher education. Morrow (1993 and 2000) drew a fundamental distinction between physical and epistemological access[5] to education. This debate has since been taken up by analysts like Jansen (2001), who argue that in the access discourse, focus must be on access to whom, for what, through which means (curricula) and whether or not this translates into success. Given the context of SA there seems to be broad consensus that the two forms of access cannot be untangled. The distinction made by Morrow and Jansen is useful, though it will be demonstrated in this thesis that they are interdependent.

In SA, access to higher education was constrained by the limited number of institutions available to Black students, geographical location of institutions, financial costs[6] of higher education, low numbers of students qualifying for entry into universities and technikons, limited quotas for Black students at historically White institutions and other socio-economic factors. The link between access to education and state planning was not confined to higher education and is mirrored in the planning of schools, geographical locations of educational institutions, resourcing issues and the apartheid agenda implicit in the school curricula (Motala, 2000). Badat, *et al.* (1994) pointed out that access and planning of higher education in the past were linked to parochial conceptions of labour market needs based on race, gender and class. The key difference in terms of access and planning in the present is that the emphasis, although still located in terms of labour market needs, is on widening access and inclusion. This thematic emphasis is further reinforced in other policy frameworks that make the link between the labour market, employment opportunities and training. These will be discussed on the basis of pertinence to the subject of access to higher education. Inclusivity defined in terms of race, gender, class and disability is a salient feature of policy initiatives

[5] Access to the goods which the university produces (Morrow, 1993:3).
[6] Tuition fees, cost of textbooks and materials required, transport and subsistence costs.

across government departments. The success of these initiatives could not be evaluated as part of this research.

This research argues for extending the debate on access to include the General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and HE sectors, as well as tracking graduates into the labour market. Viewing access solely from the perspective of entrance to higher education is limited, in that success in higher education is a critical requirement for access to the labour market and society. A silo approach to access fails to recognise the interplay of dynamics between the different sectors, as well as inter-related variables, such as affordability, geographical proximity, qualifying for entry into higher education, and poverty, amongst others.

A defining feature of policy in SA higher education post-1994 was the attempt to invert the social exclusionary practices and move towards increasing inclusivity. Access to education has been understood to be an important feature of the transformation processes, especially for a newly emerging democratic state like SA. There are many arguments put forward linking productivity of a nation to improved education standards and likewise to buoyant economies (e.g. UNESCO, 1998). Fundamental to this research was examining access as a critical lever in redressing inequities of the past, not just in the realm of education, but in terms of wider transformation of society. The extent to which the policy reform initiatives have translated into greater access for those excluded by the state in the past was interrogated during research undertaken for this thesis. Drawing on Young's (2002) notion of democratic debate as 'struggle', this research evaluated the extent to which the debate on inclusion has created space for the voices of the excluded in terms of agenda setting, implementation and 'compensatory measures' to address exclusion (Young, 2002:50). The 'struggle' for access to be dominant on the policy agenda is visible in policy rhetoric and it was the objective of this research to evaluate the policy reforms implemented and ascertain the extent to which outcomes envisaged and articulated in government documents have materialised concretely.

As Barnes (2006:223) pointed out, the reality of planned transformation had to be tempered with what was achievable in terms of funding and redefining the meaning of institutional redress. Barnes (2006) is correct in pointing out that redress at the individual level was partially achievable by early policy initiatives, but more difficult to capture in relation to institutional redress. Part of the problem facing policy analysts is the process required to distil and understand the logic of the restructuring of the higher education sector in relation to the

stated goals of widening access. Thus, the changes in the size and shape of the higher education sector were not met with applause[7]. In fact, analysts have called for government to explicitly state how the goals of the White Paper were to be achieved through mergers and whether in actuality there was a failure to deal with the core structural problems (Jansen, 2004).

The adoption of the Constitution in 1996 and the recognition of education as a human right were seen as major redress levers. This thesis demonstrates that the discourse on access in the 2001–2005 period shifted and may not resonate with earlier iterations on access. Thus, policy rhetoric on access from the early 1990s has not translated into the various policy documents and regulations that are presently applied to the higher education sector. It is perhaps pertinent to draw a distinction between policy rhetoric, actual reform measures and the growing maturity of the democratic state in terms of problem identification, proposed solutions and interlinking of reform measures to counter broader issues emanating from the active social exclusionary practices of the past. Several studies have been conducted on social exclusion in areas like poverty alleviation, land reform, health and education, especially in relation to schooling in SA (Akoojee & McGrath, 2005; Bhorat & Lundall, 2004; Cloete, 2012). Research on access to higher education has been undertaken (Sayed, 2000; Duke & Jones, 2005; Cele, 2004; Cele & Menon, 2006). A limitation of some of the research in the field is that lack of progress in relation to access is perceived as a failure of policy reforms, or lack of resourcing to widen access or other factors, such as poverty, labour market trends or school statistics. That a more holistic view is required is patently clear, as access to higher education cannot be viewed in isolation from other extenuating factors.

International research partially confirms that policies often fail to take cognisance of 'academic preparedness, institutional expectations and commitment, academic and social match, finance and employment, family support and commitments, and student support services' (Thomas, 2002:1). Additional factors can be added to this list, such as proximity to institution, transport, health, family responsibilities and adaptation to higher education. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) discussed the important concept of traditional students who feel like 'fish in water'; and those who are entering higher education for the first time, without the required social and cultural capital and who feel like 'fish out of water'. The extent to which this form of social exclusion impacts on the access and success debate in SA has not

[7] Confirmed by interviews conducted in 2007 for the purposes of this research.

been sufficiently researched yet merits attention in relation to the issues of race, gender and class. The 'fish in or out of water syndrome' relates to the 'institutional habitus' issue, which focuses on the culture of institutions, i.e. 'if a student feels that they do not fit in, that their social and cultural practices are inappropriate and that their tacit knowledge is under-valued, they may be more inclined to withdraw early' (Thomas, 2002:2).

This is an important area for research, especially in adding to the dimension of access by highlighting an additional category of social access to the physical and epistemological dichotomy. The state in setting out policies for access has stressed the linkage between physical and epistemological access. Social issues have surfaced at various institutions in the form of language debates, student residences and recently, differential fees in relation to access to facilities brought on by mergers of multi-site campuses.

This thesis focuses on:

(i) Reviewing the access to higher education in SA;

(ii) The extent to which the policy discourses have ameliorated and expedited access for groupings previously excluded from participation;

(iii) Planning and regulation by the state, which has finite and limited resources to expend on achieving widened access;

(iv) Access as a social justice and redress imperative, is evaluated in relation to the higher education policy environment;

(v) Analysis of the higher education student data against the goals set out in the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE); and

(vi) Development of an evaluative framework to measure the performance of the sector in terms of equity and access.

In the thesis, tensions, contradictions and paradoxes in the policy environment are discussed, such as Singh's (2001:67) view that social justice must 'trump other countervailing measures' or Badat's (2003:18) reference to 'paradoxes, ambiguities, contradictions, possibilities and constraints' that are inevitable. Muller (2003) and Bundy (2006) raised the issues of whether or not accountability signals the beginning of closure of transformation and redress issues. The paradox raised by Muller (2003) is whether or not transformation policies are compatible with innovation and economic development. This brings to the surface whether or not a

choice has to be made between pursuit of transformation and economic development. Discussion of access as being in potential tension with other forces, such as accountability, quality demands and economic development market forces, fits in with Ball's view on policy-making and Foucault's stress on power. These are discussed later in this chapter.

By developing an evaluative framework to measure the extent to which the goal has been met, it is envisaged that this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on policies aimed at inclusivity more narrowly and broadly on the link between stated policies and outcomes. It is expected that the relationship between government departments responsible for policy development and implementation and the university context will demonstrate the complexity of the policy intents and impacts.

The education sector since 1995 has seen a plethora of policy documents specifically related to higher education. Admittedly, and as will be pointed out later, policies have been introduced into the system at different times, replacing the old with the new, in some cases introducing new areas that previously were not on the policy agenda and leaving vacuums in policy that still need intervention. In some areas, where there has been political struggle and contestation between government departments on policy options, this has resulted in a period of suspended animation for the sector (DoE & DoL, 2002). The policy context was relevant to this research for three critical reasons. It provides a measure of comparison between the state of access in the period 1994 and 2010. It enables a tracing of the evolution and refinement of government's framing of access and the policy frameworks developed to foster access. It creates space for discussion on the interpretation and implementation of policies at higher education institutions, with a view to extrapolating the data of the sector as a whole.

Essentially, it is the contestation of this thesis that there are important distinctions that must be made at the outset. Firstly, there is the policy rhetoric that is evident in policy documents and must be disentangled from actual policy instruments. Secondly, policy instruments and regulatory mechanisms have been introduced into the higher education sector at different times and have thus had a delayed impact on public higher education institutions. The time-lag between policy determination and finalisation by the government departments and the reception of these at institutions is relevant. Turning policies into implementation strategies requires interpretation and distilling at the institutional level prior to actual operationalisation. Thus, for example, the effect of the funding formula that provides performance incentives for

enrolment by race has to translate into targeted recruitment and marketing at the institutional level.

In 1996, the Minister of Education published the report (NCHE, 1996: Section 1.3.2) of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), which triggered all other policy initiatives in higher education. At the time of its publication, other policy initiatives salient to education were also produced.[8] The central features of the report in relation to access can be summarised briefly to establish the relevance to the research. It signals quite importantly the need for expansion of student enrolment and participation, and the requirement for SA to move from an elite model to a mass system, with a recommendation to explore new models of delivery. There is implicit recognition that this would imply changes in governance and fiscal arrangements in order for the anticipated expansion of the system to occur. This would include governance arrangements, both at the level of government and in the higher education sector. Importantly, there is recognition of the need for changes in qualification structures, quality assurance arrangements, expansion of the FET colleges and the role of private institutions. The emphasis on planning and negotiation is flagged in the report as critical for the transformation of the sector.

In relation to the research undertaken, the NCHE report rightfully pointed out that higher education institutions tend to 'replicate the ethnic, racial and gender divisions in the wider society' (NCHE, 1996:1-3). The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE, 1996: Section 2.1.1) endorsed the views of the NCHE by asserting that the higher education environment was characterised by 'gross discrepancies in the participation rates of students from different population groups'. It argued that the tension between massification and the cost of massification will have to be carefully balanced, without losing sight of the overall goal. The Education White Paper 3 of 1997 maintains an overall coherence in terms of problem identification, goals, values, principles and proposed governance and fiscal frameworks to achieve the goal of access to higher education. The White Paper (DoE, 1997: Sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4) advocated a planned expansion of the system, as well as the requirement to improve throughput and graduation rates in the system. This policy thread is expanded on in the DoE (2001:3):

[8] Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; The White Paper on Reconstruction and Development; the White Paper on Education & Training; the Labour Relations Act; The White Paper on Science and Technology; Report of the Labour Market Commission; and the GEAR macro-economic policy.

> *Equity of access has not been complemented by equity of outcomes, with black students accounting for a larger proportion of drop-out and failure rates than white students.*

It also states that (DoE, 2001:24):

> *… it is imperative to guard against rapid enrolment growth, unless it is matched by additional resources. Increasing enrolments without new investment will be detrimental to the long-term stability and sustainability of the higher education system, as well as to the quality of offerings.*

The NPHE (DoE, 2001) with its 16 outcomes and White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) on the Transformation of Higher Education of 1996 clearly enunciate the importance of achieving equitable redress and social and economic relevance in a complementary fashion. This linkage requires greater access to higher education. Access to education at all levels was circumscribed by apartheid laws and the regulatory framework in the period prior to 1994. Levels of circumscription, restriction and access to education changed at different intervals. In analysing the period 1994–2004, the history of access to higher education was reviewed in order to understand the debates that have prevailed on massification of higher education, planned enrolment growth and access-success.

Enrolment at higher education institutions is one measure of evaluating the efficacy of the widening of access policies. However, policies have also linked access to graduate output and the quality of output. More recent, regulatory instruments in higher education, e.g. the Student Enrolment Planning in Public Higher Education (DoE, 2005) and the Ministerial Statement on Higher Education Funding (Ministry of Education, 2005), have begun to foreground efficiency by developing systems that reward provision of access to higher education for designated race groups and incentives for production of graduates in terms of output rewards. Some of the performance measures for institutions would be equity of access to programmes and equity of outcomes in terms of completion rates and graduation rates.[9]

Both these performance measures are further finessed in terms of the following critical dimensions in terms of the access issue in higher education:

[9] Defined as such in terms of the conceptualisation of the Funding Formula.

a) Shifting enrolment ratios of Science, Engineering and Technology, Business/Commerce, and the Humanities from 25:26:49 to 30:30:40 (NPHE); and

b) Graduate output to be evaluated against graduate success in the economy.

The Student Enrolment Planning Report from the DoE emphasised that 'affordability and sustainability require student enrolment growth to be managed at both national and institutional levels' (DoE, 2005:18). The envisaged participation rate[10] for higher education is set at 20 percent to be achieved by 2010–2015. This would represent an increase from the current 16 percent. The performance target is not prefaced by a rationale for the marginal increase of five percent and it may be linked to fiscal resources and the capacity of the institutions to absorb large numbers of students into the system. It could also be linked to the number of learners who qualify for entry into the higher education system.

This shift from funding of enrolment to linking the funding to include success is significant and has been contested by higher education institutions. The policy shift has spawned a new vocabulary that focuses on student retention, non-completion, time taken to complete, cohort analysis, drop-out rates, throughput rates. It has been argued that policy terminology fails to take account of other factors that impact on the access-success debate (Jansen, 2001).

The balancing act implicit in the South African policy environment is the push-pull factors of transformation and economic efficiency. As both goals are implicit and explicit in the country's regulatory framework, steering instruments and systems and structures, the battle for centre stage in terms of agenda-setting is fierce. The issue of provision of access and, by implication, higher enrolment in the tertiary sector, is not viewed as sufficient if it is not accompanied by actual production of graduates. This combination policy outcome of access-success is a result of recent regulatory instruments that have shifted the focus from provision of access to higher education to the added responsibility of ensuring that there is concomitant success for the graduates. The result is that there are new accountability frameworks for higher education institutions, which require reporting on enrolment data, drop-out data, throughput data, as well as completion rates. An added dimension is the issue of employability of graduates as a responsibility for institutions to absorb.

The intention underpinning sketching of the policy background is to demonstrate the nuances and shifts in policy in relation to access. This policy shift, from massification rhetoric is

[10] Percentage of the population eligible for entry to higher education, who are between the age of 18 and 25.

placed at 2001, with the publication of the NPHE (DoE, 2001), accompanied by a requirement by the DoE for both institutional plans and student enrolment plans of universities to be submitted. The nature of the student enrolment plans and the response of the DoE to these formed part of this research, as it is central to the access debate. It has been argued that despite goals of widening access, some of the regulatory instruments are curbing access (HESA, 2005). The extent to which this is a valid argument was explored as part of the research. A counter rebuttal from the DoE is that 'planned growth' with access-success has always been central to policy development and implementation (DoE, 2001).

One of the policy goals in higher education (DoE, 1997:1.14) focuses on redress in respect of the legacy of apartheid; achieving social justice through equity of access and outcomes; and support for social and economic development in the context of globalization. Redress, as discussed in the policy documents, refers to institutional redress aimed at improving facilities and infrastructure at former historically disadvantaged institutions (HDI) and individual redress aimed at facilitating access to higher education for those socially excluded on the basis of race, class, gender and other categories.[11] The government has employed a number of strategies that have impacted significantly on the higher education system and its institutions. It is the precise nature of this impact that formed a substantial component of the research for this thesis. The last 16 years have seen major educational reform across all sectors, with significant policy shifts in the school sector, as well as in higher education. Critical interventions of the state and its agencies are listed in no order of importance:

(i) New regulatory policies and systems, including:

- Establishing a Higher Quality Committee (under a Council of Higher Education) with a mandate to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of institutions of higher education, accredit programmes of higher education and promote quality assurance in higher education (HEQC, 2001:3-8).
- Regulation of private HE providers by the DoE.

[11] See Carrim, N. (2002). Inclusion/Exclusion in South African Education. Learning about Inclusion and Exclusion in Education: Policy and Implementation in India and South Africa. *Institute of Development Studies. Discussion paper 2*, University of Sussex; as well as Soudien, C., & Sayed, Y. (2004). A New Racial State: Exclusion and Inclusion in Education Policy and Practice in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 22(4), December, 101-115.

(ii) A large scale restructuring programme that included: merging a number of public higher education institutions; reducing the number from 36 to 23; as well as re-defining the purpose of higher education institutions;

(iii) A new planning system, linked to the new funding formula and arrangements, which include: managing the programme and qualifications mix for each higher education institution; determining the enrolment figures for institutions; and in some cases capping student numbers;

(iv) Establishing a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and related statutory regulations;

(v) Bodies responsible for training based on The Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999);

(vi) Establishing a new student loan fund, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme of South Africa (NSFAS) in 1996;

(vii) Setting of benchmarks for graduation rates at different levels of study;

(viii) Funding formula linked to institutional efficiency measured in terms of graduate output;

(ix) Setting of performance measures for institutions in terms of production of postgraduates;

(x) Notice of intention of the Ministry to set targets for achievement of equity in relation to students and staff should institutions fail to do so;

(xi) Linking of funding of institutions to approval of three year rolling plans;

(xii) The separation of the DoE into two distinct Departments – Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (DoE, 2009);

(xiii) The publication of the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa (DHET, 2012);

(xiv) The publication in 2014 of the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa (DHET).

The rationale for listing the above measures is that it is clear that the substantive intent is on widening access in different ways and through different instruments. It is precisely these that were evaluated for the research and will be discussed. They can be viewed as the main policy

instruments that speak primarily to the goal of widening access. The extent to which the initiatives interface and work together formed a substantial component of this research in terms of developing an evaluative framework that can focus on the outcomes and outputs of the interventions listed.

There are several assumptions implicit in the DoE's (2001) policies. These are stated in no order of priority and are based on a close reading of the policy texts:

(i) Policies and regulatory frameworks and instruments will have the required impact on widening access to higher education;

(ii) The impact of the policies, outcomes and outputs will be experienced uniformly by all public higher education institutions;

(iii) If access to higher education is provided then success must be guaranteed;

(iv) The free will of students to select programmes is not considered;

(v) The labour market is in a state of readiness to employ the graduates produced;

(vi) Performance incentives provided by government to prioritise specified fields of study will translate at the institutional level to recruitment and selection policies.

The intention underpinning provision of the policy and legislative context of higher education is to provide a lens through which the issues of access, massification, planned enrolment and access-success debates link in with the equity-development conundrum that is an essential part of this thesis.

1.6. THE SECTOR

If one is to nest the narrower issue of access to higher education within broader debates on access to infrastructure, social services and opportunities, the policy integration required by the state would need to work in concert in order to serve as a buttress for the socially excluded. Thus, a narrow approach to analysing access to higher education would counter that policy initiatives by the DoE have not significantly improved access (Kraak & Young, 2001; DoE, 2001). An alternative perspective would be to adopt a broader view and consider the spectrum of variables that would inhibit, curb and require other interventions to successfully work prior to higher education policy working effectively.

Popular media analysis focuses on educational issues and often adopts the narrow approach, failing to take into account that the state is restricted, in that for policies to be implemented, there is a dependency relationship with institutions and players within institutions, who interpret and implement. Further down the line would be multiple variables that may not be a line responsibility of the DoE/DHET, but these would impact on student access to higher education. These include students who may be eligible for entry to higher education but are forced to work because of poverty within households. These entrants into the labour market are 'unskilled' and as such fall outside the student recruitment pool.

In terms of voices of the sector, the researcher undertook ten interviews with higher education institutions focusing on institutional planners or the relevant member of the senior management team. Whilst the outcomes of the interviews are briefly presented, the focus of this research remains critical engagement with the quantitative data on enrolment patterns and graduate outputs. The interviews were found to be of limited value though confirming that institutional contexts shaped individual responses. Criteria for selection of interviewees were based on both the institution and the actual interviewee. Broad criteria were:

a) Interviewee should be at institution for more than five years in the senior management team;

b) Experience and position within the institution is relevant to implementation of student enrolment planning, provision of access and monitoring of institutional performance;

c) Familiarity with the relevant policies and regulatory frameworks within higher education and related sectors.

The interview focused on the interpretation of policies, implementation of policies at the institutional level and the impact of policies on access over a period of ten years. The objective was to ascertain the following:

a) How was the goal of access interpreted and given effect to within the institution?

b) What were the barriers and enabling factors within the institution that inhibited or accelerated progress towards widening access?

c) How have government's policies shaped and impacted on the institution's performance in terms of provision of access and widening access?

d) What extraneous factors have impacted on the goal either positively or negatively?

e) How would the institution evaluate itself in terms of performance in relation to the goal of access?

Selection of institutions took into account the diverse range of types of higher education institutions. The criteria for selection were to include at least one representative of the different types of institutions. These are:

a) Former historically advantaged institution (University of Cape Town (UCT), University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), Stellenbosch University (SU), University of the Free State (UFS), Rhodes University (RU));

b) Former disadvantaged institution (University of Venda (UNIVEN), University of Fort Hare, University of Zululand (UNIZULU), Mangosuthu University of Technology, University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN));

c) Rural institution (University of Venda (UNIVEN), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), University of Limpopo (UL), University of Fort Hare (UFH), Rhodes University (RU));

d) Former technikon (Durban University of Technology (UoT), Central UoT, Cape Peninsula UoT, Vaal UoT, Tshwane UoT);

e) Comprehensive university (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of Zululand (UNIZULU));

f) Distance education university (University of South Africa (UNISA));

g) Traditionally Afrikaans institutions (North-West University (NWU), Stellenbosch University (SU), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of the Free State (UFS).

For the purposes of this study, the categories listed above were used to select institutions and interviewees. It must be noted that these categories assist in covering the spectrum of institutions but are not as clearly delineated. Mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions over the last five years have blurred the categories. For example, UKZN is a result of a merger in 2004 between the former University of Natal (historically advantaged institution) and the former University of Durban-Westville (historically disadvantaged institution). Interviews with merged institutions took into account the contextual factors of the merging partners where possible and more importantly reflected on whether the merger has resulted in widening access.

Analysis of the data derived from the interviews drew on the work of Foucault using discourse analysis as a research methodology. In drawing upon patterns and themes identified, analysis did not focus on 'hidden meanings, but to understand how they have appeared – what it means that they have appeared' (Foucault, 1971:109). Usage of discourse analysis enabled the researcher to identify patterns in how the concept of access is constructed by interviewees and within institutions. All interviewees declined to provide permission for their names to be disclosed. A summary of the major trends in the interviews reveals that the mergers remained central and framed responses; a view from institution based interviewees was that policy was imposed and no direction provided on how any of these policies either contributed to the goal of access or how they should be implemented. This frustration emerges as a trend and despite the limited numbers of respondents, is reflected in the work of policy analysts such as Jansen (2002a and b).

One of the interviewees from a historically disadvantaged and merged university stated that the merger clouded the focus of the institution on widening access. In the period before the mergers, the interviewee's institution was focusing on understanding the barriers to access for the poor and from racial groups previously denied unfettered access to universities. The specific university in discussion had initiated programmes to attract students to specific qualifications in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) fields, both in terms of epistemological access, as well as in terms of financial access. The mergers diverted attention from the systematic progress of the institution to widen access and, more specifically, put in place mechanisms to ensure the success of students.[12] Despite these comments, the interviewee confirmed that, with the bedding down of the merger, the university had gained additional sites of delivery and that institutional planning was now working on: enrolment plans to ensure a diverse student population in terms of race, gender and class; as well as rolling out Foundation programmes to support students, especially in Science and Mathematics.

One of the interviewees commented on the impact of the merger, as the university he worked at grew from a medium sized institution to a large institution. There was also a lack of clarity as to how institutional planning could fit in with national plans. He stated:

> *The trouble with having policy overloads is that you end up not being able to discern what are the most important things to do because you are diluting the*

[12] Interview conducted on 17 April 2007.

> *efforts across the very front, so having a layer upon layer of policy, doesn't necessarily get us the outcomes that we want; what we realize is that in the short to medium term we need to strategically plan at the institutional level ... prioritise most important things and put them within a short, medium term planning framework so that we are giving undivided attention to specific issues like access and equity.*[13]

Thus, in the midst of a flurry of policy-making, institutions appeared to either miss critical policy signals or were caught up in the day to day management of the institution. Contexts thus informed and shaped the performance of institutions in terms of widening of access. During the course of conducting interviews, a recurring theme, especially with interviewees from merged institutions, was that the mergers were meant to widen access, although it was not clear how, as some sites of delivery were closed and institutional capacities were vested in the management of the mergers.

In line with the semi-structured interview process, questions often followed on from responses that were specific to interviewees, which made for varied, rich and different views and perspectives. Some interviewees were not available and this created some adjustments to the proposed list. It was noted, in line with the position adopted in this thesis, that while policy is the official responsibility of government at the national level, there is policy that is developed at universities, which either reflects or detracts from the policy position of the government. Thus, there are a range of players who could be deemed to be policy-makers, because they are actively engaged in both the construction and interpretation of policy, as well as in implementation.

Vidovitch (2001:2) argued that there should not be a separation between the formulation and implementation phases of policy. Thus, Ball sees 'policy formulation, struggle and response from within the state itself through to the various recipients of policy' (Ball, 1993:16). The assumption underpinning Ball's position is that policy cannot be relegated to the realm and sole responsibility of the state, as this is a narrow conception of policy. Thus, the nexus between government and institutions is explored in this thesis.

[13] Interview conducted in June 2007.

1.7. METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

This research study took into account the intensely political nature of the complexity of the relationships between policy development and education institutional contexts. The concept of access is used in this thesis to discuss entrance to higher education and the barriers that exclude certain people. Access in itself is a political term in the same way as admission to university is either a political act or a consequence of a political act. Thus, constructions of admissions criteria by institutions are by their very nature political acts. It is an area which has not been explored by researchers in detail and does not form part of this research. This research worked at exploring the acts of widening access by analysing the policy trajectory between 1994 and 2010. Thus all government documents emanating especially from the line department (DoE and DHET) have been analysed. The first two chapters of this thesis will define the concept of access, trace policy developments and analyse both policy texts and action that will foster an understanding of the detailed quantitative analysis that was undertaken and is detailed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 2 critically discusses the debates on access to higher education in SA and sketches the key positions adopted by policy analysts, both on the local and international access questions. This chapter will demonstrate the complexity of the debates on policy reform in SA and establish the parallel resonances that exist in debates in higher education internationally. SA policy analysts have critiqued and evaluated policy reforms with a view to impacting on policy and proposing alternative routes. These debates are discussed in this chapter. Access is not a uniquely South African concept, though the attendant problems are different from those of other countries that grapple with social exclusion and higher education. The chapter thus sets out the body of literature on access and attempts to contextualise the difficulties inherent in the policy-making process.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the policy and planning environment in the South African higher education context between 1994 and 2010. Through the descriptive narrative, the intention is to explore the extent to which state planning has had the desired effect of widening access to higher education. After all, a textual analysis of the planning documents of the DoE/DHET reveals that equity and redress as well as access are prioritised. It concludes that greater coherence in policy-making is required, as the higher education sector has complex inter-relationships with other sectors; thus policies and planning to address social exclusion in higher education cannot occur in isolation. It sets the basis for describing the

analysis of funding of higher education that features in Chapter 4 and which also maps out the linkages between higher education and the economy. This sets the scene for the detailed analysis of participation rates in higher education broken into categories by race, gender and field of study. The intention underpinning these two chapters is to evaluate the extent to which resourcing of the higher education sector sufficiently addressed government's plans to widen access. Chapter 5 proceeds to analyse the goals of the NPHE (DoE, 2011) using the quantitative data accessed from HEMIS with the intention of measuring progress. The final chapter concludes by proposing an evaluative framework that would require data collection in a specific way to enable a holistic evaluation of the goal of widening access, especially how it is interpreted at the institutional level.

CHAPTER 2
WIDENING ACCESS: EQUITY OF ACCESS AND EQUITY OF OUTCOMES

Diverse as these 'transformation' policies are, they all face in one of two directions: they are directed towards equity and access … on the one hand; or innovation and economic development on the other. To put that in different terms, the redemptive longings driving higher education transformation in South Africa are salvation from the dead hand of apartheid on the one hand, and progress towards global economic competitiveness on the other. These two longings anchor the political theology of restructuring in South Africa (Muller, 2003).

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities, 1859:1).

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Any retrospective of the literature on higher education for the period 1994–2010 in SA will encounter terminology such as: widening participation; access; equity of opportunities; legacy of apartheid; redress; transformation; and equality or inequality. These phrases are imbued in policy texts or policy analysis and have become deeply embedded in contemporary discourse. Depending on the vantage point of the writer, the state is interventionist, actively steering, steering in the wrong direction or not steering at all. Policy analysis itself throws up contradictions and paradoxes in interpretations of the role of the state, with simultaneous accusations of inadequacy in terms of policy direction or at the worst, excessive policy overload. There is, in addition, the characterisation of the state as abandoning the agreement on the transformation project and of institutions of higher education being excessively pressurised as a result of policies.

This chapter focuses on providing a perspective on the literature on social exclusion and access, noting that the views expressed in relation to contradictions and conundrums find expression in the international literature as well. It will be demonstrated that, in most cases, policy analysis follows the line of rationalism in the expectation that policies will have the intended consequences – confirming a causal relationship. The trap of believing or expecting that policies will have the desired outcomes is one that assails most evaluative perspectives not excluding this research. An intention underpinning the literature review is to demonstrate that increasing access and fiscal austerity dominate the education agenda in most countries, though textured differently in the South African context. A prevailing view is that much of the education reform undertaken post-1994 has been plagued by neo-liberal economic policies and the growing impact of globalisation. This criticism emanates from the linking of higher education to economic and human capital development. After exploring and engaging with these debates, the theoretical perspective adopted by this research study will be discussed.

2.2. PURPOSE OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was undertaken for the following purposes:

(i) To review the theoretical framework that underpins this study; and include an evaluation of frameworks and approaches to evaluating outcomes in the field and, more specifically, in education reform;

(ii) To review and report on trends in debates on access to higher education, both nationally and internationally; and

(iii) To review secondary data that may be relevant, such as labour market trends and macro-economic reforms.

The structure of the review took into account the main research questions:

(i) What is the relationship between policy implementation of the state in relation to the goal of access to higher education?

(ii) What is the role of the higher education institutions in the public sector in relation to the goal of access?

(iii) What is the relationship between events, policy choices and implementation in relation to the goal of widening access to higher education?

(iv) What are the other factors that have impacted on access to higher education?

(v) What are the criteria that could be used to evaluate the extent to which the goal of access has been achieved?

2.3. REFORM, ACCESS AND REDRESS

There is "critical consensus" in education policy analysis on SA in terms of the following themes, with minor variations (Jansen, 2001, 2002b; Badat, 2003; Fataar, 2003; Bunting, 2002; Cloete & Bunting, 2004; Cooper & Subotzsky, 2001; Kraak, 2004a). This is not a comprehensive list, but it does include some of the key policy analysts in the field of education in SA. The characteristics of this consensus may be described as follows:

(i) The policy reform process since 1994 has been symbolic and policy pathways have had minimal effect in terms of outcomes;

(ii) Fiscal restraint, in terms of the budget, is a sign that neo-liberal policies have triumphed;

(iii) Accountability requirements of the state have deprived institutions of autonomy;

(iv) Redress and equity have been compromised by other priorities; and

(v) Policies have not translated to active redistribution of resources to privilege addressing inequalities prioritised.

It could be argued that policy analysts maintain the position that equity and development cannot be pursued together, as one will reverse the effects of the other or they will cancel each other, thus creating an untenable situation of marginal progress. In order to understand whether equity and development are untenable as joint goals, an analysis would have to be undertaken of broader socio-economic reform initiatives and the performance of the country across other indicators like health and poverty amongst others. This level of analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

Access to higher education in SA has always been defined in terms of race, class and gender. A legacy of the apartheid policies is that historically higher education's elitism was constructed very deliberately and was embedded in a legislative framework that advocated specific forms of social exclusion. The new government of 1994 has had to contend with shedding exclusionary policies, structures, systems and institutional arrangements in order to redefine the landscape, vision and purpose of higher education. Central to the myriad goals that have to be prioritised in higher education is the widening of access to higher education.

This foregrounding has ensured that access is weighted evenly, along with equity and redress issues, as a major part of the transformative agenda in higher education. Singh (2001:67) pointed out that in the South African policy environment, social justice issues have to 'trump' other more ideologically countervailing factors. This assertion aptly locates the access issue firmly within the broader agenda of policy-making in post-apartheid SA. It also serves to locate access and equity, rights, redress, and redistributive policies that nuance the South African policy environment in comparison with other countries. It has been argued quite vociferously by some analysts that policy reform in SA has shifted radically from achievement of equity to a more instrumentalist view of higher education's contribution to the economy (Kraak, 1999).

Akoojee and McGrath (2005:11) pointed out that poverty in this country has 'pronounced spatial, racial and gender dimensions' that impact on progress in education. Thus, while the UK and Australia, for example, have also contended with widening access and the responsiveness of higher education to the economy, reform measures did not have to deal with deep structural shifts in the same way as SA had to (Bundy, 2004). Furthermore, there is agreement, despite quibbling over definitions of poverty, that between 45 and 55 percent of the population is poor and that a further 20 to 25 percent are in extreme poverty. This accounts for between 18 and 24 million people, with those in extreme poverty constituting between eight and ten million people (Bundy, 2004). New data suggests that 48 percent of the population were living below the poverty line in 2008 (NPC, 2013). These statistics (viewed against inflows into education and performance at tertiary level) are daunting enough as macro socio-economic problems that militate against policy triumphing in the field of education.

There is also implicit confirmation that higher education policies in SA, and the success or failure thereof, are entwined in primary and secondary performance, but also embedded in the wider social network of poverty. In demonstration of this, Akoojee and McGrath (2005) focused on the seven indicators for poverty and confirmed that the 'structural distortions of apartheid' are deep-seated and that there are no easy or short-term solutions. The seven indicators are:

'1. Inadequate access to physical assets;
2. Low productivity of the assets accessed;
3. Inadequate incomes due to unemployment or under-employment;

4. Inadequate social grants;
5. Under-developed human capabilities (deriving from education, skills and health care);
6. Exclusion from participation in decision-making; and
7. Weak economic participation' (Akoojee & McGrath, 2004:12).

Having stated the above, the question that begs a response is how one locates redress, access to higher education and policy reforms within these debates. A second question is linked to the view that higher education in SA is now open to the impact of changes that have assailed higher education globally since the 1980s (Bundy, 2006:9). The sense of 'paradise lost' after the initial enthusiasm over the NCHE report (1996) and the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) needs a heuristic lens to offer some explanations. In Chapter 3, policy developments are traced in the period between 1994 and 2011, with a view to evaluating the extent to which policies, implementation strategies and the responses of the sector impact on higher education in the manner envisaged. In other words, the key question is whether in line with the statement of goals by government and HEIs, access has been widened to include previously excluded groups.

It must be noted that one form of evaluation of outcomes of policies is measurement of performance of the sector. Subotzky (2003:360), similarly to Akoojee and McGrath (2005:14), used inflow diagrams to provide a perspective on enrolment and output in higher education linking this to participation rates. Figure 2.1 below is useful in that it connects the inflow into education with the labour market. Additional figures that could be added to the diagram are graduation statistics for higher education institutions, which would add an additional 100 000 plus to the labour market plus the currently unemployed. Figures that require additional research and which display worrying trends are: the 551 000 learners who disappear between Grades 1 and 11; poor matriculation performance; and graduate output. Despite the dated figures, the data is useful for understanding the extent of the problem, commencing with the initial stages of education through the different secondary and tertiary sectors and finally culminating in employability of graduates by race.

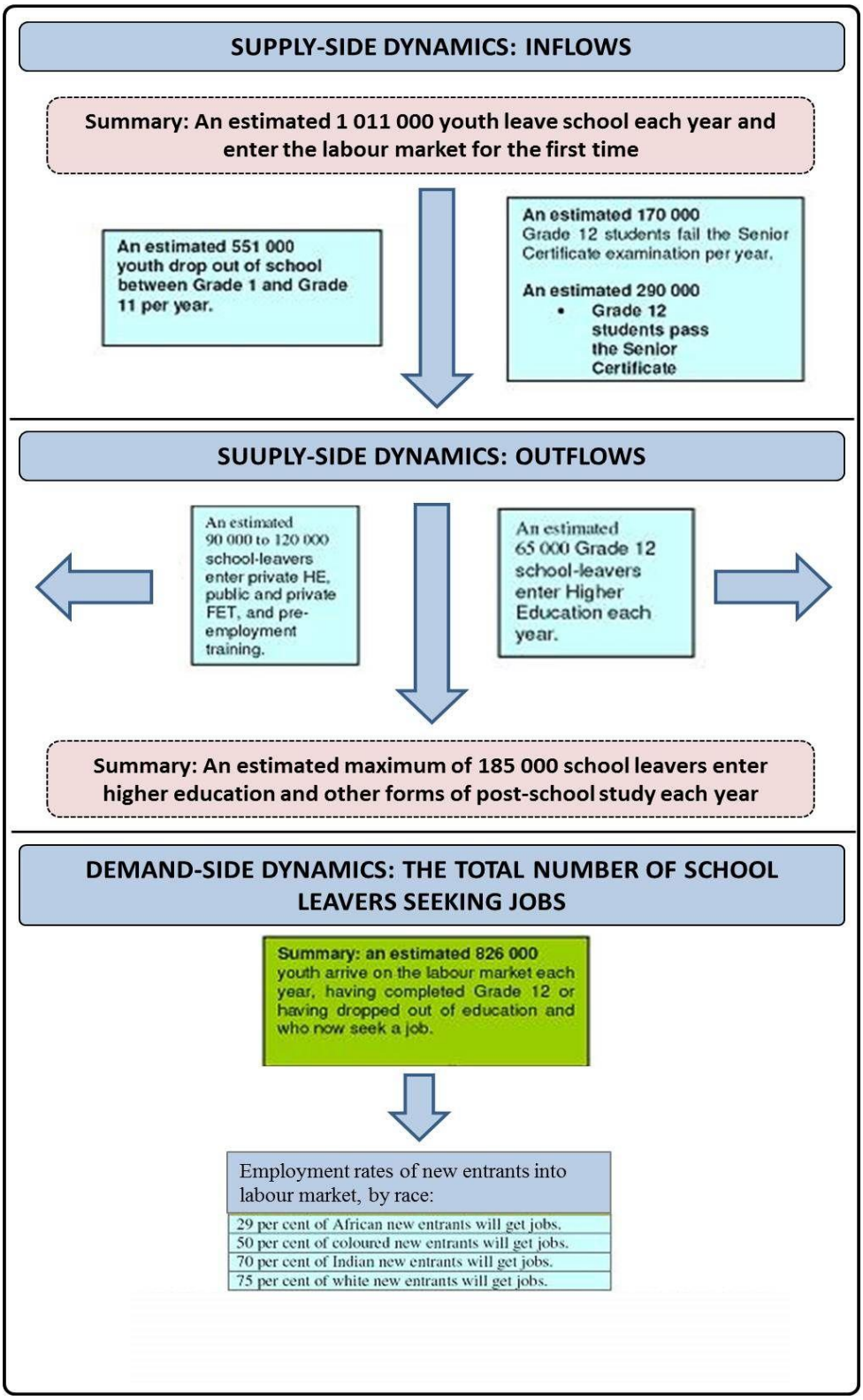


FIGURE 2.1: AVERAGE ANNUAL THROUGH-FLOW OF SCHOOL LEAVERS ENTERING THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET FOR THE FIRST TIME, 2000–2002

Source: Kraak, 2003.

It must be noted that the diagram above, though dated, reinforces the crisis faced, both in terms of access to higher education, as well as in terms of access to the labour market. It is

clear that racial disparities still exist and persist, both in relation to inflows into higher education, and outflows into the labour market.

An alternate way of looking at access is to analyse data from the National Senior Certificate results, as the outflow from the schooling system feeds both the higher education system and to a lesser extent, the FET colleges. This is discussed in further detail in Chapters 4 and 5. However, in terms of a narrow view of access that is purely in terms of numbers and not disaggregated by race or gender, Table 2.1 provides an interesting perspective on the actual percentage of students who register at higher education institutions as first-time entry students.

The range of between 20 percent in 2006 and 21 percent in 2012 does not signify substantial improvement. It could also be argued that this form of data requires disaggregation by subject if there is to be significant growth at universities in the SET fields. The growth of SET at higher education institutions has been firmly tied in to the economic development of the country. Further analysis of performance in Mathematics is undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5, confirming that the desired outcome of provision of access to SET is contingent on significant growth in participation in Physical Sciences and Mathematics at school level.

TABLE 2.1: ENROLMENT: ANNUAL OUTFLOW FROM BASIC EDUCATION (2006–2012)

Year	Total wrote Grade 12 (NSC)	TOTAL PASSED / ACHIEVED			TOTAL FAILED	Actual First Time Entry in following year: Year = (n+1)	Percentage to HEI[2]
		Total	With Endorsement[1]	Without Endorsement[1]			
						2006	
2005	508 181	347 184 (68.3%)	86 531 (17%)	260 653 (51.3%)	160 997 (31.7%)	Total = 140 012	
						Grade 12 = 70 292	20.30%
						2007	
2006	527 950	351 503 (66.6%)	85 830 (16.3%)	265 673 (50.3%)	176 447 (33.4%)	Total = 152 125	
						Grade = 70 694	20.10%
						2008	
2007	564 381	368 217 (65.2%)	85 454 (15.1%)	282 763 (50.1%)	196 164 (34.8%)	Total = 152 511	
						Grade 12 = 72 293	19.60%
			Admission to Bachelor degree studies[1]	Admission to Certificate & diploma studies[1]		2009	
2008	553 561	344 794 (62.2%)	106 047 (19.1%)	238 747 (43.0%)	199 817 (37.4%)	Total = 161 624	
						Grade 12 = 88 692	25.70%
						2010	
2009	552 073	334 718 (60.6%)	109 697 **(19.9%)**	225 021 **(40.8%)**	217 355 (39.4%)	Total = 168 408	
						Grade 12 = 72 903	21.78%
						2011	
2010	537 543	364 147 (67.8%)	126 371 (23.5%)	238 810 (44.4%)	173 396 (32.3%)	Total = 175 072	
						Grade 12 = 72 786	19.99%
						2012 – projected[3]	projected
2011	496 090	348 117 (70.2%)	**120 767 (24.3%)**	**227 350 (45.8%)**	147 973 (29.8%)	Total = 179 793	
						Grade 12 = 73 975	21.25%
						2013 – projected[4]	Projected
2012	511 152	377 829 (73.9%)	**136 047 (26.6%)**	**241 782 (47.3%)**	133 323 (28.1%)	Total = 183 893	
						Grade 12 = 80 289	21.25%

Source: DHET, 2013: Slide 9.

The school system is a feeder for higher education, as well for FET colleges. Shifts in numbers at the school level necessarily impact on enrolment planning at universities. Trends that can be identified in the table are as follows:

(i) The number of available spaces for first time entering students at universities between 2005 and 2012 increased by 40 381;

(ii) There was an increase between 2005 and 2012 in the number of students by 30 645 who academically qualify for entrance into universities or universities of technology;

(iii) The percentage of students who actually enter into higher education from the pool of National Senior Certificate (NSC) qualified students hovered between 20 and 21 percent;

(iv) Research discussed later in this thesis will signal that affordability could be an inhibiting factor of poverty levels, with the NSC candidate seeking work immediately after qualifying;

(v) The numbers of students qualifying requires disaggregation by subject choice in order to understand the fit with higher education entrance requirements;

(vi) The overall number of students writing Grade 12 did not show significant growth in the comparative years.

The spectre of a poor performing school sector will continue to plague and hinder growth and performance in higher education. The counter argument is that higher education still does not cater for the needs of all those qualifying and who have academic potential to enter higher education.

2.4. VOICES OF DISSENT

The body of analysis on SA higher education post-1994 can be summarised as being pessimistic, critical of government policies and deeply cynical of any new policy initiatives. This section focuses on some of the leading education policy analysts and attempts to ascertain and identify the key issues highlighted by them.

Muller's (2003) central contention is that: exogenous factors, like market forces and policy, are, firstly, not received at institutions uniformly; and secondly, that transformation within institutions is a long drawn out process. If change does happen in the signalled direction, it cannot be attributed to policy or the market. This focus on locating change within institutions and the recognition that institutional politics and policies take time to process and give effect to government policies, or that institutions may not always respond in the same way or at the same time, once again confounds rationalist policy models. Countries that pursue 'third-way' centre-left political policies that attempt to steer a path between rampant free market ideology and state collectivism, SA included, are thus likely to have higher education restructuring strategy statements that attempt to 'reflect both the "marketization" as well as the "equity"

strands of the "third way" political frameworks' (Naidoo, 2000:262; Muller, 2003:113). The result, as Muller concluded, is policies with disparate elements of marketisation and equity blended.

As Kerr (Gumport, 2000:184) asserted, 'the "confrontation" between the past and the future results in a tension that is so profound that the current era is "*the* greatest critical age" for higher education in industrialized nations'. This confrontation is characterised by a simultaneous call for protection and for redefinition, i.e.:

- On the one hand, there is a call to protect: How can higher education protect its legacy, including decades of public investment in an enterprise whose strengths must not be diluted or deteriorated for short-term market demands?
- On the other hand, there is a call to respond: How can higher education redefine itself to attend to the signals of those it is supposed to serve?'(Kerr quoted in Gumport, 2000:88). It is this tension that could be termed intractable.

Bundy (2006) contended that massification, marketisation and managerialism contribute to the state of higher education internationally and have surfaced in SA. Combined with the state's neo-liberal stance, the policies and reform project, as stipulated in the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) and the NPHE (DoE, 2001), would be unachievable. As useful as Bundy's analysis is, there are no indications regarding the dilemma and whether or not South African policy development will be subject to 'the globalised tendencies of the post-industrial world' (Bundy, 2006:20). Lange (2006) argued quite eruditely that the relationship between institutions, states and society in relation to capital, class and social structures needs detailed analysis taking into account local conditions. Bundy's swipe at 'performativity' and 'accountability' mechanisms as being equated with new managerialism is not supported with a coherent response as to how the state evaluates and assesses the performance of institutions without accountability mechanisms in place. This debate on the state being painted as the 'auditor' and institutions as the 'audited' creates the impression that any attempt to evaluate will be perceived and reported as managerialism. Lange's contention is that quantitative indicators should be measured with a critical eye and that the immeasurable should be researched (Lange, 2006:51).

Both the NCHE (DoE, 1996) and the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) signal the importance of establishing the CHE and its critical function of monitoring and evaluation, amongst other

functions. In terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, as amended, Chapter 2, Section 5(d), the CHE is responsible for monitoring and evaluation, especially of progress towards achievement of policy goals and objectives, including any developments that impact in higher education. To this extent, the CHE has been publishing reviews of the performance of the higher education sector, focusing on a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the goals set out in the NPHE (DoE, 2001). Thus, for example, the CHE Monitor which focused on the development of an evaluative framework for the monitoring of SA higher education, raised succinctly the rise of the evaluative state and the critical relationships between and amongst evaluation, monitoring and accountability (Higher Education Monitor, 2004).

In the SA context, the envisaged accountability is ultimately to the DHET, with dual responsibility for monitoring and evaluation split between the CHE and DHET. It is not entirely clear from pronouncements from the DHET that the relationship, as stated in the Higher Education Act, has actually worked properly and whether or not the range of evaluations undertaken by the CHE are seriously considered by the DHET.

In addition, in keeping with international trends, monitoring and evaluation functions were located in an arm's length body to ensure that sufficient critical distance is maintained. Each publication released by the CHE since its establishment has identified barriers that stand in the way of achievement of the key goals, especially in relation to access and equity. The research undertaken provides useful consolidated datasets on higher education statistics, analysis of trends and policy developments. There has been no visible or tangible impact in the form of policy reforms that are attributable, barring in the field of quality assurance. The key limitation of the work undertaken by the CHE is that while it provides academically sound analysis, it fails to provide any guidance on action that could be taken to accelerate progress on any of the goals and, more specifically, in relation to the goal of access.

Neave (1998:10-12) is by no means the first theorist to have written about the rise of the evaluative state. However, in relation to higher education he speaks of the evaluative state which is accompanied by 'two major shifts in the timing, purpose and location of evaluation in the process not only of policy-making but also policy adhesion' and the second being 'a posteriori evaluation' which seeks to evaluate how far goals have been met (Neave, 1998:10-12). The argument made is that this form of evaluation is a mechanism used by governments to steer higher education and align it closely to national priorities. In these instances, it can be

assumed that Neave's (1998) references include Research Assessment Exercises conducted in the UK or the sudden mushrooming of quality assurance agencies in the period after the 1990s. In the South African context, there is the articulation of goals that emanate from the NCHE (DoE, 1996), which are further elaborated in the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) and the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, and refined in the NPHE (DoE, 2001) and then in the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012). Evaluation of these goals has to take into account whether or not the implementation envisaged and the necessary machinery activated will ensure that the transformation agenda is achieved. The goals and the systems, policies and procedures put in place in this period will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

An interesting development in the discussion on the evaluative state is the creation in 2009 of the Ministry for Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency. The purpose of this Ministry is to monitor the performance of government in relation to priorities that include the setting of targets for each Minister and by implication the line government department and partner organisations. In the case of Higher Education and Training, the setting of targets divorced from any reality on the ground has been widely criticised by universities. Stumpf (2010:17) argues that, 'departmental plans suffered from a lack of inter-departmental co-ordination and each demanded a different and often immediate set of responses from higher education institutions', pointing to a lack of 'joined up'[14] policy.

Many analysts have referred to the period post-1994 as 'symbolic policy-making' (CHE, 2004b:230), with doomsday heretics speaking of sound and fury and no substance. If this should be true, then the enterprise of widening participation would be severely under threat. In fact, a recent publication (Cloete, 2009) highlighted the 'ticking bomb' of youth between the ages of 18-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET) and puts this figure conservatively at 2,8 million. This surfaces the question of what progress has been made to avert a crisis of this nature. The slow growth trajectory in the higher education sector is problematic, especially as it has been primed as being the sector with the most potential to impact on the transformation of South African society and the economy. If policy is deemed to have been mere symbolism, then the intended outcomes in relation to access would be difficult to achieve.

[14] 'Joining up' is essentially an argument about the necessity for educational reforms to interlock with macro-economic, industrial and labour market reforms, so that their combined impact has a better chance of meeting the new conditions for global competitiveness (Kraak, 2006:6).

Jansen (2001) argued that policy-making, in the realm of education, evinces a preoccupation with 'symbolic policymaking', with the state dealing with political issues in the public realm. This view renders the state and its officials as creators of symbols, who have no regard for the implementation process or how it would impact on the goals of the country, especially with regard to access. Granted that implementation has not been a strong feature of the democratic state, Jansen offered no explanation of why symbols are selected, what they signify, and whether or not this phase is a conscious subversion of the implementation processes. This position avoids focusing on the complexities of the initial transitional phase, adopting the position that by engaging in symbolic policy-making, attention is diverted from actual implementation. Jansen used selective events to support this position and it could be argued that policy-making in the period appeared to be symbolic without substance. However, the proposition put forward by other analysts is perhaps a better reflection of the state of policy-making, noting upfront the challenges, choices and trade-offs that would have to be made.

The SA literature that was surveyed provides a critique of education policy reform, with some referring to the new accountability speak in government regulatory frameworks as representing a significant shift from the early 1990s discourse that spoke of redress and inclusivity as the main goals (Kraak & Young, 2001). Central to the contemporary education policy analysis available, is the theme of abandonment of broad transformation agendas to a new realism that is encountered in the period 2000–2005 (Jansen, 2001; Bundy, 2006). An important aspect of this research was an evaluation of whether the state has reneged in terms of the goal of access or whether the state has developed policies that will inexorably lead the sector towards fulfilment of the goal. This evaluation notes that there are other variables and contextual constraints that could detract from achievement of the goals. This research attempted to deduce if other extraneous factors have played a role and more importantly if the policy instruments are appropriate to the objectives. In evaluating the extent to which the sector has moved substantially towards attainment of the goal, the focus was also on the role of implementing agencies, which include the state and other government agencies responsible for or linked to higher education and higher education institutions. A major challenge was to identify those features of access such as fees, etc. and then to argue here whether or not access in this regard has been achieved.

Morrow made a compelling argument drawing on the work of Harold Wolpe and others, that the liberation was understood widely to mean the 'elimination of inequality' (Morrow,

1997:17). The movement was thus centred on the single principle of equality, which Morrow referred to as a 'simplifying manoeuvre'. He expanded on this further by suggesting that in the quest for equality, the need for economic development was under-played, because it was expedient to do so. Morrow furthermore drew on Wolpe's assertion that equality and development had to be pursued simultaneously and that it was not possible to sequence them. According to Morrow (1993), a simplifying manoeuvre is not tenable if it is reduced to mere distribution of resources. He quoted Wolpe as saying:

> *'... human resource development, even where this entails the privileging of a certain layer of the educational and occupational structure, cannot be neglected because both in the short term and in the long run, economic development constitutes a necessary, if not a sufficient condition for the possible enhancement of the conditions of the people'* (Wolpe quoted in Morrow, 1993:26).

Wolpe's assertion confirms that equality and development have to be pursued together, but that the reality is that certain trade-offs would have to be made. This is a realistic view and despite the rhetoric found in policy documents, the pressure on the government purse and other pursuits for higher education institutions to remain globally competitive, have led to trade-offs being made. An example from the higher education system could be the promise of redress funding. The White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) stated:

> *The principle of equity requires fair opportunities both to enter higher education institutions and to succeed in them. Applying the principle of equity implies, on the one hand, a critical identification of existing inequalities, which are the product of policies, structures and practices based on racial, gender, disability and other forms of discrimination or disadvantage, and on the other, a programme of transformation with a view to redress. Such transformation involves not only abolishing all existing forms of unjust differentiation, but also measures of empowerment, including financial support to bring about equal opportunity for individuals and institutions (1.18)).*

Despite a few interventions and some adjustments made to the higher education funding formula (Ministry of Education, 2003) to factor in historic disadvantage[15], no redress funding surfaced, with some analysts referring to the 'shift in discourse from what was desirable in terms of history to what was feasible in terms of function and funding' (Barnes, 2006:222).

[15] Funds were allocated to institutions based on the proportion of African and Coloured students. Funds to address disparities at former Black institutions were provided on an ad hoc basis when requested.

Le Roux and Breier (2012:4) argued that the funding formula should have been used more effectively to steer the system. They identified a failure of government as the slow improvement in primary and secondary education, as well as the 'inability to extend numerical and epistemological access to tertiary education' (Le Roux & Breier, 2012:23). This view supports the notion that resourcing of education has to take into account all segments of the system.

An important aspect of this thesis is to narrate the development of policy, especially since 1994. This is undertaken in Chapter 3, which demonstrates the policy choices made, especially in light of the debate on equality and development. Like other countries, SA has experienced enormous structural shifts, the intention being to level the playing field and force a new dimension of differentiation onto the higher education system. This form of differentiation, unlike the apartheid period, is unrelated to race. In the restructuring that took place, the issue of redress funding for HDIs was avoided. The focus instead moved to a new landscape, with the discourse shifting from redress to other buzz words, such as 'transformation' or 'differentiation', which had no financial incentive attached. Increased pressure on widening access has remained central to government policy, but at the same time there has been a reduction in the number of institutions, types of institutions, locations and sites of learning.

The restructuring has raised several questions and provoked debate on access and differentiation in relation to the new institutional identities. There has been some discussion on the post-school system and the new Green Paper (DHET, 2012) argues for the first time since 1994, for the need to ratchet up numbers in the vocational education sector and limit growth in higher education. The role of private providers has not been explored in sufficient detail and, unlike in Brazil and Malaysia, they have significantly not been considered as serious partners in increasing participation rates[16]. The discourse, from as early as the 1990s, has focused on the role of higher education in developing the economy and building the human resources of the country. This role is foregrounded in the Green Paper (DHET, 2012) and at the same time focuses on the need for a pursuit of social inclusion and equality, both of access and of success. Thus, critics like Jansen (2001) and Cloete (2012) have identified four key areas that can be identified in policy-making:

[16] According to 2011 data from the DHET, there are approximately 93 000 students enrolled at private higher education institutions (DHET, 2013).

1. The drive to achieve the entire suite of objectives and goals with limited capacity and fiscal constraints;
2. The impact of macro-economic conditions on government's ability to spend and on individual achievement based on graduate employment;
3. Imported policy ideas with insufficient contextualisation;
4. Excessive policy production with unreasonable demands placed on institutions.

Sehoole (2005), through a series of interviews, reconstructed events in the initial phases of democratic reform, concluding that the complexity of the early phase, with close partnerships between the state and stakeholders, difficulties in state formation and governance, and the translation of party policies into government policies, may have bedevilled the reform process as envisaged. It was a period of turbulence characterised by ensuring that business continued as usual, yet the desire to transform rapidly had to be fulfilled. Interviews revealed that newly appointed government officials had to contend with resistance from the old guard, inexperience in terms of policy development, implementation, as well as operating within the fiscal framework of the Ministry of Finance. Policy options at the level of the state required calibration and adjustment to the requirements of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Strategy[17] (Department of Finance, 1996). Sehoole contended that the period in which experience in policy-making was gained coincided with the realism enforced by the directives of GEAR. Although the expectations of stakeholders were dashed due to a lack of movement on the redress and transformation issues, it is argued that the difficulties of the period should not be under-estimated.

It could be argued that the analysis of higher education policy in relation to widening of access has largely confined itself to a partisan critique, without taking into account the socio-political context of government reform between the periods 1994–2005. Badat (2003:1) cautioned that the analysis of higher education policy has to take into account the context of the new democratic dispensation and the 'paradoxes, ambiguities, contradictions, possibilities and constraints' that are thus inevitable. The case for locating higher education policy-making and implementation is delineated by Badat (2003:18-20) into three critical periods, which are summarised below:

[17] GEAR was the macro-economic policy of the SA state that was aimed at addressing economic development, redistribution of income and opportunities for the poor.

TABLE 2.2: SUMMARY OF POLICY PERIODS

Period	Key Features
1990–1994	Symbolic policy-making; agreement on values, goals and principles.
1995–1998	Formalisation of a legislative and policy framework; establishing appropriate governance structures for higher education.
1999–present	Accelerated policy-making of a 'distributive, redistributive and material' nature.

Source: Adapted from Badat, 2003.

Table 2.2 provides a snapshot of the different periods in higher education policy, categorised by some policy analysts as a heuristic tool to describe and explain the different stages in policy-making. It can be argued that in hindsight, following the massive restructuring of higher education in 2005, the critical periods of policy-making in higher education can be reordered to reflect the dynamics of new policies introduced, as well as delays or vacuums in critical policy areas. A different perspective, though one not dissimilar, was offered by Kraak (2004b:86-87) who argued for a different categorisation of the period into 'five identifiable, but overlapping, phases':

(i) The pre-taking of power phase: 1989–1994
(ii) The legislative era: 1994–1997
(iii) The policy implementation phase: 1997–1998
(iv) A vacillating state, the era of doubt and retraction: 1999–2000
(v) The National Plan: 2001.

The usage by various policy analysts of categories and phases to describe and interpret policy-making since 1994 is useful in so far as it sketches the historical progression in terms of different stages (Kraak, 2004b; Jansen, 2002b; Badat, 2003). However, there are different ways of defining these stages if one subscribes to the view that policy-making lends itself to an ordering of events and is neat and linear. The argument made in this thesis is that the linear approach is limiting, in that it presumes that the different stages can be circumscribed and separated. This kind of analysis is useful, though limited, as it does not distinguish sufficiently between different policies at different stages. Thus, some of the conclusions drawn on the nature of the policy-making process are not sufficiently bolstered by recognition of multitudinal policy developments or the impact of exogenous factors on policy-making. The stage analysis provides a structure that could be viewed as useful, in that it orders

experience and allows for argumentation of views of policy-making to be framed in a particular manner.

Thus, Cooper and Subotzky (2001:2) asserted that the period from 2000 onwards signalled the death of 'symbolic policymaking' and a move to what can be termed 'substantive procedural and material policy approaches, incorporating concrete action, implementation procedures, and resource allocation mechanisms'. Jansen (2002a:51) argued that, 'the flurry of policy was replaced by a flurry of implementation talk'. The central debate raised by Jansen was whether or not the reality of limited resources would be able to deliver on 'symbolic policy-making'. Moja and Hayward (2005:33) similarly argued that policy-makers focused initially on aspects of the system that were racially offensive and could be fixed quickly. They pointed out that access was seen as an achievable goal that policy reform could ameliorate.

There is acceptance that political symbolism can have a measurable impact, although it may not be able to deliver on all intentions and may locate power in the state, rather than with stakeholders. It will be argued that delineating policy-making in stages enables the kinds of arguments posed to raise new and fresh questions. However, a caution must be raised that the role of the state and power are not new debates in higher education in SA. Both featured in the apartheid period, creating unwieldy governance structures, skewed financing and limited access to education.

The 'steering' role of the state and its agencies[18] is present in the early post-apartheid policy discussion documents (NCHE, 1996). The term 'steering' is often conflated with governance and management of institutions. Policy documents like the White Paper and the NPHE assert that higher education is a public good and that, in line with public interest, government resourcing will be made available to institutions. In this vein, government sets broad policy goals and is required to ensure that resourcing is adequate and congruent with achievement of the goals. As public institutions, the institutions are expected to deliver on these goals. However, amendments to the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (which accorded the Minister of Education powers to establish, close or merge institutions, determine funding allocations to institutions, declare the seat of an institution and in some instances be advised of loans or overdrafts of institutions) were met with rumblings that this expansionary role was tantamount to interference. The concept of steering in higher education was clearly flagged in

[18] Statutory bodies like the Council on Higher Education and SAQA.

early policy documents (DoE, 1997; DoE, 2001), with funding, quality and planning being identified as the three steering mechanisms.

In terms of government's role of actively steering the higher education sector, it is salient to refer to Osborne and Gaebler (1992), who stated, "after all, those who steer the boat have far more power over its direction than those who row it" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992:32). This assertion broadly refers to the concept of steering by governments and is not specific to the South African context. Part of the New Public Management and the infusion into the discourse of a strong focus on delivery and accountability, was the need for government to clearly delineate goals and objectives and work with partners in the system to achieve delivery.

2.5. INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

Trends in South African policy-making and critique mirror the debates taking place in higher education internationally. The main debates revolve around accountability, redefining the role of universities, performance management of institutions, and efficiency and effective measures. International debates on having to contend with massification of traditionally elitist higher education systems with diminishing funds enable South African institutions to compare experiences with the international policy environment. Alternative views were presented by Bundy (2006) who places the SA policy development processes and implementation within the context of world trends in higher education. The UK had also launched into a shift from an elitist higher education system to mass higher education with limited and progressively reducing resources. The same patterns can be traced in Europe, Japan and America. He stated:

> *Universities across the world have had to do more with less; their internal functions have been subjected to efficiency gains while their relations with the state have been recast in terms of greater accountability and performance audits* (Bundy, 2006:4).

Bundy (2006) moved into a critique of the policies, arguing that there is what he terms a 'convergence' in the issues that frame higher education and these are not confined to the South African experience. International developments in higher education can be related to the South African context, as the era of symbolism in policy-making in education was replaced by 'economic rationalist discourse' (Fataar, 2003:37). This view links international

policy debate to the issue of access, where grappling with more students with fewer resources is determined by what critics term, 'economic rationalism'. Once again policy analysts use stage analysis to critique implementation of policy. Though it is a truism that economic rationalism is implicit in policy-making in SA, the position adopted by analysts is that such rationality necessarily abandons or sacrifices policy goals. As the focus of this research was on access, which has been central to all major policy initiatives, analysis in this thesis that refers to abandonment of policy goals by implication infers the non-attainment of these goals or the redefining of the goals.

As Bundy (2006) pointed out, the debates prevalent in SA are not unique, as they pertain to higher education internationally as well. Implicit in the literature surveyed are several tensions that, in some cases, demonstrate a belief that having accountability mechanisms signals a shift in the original agenda. Likewise, in relation to widening of access as a goal, the following tensions are implicit in the literature based on the reading undertaken during research for this thesis:

(i) Reduction in fiscal allocation to higher education is not viewed as an efficiency and effectiveness measure, but rather as a lack of commitment to transformation of the state.

(ii) The restructuring of higher education in terms of the landscape has detracted from the transformation agenda by reducing the number of institutions, as well as leaving untouched former historically advantaged institutions.

(iii) Creation of new types of institutions, such as the comprehensive universities and universities of technology and the retention of traditional universities.

(iv) Policy instruments that marginally address equity issues and stress performance, without taking into account the historical context and institutional challenges faced by different universities.

(v) Funding mechanisms and formulae that reward institutions for graduate output, research output and student enrolment plans that curb enrolment.

(vi) Perceived increase in state intervention that is viewed as a threat to institutional autonomy and academic freedom.

These are just some of the tensions that emerge from the literature. Needless to say there are others that will be factored in during the course of this thesis. Some of the above tensions are not peculiar to SA and are evident in reform measures undertaken in the UK and Australia.

Brazil for example, has moved on expansion, not by building on the public sector, but through arrangements between government and the private higher education institutions. McCowan (2004:3), in a review of the expansion in Brazil, suggested that despite the rapid expansion, the poor have remained socially excluded from both the public free higher education system, as well as from the private higher education system with its high fees. This suggests that the expansion has not addressed equity issues such as financial affordability, geographical access and other socio-cultural factors. The 'pillar of higher education policy in Brazil has been the expansion of the private sector' (McCowan, 2004:8), through tax incentives. This has resulted in inequitable expansion, as the cost of programmes offered by private institutions has curbed participation by lower income groups. *Programa Universidade para Todos* (University For All Programme), or *Prouni* was initiated in 2004 by the Lula government to encourage private universities to allocate unfilled places at no charge in return for tax incentives. In addition, Brazil introduced a quota system to address the problem of disparate opportunities for marginalised communities. Even though the policy has been widely critiqued, it has been accepted that any other strategy would have delayed the required outcomes (McCowan, 2004). McCowan (2004) argued that despite the success of the Brazilian model, there has to be more investment in the public sector.

The Chinese higher education system grew from two million in 1997 to 7,3 million by 2006, with the gross enrolment ratio increasing from seven to 22 percent (Li, Whalley, Zhang, & Zhao, 2008:2). This was achieved by rapid changes in public funding shifting from a model supported by three different levels of authorities to a co-funding model supported by tuition fees. This shift in funding saw resources allocated to universities in key cities funded by the central government and others by local government. This shift brought about some measure of social exclusion, as rural universities were not appropriately funded. In addition, the expansion strategy saw the establishment of campuses in different locations. The Chinese plan included private institutions, the introduction of short programmes and a system of differentiation. It is argued that the restructuring resulted in differential exclusion for the youth, as access to the job market depended largely on the university one had attended (Li, *et al*., 2008).

Having briefly discussed reforms in Brazil and China, the SA reform measures when subjected to detailed policy analysis have revealed ambiguity, ambivalence, inaction and compromises, as well as firmness, clear agenda setting and goal driven processes. The

vacillation between the two extremes is evident and poses challenges to those on the ground to interpret and enact in a highly subjective way. Levin (2001:8) argued that reform, by its very nature, is political and that 'one finds a high level of ambiguity and contingency in every aspect of the political process.' It is important to recognise that these contrary features are not unique to this country, but are characteristics of policy-making processes elsewhere as well.

2.6. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It was expected that the research questions posed may in turn generate further questions, thus 'establishing a dialogue between current questions and possible (provisional) answers' (Barzelay, Gaetani, Cortazar-Velarde, & Cejudo, 2001:27). The nature of the theoretical framework adopted has in turn forced the thesis to continue this dialogue through discussion of the discourses that have shaped policy-making and the accompanying contextual forces that shape and mould implementation.

The focus on performance and accountability in the last decade has shifted the discourse from 'trust' to 'contractual requirements'. One view that provides an explanation for this shift draws on Durkheim's theory on differing forms of social solidarities (Harley & Parker, 2006:3).

> *In this theory, the key driving force of forms of social solidarity is the division of labour. In societies with undifferentiated forms of labour, there is a 'sameness' in individuals. This 'sameness' is indeed our binding force. We share a common faith, and authority has a positional legitimacy simply by virtue of its being an authority. This Durkheim called "mechanical solidarity" because it is an unreflexive, unquestioning form of solidarity. As forms of labour become increasingly differentiated and specialised, so do differences amongst individuals become more pronounced. Solidarity, now more obviously precarious, comes about as individuals recognise their differences – and their occupational interdependence. 'Organic solidarity' draws on ties of co-operation as reciprocal relationships create a morality of co-operation. Such morality is insufficiently powerful to keep society from falling apart, however. To sustain solidarity, contract has to replace covenant. The contract is juridical expression of co-operation. When 'mechanical' faith and trust disappear, our interdependence is sustained by law, and by transparent forms of regulation.*

This analysis is germane to the research, in that it points to the changes affecting higher education, both at the level of the state and at the level of the institutions that make up the sector. The so-called 'assertive' role of the state is evident, in that it demands that institutions account in relation to governance, financial management, production of graduates and research, as well as responsiveness of higher education to societal needs. It is argued that the state's demand for accountability is imperative in relation to an important goal such as access, as it involves shifting of value systems within institutions from the pre-democratic period. Accountability, it could be argued, is the only mechanism that the state has to evaluate the extent to which goals are translated, interpreted and implemented at the institutional level.

2.7. A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

In attempting to develop a conceptual framework for analysis of policy reform in the education sector, the work of Ball (1990, 1991, 1994) and Bowe, *et al*. (1992) was adopted for purposes of this research. It enabled an analysis of policy that takes into account the politics that shape reform, the role of agenda setters and critically, the role of the implementing agencies.

Policy, as Ball (1993) pointed out, is difficult to define, and the ambiguity that could accompany analysis and evaluation could be compounded if it is not explicit. An important aspect of the research was to view policy as being both 'text and discourse' (Ball, 1993:11). Thus, policy is 'both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted, as well as what is intended' (Ball, 1993:10). The policy cycle approach is valuable, in that it views the nature of policy as a process and not as an end product. Interpretation of policy is open to all and it could be seen as a contested terrain, thus nullifying the predictability of policy outcomes. The approach was further developed to include the impact of policies on inequalities, social exclusion and how strategies could be developed to address problems of inequality. Critics of Ball argued that he had fallen into a Foucaultian trap and under-estimated the power of the state or the central role of the state in policy-making (Vidovich, 2001).

Ball (2001:210) referred to a kind of 'policy technology' that has permeated education:

> *A technology, a culture and a mode of regulation, or even a system of terror in Lyotard's words, that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change. The performances – of individual subjects or organizations – serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of*

> *'quality' or 'moments' of promotion or inspection. They stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organization within a field of judgement.*

In developing an evaluative framework, the tension between performativity and accountability was explored. According to Lyotard (1979:46), performativity is the best possible 'input-output equation'. In undertaking for the purposes of this research, a textual analysis of the discourse of government documents, reporting systems and agencies indicate that there is a strong leaning towards new public management. In setting out the South African context, within which access is raised as beneficial and is viewed as a public good, the tension between evaluating outputs and outcomes versus evaluating the purpose of higher education manifests itself. In developing an evaluative framework, the research was mindful of the tension between the calibrated efficiency output of institutions and the consequences in the form of rewards/punitive measures of some of the policy instruments. Thus, the question of power of the state and accountability regimes needed to be balanced against the goal of access to higher education being laudable, but the performativity measures detract from achievement. Central to this was an exploration of whether or not there are other policy options that could have been exercised that would serve the same purpose.

The research approach adopted concurs with the theoretical position that seeks to align more closely, the 'generation' of policy and 'implementation' of policy (Bowe, *et al*., 1992:7). The approach to the research used a tripartite frame that views education policy as having three phases:

(i) Influence (generating policy);
(ii) Text production (policy statements); and
(iii) Practice (implementation) (Bowe, *et al*., 1992).

The above phases provided a framework within which the research could accomplish the following:

(i) Establish the influences that initiated the development of policies in relation to access;

(ii) Enable the research to focus on the narrative and discourse of policy documents to understand the intent of the policies;

(iii) Evaluate if the implementation phase is aligned to both the influences and rationale for the policies and the actual policy statements;

(iv) Assess the extent to which the intent in policy narratives is translated into implementation; and

(v) Evaluate the extent to which the state policies and implementation strategies trigger responsiveness in higher education institutions.

The framework provided a basis for exploring the different stages of policy-making while recognising that there may be deviation at any of the three stages from the overall goals and purposes. As Ball (1993:126) stated:

> *Most policies are ramshackle, compromise, hit and miss affairs that are reworked, tinkered with, nuanced and inflected through a complex process of influence, text production and ultimately, re-creation in contexts of practice*.

Bowe, *et al*. (1992:22) added:

> *Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers; they come from histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently, as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests, which make up the arena, differ. The simple point is that policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Part of their texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood; responses may be frivolous, etc.*

The value of using Ball's (1993) framework in evaluating policy is that the state is not perceived as the sole architect of policy development and implementation. Ball's framework is useful in that it makes provision for policy analysis to take into account both the role of the state and what they refer to as 'the context of practice' (Ball, 1993:22). This enables one to see the policy-making process as dynamic, with the role of the state defined, as well as the role of institutions that implement or receive policies for implementation. As much as Ball's (1993) framework has come in for some criticism by those who advocate a more central and powerful role for the state, it lends itself to analysis of policy-making process particularly in a democratic and developing country where the processes of consultation, stakeholder input and institutional autonomy are still valued and respected (Hatcher & Troyna, 1994). It will be

demonstrated in this thesis that, despite state driven policies and regulation, the university sector still has latitude in terms of interpretation and implementation.

2.8. POWER, THE STATE AND INSTITUTIONS

As Peters (2004:57) pointed out, Foucault has provided us with a way of interrogating the relationship between 'the researcher as author and text: between doing research and reporting on it'. In analysing policy-making processes and implementation, the series of interactions between actors and structures must be drawn in and linked to Giddens' (1984) concept of 'transformation points', or Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth'. Transformation points refer to the 'routinized intersections of practices' and 'the modes in which institutionalized practices connect social with system integration' (Giddens, 1984:xxxi). The relevance of this concept is related to external triggers that foster change. External triggers could be policy entrepreneurs[19] or crises prompted by varying factors.

In keeping with this theoretical stance, the work of Foucault (1988) is invoked in this thesis, especially in relation to discussions on power and the state. For Foucault, the notion of power is that it is dispersed and is based on networks of relationships and is found then in discourse. This is akin to Ball's notion that the state is not the main and absolute player in developing policy – it is part of the context within which policy is made, enacted and interpreted. Thus, power relationships between the state and other players may not be equal, but are not viewed as top-down enforcement. There is thus an acknowledgement that power and knowledge are linked and that 'regimes of truth' refers to the institutional infrastructure for the production and dissemination of truth claims. Foucault's notion of 'regimes of truth' enables an analysis that echoes and resonates with Ball's notions of the state and the central role of 'policy as context'.

Bowe, *et al.* (1992:13) stressed that 'texts have clear relationships with the particular contexts in which they are used'. This formulation argues from a position that decreases the gap between policy generation and formulation to sites of implementation. This elevates the role of context in giving effect to policy. The view that there is a clear relationship is somewhat ambiguous, in that it diminishes the role of other variables that distinguish one institution from another. Policies are targeted at institutions that are located in particular contexts, with

[19] Defined by Kingdon as 'advocates who are willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position in return for anticipated future gain in the form of material or purposive or solitary benefits (1984:179).

different resource capacities, prey to different market forces, have different management and governance configurations. The list provided is not exhaustive, but it does serve to emphasise the different contexts within which texts are used. Thus, the level of interpretation and level of implementation could vary. Bowe, *et al.* (1992) recognised the importance of context and cited Codd (1988) as pointing out, quite rightly, that making meaning out of policy does not end with the legislative moment. This allows space for varying levels of policy adoption or absorption at different institutions, which will inevitably impact on the extent to which goals are realised. Collectively, the uneven implementation of policies or misinterpretation of policies will have consequences on goal attainment. In addition, there are other state agencies that play important contributing roles that may or may not act in concert with other policies. The action or inaction of various state departments and agencies could inadvertently impact on policy outcomes. Given the vastness of the scale of reform not only in the education sector, policies are at different stages of implementation or dominating higher education debates by their absence, confirming that a linear and sequential view of policy processes is clearly inadequate as an analytical tool.

The dilemma is that neither policies nor implementation can be delinked from the socio-economic-political environment. The focus of this research has been largely confined to understanding access in policy initiatives that have emanated from the government departments responsible for higher education. Where required, recognition is accorded to other policies or initiatives that have high/medium/low impact on the goal in varying degrees. Admittedly, these may be experienced differently at each higher education institution. However, the thesis only discusses extraneous policy influences if the impact is discernible in the higher education sector.

This research study attempted to draw on the analytical potential of integrating the work of Ball and Foucault with policy evaluation of social exclusion, inclusion and access to higher education in post-apartheid SA. The position that is advocated here is that given the crisis in SA in terms of exclusion of groupings from higher education, policy-makers and the state initiated a process of mobilising policy-making to counter exclusion. Other forces in society and the historical context have also shaped the translation of the policy goal of widening access in practice, as well as the interpretation of policies at institutional level. Thus, the field of analysis broadens to encompass an arena that focuses on actors, the context and the policies.

2.9. CONCLUSION

Exclusion as a concept focuses on the breakdown of the compact between the individual and society. This chapter has focused on utilising Sen's concept of 'social exclusion'. The dual concepts of active and passive exclusion are pertinent to an analysis of education policy in South Africa and the relational issues in deprivation. Sen enables a focus on the legislative and regulatory regime that inhibited access to education for specific races and the consequences of the active exclusionary practices on poverty and participation levels in the economy. In the course of this research, it will be demonstrated that post 1994 passive exclusion continues to dominate the higher education sector especially in the discussion on the success of graduates. It will also be demonstrated that other factors contribute to passive exclusion, like non-receptive labour markets ready to absorb 'black' graduates, an inequitable schooling system that does not produce students with the requisite skills to enter higher education, affordability of higher education, and the context of socio-economic environments.

It will be argued that discussion on access to higher education is complex and cannot be resolved by mere removal of barriers to exclusion. For example, insufficient resourcing of the higher education sector is arguably one of the reasons for student tuition fee hikes that pose a new barrier to higher education. In the same vein, the lack of sufficient mathematics and science teachers restricts the teaching of these subjects in schools which are rural or servicing poor communities. This in turn has the consequence of impacting on which candidates successfully access higher education.

Policy reform in South Africa, using Ball's (1990, 1994) framework of understanding policy development and the impact on implementation will focus on how policy meanings are mediated at the level of the university and the sector.

The mode of research was to initiate and follow 'trails', as dictated by the literature review. The debate, both locally and internationally, in relation to access, clusters around what is referred to as the 'new managerialism' pervading higher education and the capacity of higher education institutions to absorb higher numbers of students in the face of reduced funding from the state. The South African literature focuses sharply on the transformation agenda set out since 1994 and the extent to which global trends in higher education impact on the sector. It has been a central part of this research to assess if, as has been suggested by some analysts

(Bundy, 2006), the transformation agenda has been abandoned in favour of a new realism post-2000. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Analysis of earlier policy documents may not support this argument. Analysts argue that abandonment of the transformation agenda is linked to the introduction of accountability and performance measures. This in turn is linked to the introduction of managerialism in higher education. It is argued in this thesis that the introduction of accountability measures in SA higher education is linked rather to the shift from an elitist higher education system to mass higher education, which includes new entrants who were previously excluded in terms of race, class and gender. Accountability measures are linked to ensuring that the new objectives and goals are implemented and measurable. Chapters 4 and 5 will explore performance indicators in higher education spanning the 1994–2010 period. The purpose is to link policy reform with performance of the higher education sector. In tracing the historical performance of institutions, and thus the sector as a whole, due regard is given to extraneous influences that have had an impact.

CHAPTER 3

TRACING POLICY: A JOURNEY FROM 1994 - 2010

> *In reflecting upon where the country currently finds itself, the sheer weight of what apartheid left behind must not, however, be underestimated. It produced at the structural level an obdurate legacy of social and economic inequalities which was accompanied and underpinned by a complex skein of discriminatory political and cultural attitudes, dispositions and orientations* (Soudien, 2010:4).

3.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter focuses on the extent to which higher education planning has succeeded in relation to the goal of access. It will be argued that policies to address social exclusion in terms of access to higher education have to be formulated in concert with other sectors and that greater coherence in education policy is required. This chapter will also provide an overview of planning initiatives for the period 1994–2010 in order to trace policy development over time, review progress critically and provide an evaluation of the extent to which the policy goal of access is achievable. Analysis will also centre on steering of the higher education system, which has been influenced by socio-economic conditions, institutional governance arrangements in higher education and limited resourcing by the state. The DoE and from 2009, the DHET, through various policy documents, have referred to funding, institutional planning and quality as the main steering mechanisms that would improve access to higher education. Recent developments from DHET suggest that access, as a goal, still remains elusive and that improved resourcing and a differentiated post-school education and training system should offer more opportunities (DHET, 2012). Though attention is paid to the role of the state in driving policies, there is acknowledgement of the role of the myriad actors in the sector who interpret and implement based on their unique histories and contexts (Bowe, *et al*., 1992).

3.2. INTRODUCTION

As described in the previous chapter, institutional governance arrangements for higher education, as well as the broader education and training sector during apartheid, were configured to ensure perpetuation of unequal access to education. In this chapter, policy reform measures instituted between 1994 and 2010 are reviewed and a critical evaluative

stance invoked in relation to the policy 'silences' and 'vacuums' that are in themselves regressive. It will be argued that the state's commitment to increasing access is not always accompanied by appropriate policy instruments and a shift in policy stance and that the absence of policies in some cases, has delayed real progress. Thus, policy spurts have broadly followed the aspirational path charted in White Paper 3 and the NPHE, although the logical sequencing of policy development, resourcing and implementation have often defied rationality. The gestation period for policy development and implementation is long and not always synchronised with other inter-related sectors.

The consequence of this is the incoherence and confusion that often result. Thus, for example, the NCHE in 1996 advocated the restructuring of the higher education landscape; but the actual restructuring took place almost nine years later, with the mergers and incorporations that reduced 36 universities to 23. Perceptions of the final enacting of the restructuring were that government was sending mixed messages, especially in relation to the goal of widening access. Jansen (2003:299) pointed out that this radical move from massification debate to narrowing access represents a conundrum in policy-making, as the mergers, together with the closure of teacher training colleges, effectively reduced rural access opportunities. This essentially meant that there were fewer, but bigger, institutions. Large institutions that have multiple campuses have experienced problems, especially around governance and the costs of management of satellite campuses (Jansen, 2003). The rationale underpinning the mergers was to achieve, amongst other goals, efficiencies in the system and reduce duplication (DoE, 2001). The jury is still out as to whether or not the mergers and restructuring impinged on the initial policy agenda, which was to widen access.

3.3. SHIFTS IN GOVERNANCE

One way of discussing policy development would be to categorise by periods, the governance model adopted in government. From 1994–2009, higher education was managed by the DoE in the Universities branch. After the elections in 2009, the newly established DHET came into being and brought together: skills development, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), FET and universities. This separated the schooling system into a new DBE along with some components of adult education. The 2010 concept document for the Stakeholder Summit for HE stated:

> *The establishment of the DHET in 2009 has added a new dimension to the transformative possibilities in higher education. The new Department provides an opportunity to create a single, seamless, post-school education and training system that will meet the aspirations of both the youth and adults and, simultaneously, ensure that education, training and skills development initiatives can respond to the national requirements which include the performance of the economy, the challenge of rural development, and the development of an informed and critical citizenry* (CEPD, 2010:1).

Though it is still early to evaluate the impact of this structural shift in governance, what has emerged is the Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012) and several other initiatives that impact on higher education. These will be discussed with the caveat that policy initiatives and positions take time to filter down to universities and thus measurable impact will not be evident in the short term.

3.4. 1994–2010

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of what has popularly been termed the 'shape and size' of the higher education sector (DoE, 1997:2.7). The shape and size of the higher education system linked to 'the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners' (DoE, 1999) signalled a policy priority that required urgent remediation to address issues of exclusion. The Extension of University Education Act (RSA, 1959) enabled government to set up either universities or technikons for different race groups. The promulgation of this Act was aimed at ensuring that the higher education sector was designed on racial grounds and that there were barriers to access for Black students who wanted to study at historically White universities or technikons. This is the legacy that was inherited by the new government in 1994. The inheritance of 21 public universities and 15 technikons based on race and geographic location was brought under the jurisdiction of the national DoE. In the pre-1994 period, universities and technikons were governed, funded and administered by various departments, depending on the purpose of the higher education institution. 'Purpose' in this instance refers specifically to the race group the institution was expected to cater for, which, in turn, defined its legal and governance arrangements with racially defined departments of education.

Table 3.1 provides a visual description of the nature of the divisions, the different types of institutions and the governance arrangements. These governance arrangements translated further into differential funding arrangements and disjointed contributions to society in terms of human resource development (HRD). Further differentiations can be seen in terms of the distinction between universities and technikons.

TABLE 3.1: HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

Authority	Universities	Technikons	Total
House of Assembly (Whites)	*English:* University of Cape Town, University of Natal, Rhodes University, University of the Witwatersrand *Afrikaans:* University of the Orange Free State, University of Port Elizabeth, University of Pretoria, Potchefstroom University, Rand Afrikaans University, University of Stellenbosch *Distance:* University of South Africa	Cape Technikon, Technikon of the Orange Free State, Natal Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, Vaal Triangle Technikon, Technikon Witwatersrand *Distance:* Technikon of South Africa	19
House of Representatives (for Coloureds)	University of the Western Cape	Peninsula Technikon	2
House of Delegates (for Indians)	University of Durban-Westville	M L Sultan Technikon	2
Department of Education and Training (for Africans)	University of the North, University of Zululand, Medical University of South Africa, Vista University	Mangosuthu University of Technology, Technikon Northern Transvaal	6
Republic of Transkei	University of Transkei	Eastern Cape Technikon	2
Republic of Bophuthatswana	University of Bophuthatswana	Setlogelo Technikon	2
Republic of Venda	University of Venda		1
Republic of Ciskei	University of Fort Hare	Border Technikon (Ciskei)	2
Total	21	15	36

Source: CHE, 2004b:40.

The size and shape of the higher education system posed significant challenges to the state in 1994 and debates on the appropriate configuration of the higher education system for SA ensued. In the period 1999–2002, intense debate on mergers, incorporations and closures of

higher education institutions dominated. By 2002, Education Minister, Asmal, introduced legislation that altered the size and shape of higher education by reducing the number of institutions from 36 to 22[20], which was to be carried out over a three-year period from 2002–2005. In providing advice to the Minister of Education, the CHE, which was established in 1999 as an independent statutory advisory body to the Minister, stated:

> *The higher education system still does not function in the co-ordinated way envisaged by the White Paper. Neither the existing planning instruments nor the institutions have produced meaningful co-ordination or collaboration. Many of the features of apartheid fragmentation continue within the system and between institutions* (CHE, 2000:17).

A review of policy documentation that emerged during the period 1994–2001 reveals a stress on the importance of a higher education system that is planned, governed and funded as a 'single, co-ordinated system' (NCHE, 1996; DoE, 1997). The emphasis on 'single' symbolised a deliberate break with the multiple structures and duplication of apartheid. The White Paper set out the principles and values that would inform the system to be developed, though it realistically opted for planned growth with the emphasis being on access and success. The envisaged state intervention was to be in the form of planning, at the national and institutional levels, funding that would be linked to the goals of the system that would be identified in a national plan and finally, accountability from institutions. The reality was that fiscal constraints could not support the 'massification' envisaged in the NCHE documents, which explains the reference to 'limited real growth in public expenditure' (DoE, 1997:2.27). The insufficiency of funding of higher education is elaborated on in Chapter 4. The logical consequence was then for institutions to mobilise additional private resources, as the targeted redistribution of funds would necessitate reliance on other streams of income. The White Paper states:

> *The key instruments in the planning process will be the development of an overall national and institutional 'three-year' rolling plans, indicative plans which facilitate the setting of objective and implementation targets that can be adjusted, updated and revised annually. A participatory, multi-year planning process will avoid the inherent defects of the old top-down central budgeting system. This is in line with the government's budget development process as reflected in the*

[20] Mangosothu Technikon was supposed to merge with the Durban UoT in 2005. This merger did not occur.

> *Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. A three-year planning cycle, with data, resource estimates, targets and plans annually updated, enables the planning of growth and change in higher education to be more flexible and responsive to social and economic needs, including market signals (while avoiding the rigidity of old-style 'manpower planning'), permits adjustments to be made on the basis of actual performance, and introduces greater predictability and hence stability into the budget process* (DoE, 1997:2.9).

An early ANC document referred to as the 'yellow book', *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*, stated:

> *The present funding formula for higher education will be reviewed and restructured in terms of the need to expand the system, redress institutional inequalities, and increase the intake of disadvantaged students* (ANC, 1994:115).

Bunting (1994:239) analysed this funding formula reference in the ANC document and concluded that the envisaged usage of funding to effect transformation of the higher education sector could best be characterised as a 'soft' form of leverage. He argued that in order for the funding formula to actively steer the system it would need both incentives and disincentives. In other words, it would be a system of rewards and punishments. The gap between 1994 and the implementation of the new funding framework in 2004 signified a decade of the status quo being maintained and opportunities lost. Policy analysts (e.g., Wolpe, 1991; Badat, 2003) argued that the policy frameworks envisaged would encounter difficulty in pursuing both equity in terms of access and the developmental role of producing human resource skills and knowledge relevant to society.

A charting of the history of higher education for the period after 1997 will confirm that beyond agreement on the goals and principles espoused in various policy texts, institutions and various role players assumed a counter-position to the state partially attributable to the emergence of the size and shape debate. The *CHE Report: Towards a New Higher Education Landscape* (CHE, 2000) advanced a case for equity and access issues to remain at the forefront of higher education, pointing out that 'the extent to which equity and access are actively promoted or frustrated will determine the nature and extent of social and class stratification and have a direct bearing on the nature of SA's democracy, labour market and social stability' (CHE, 2000:27). This statement bears out the palpable tensions emerging

through the policy development processes and raises the spectre of the extent to which there may have been deviations from the aspirational goals referred to in White Paper 3 and the role of education in transforming both society and the labour market.

The DoE (2001) followed after a period of extensive consultation, and a hiatus of four years, which, in a self-referential way, reflects the delay as a shortcoming. Thus, following White Paper 3 in 1997 and the enactment of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the next significant policy document emerging from the DoE was the NPHE. In terms of actual policy work, the period between 1997 and 2001 could be perceived as a 'policy gap', but it was also a period of intense debate on pivotal issues, such as the size and shape of the system, responsiveness of higher education to the economy and society, and the transformation agenda. The goals stated in the National Plan resonated with the earlier stated goals in the White Paper as analysed in this research, but were underpinned by strong planning language. It also gave the Minister of Education the right to allocate funding based on institutional plans and targets, and introduced the concept of incentive funding.

The NPHE provided a detailed plan for the higher education system. Goals, performance indicators, and outcomes were clearly stated. It provided the rudiments of the framework and set out the planning instruments to be used by the government to achieve the targets. It could be argued that the restructuring of the higher education system, which commenced at roughly the same time as the release of the NPHE, deflected some of the momentum that could have been gained. As institutions affected by the restructuring merged or were incorporated, institutional energies were diverted from focused attention on the NPHE. The development of new planning frameworks experienced both development delays at state level and implementation delays at institutional level. Institutions untouched by mergers or incorporations proceeded with business as usual. It could be argued that the NPHE provided a framework and set out government's course of action for a period of time and explicitly stated the goals of the higher education system. This, in itself, was to be interpreted by institutions, which would, in turn, determine the course of institutional planning processes. However, the other side of the coin was that the effect of the NPHE was experienced differently by institutions, depending on if they were merging, merged or soon to be incorporated. This 'transforming' process for higher education institutions then required all impacted institutions to have an inward focus, as opposed to positioning and gearing to meet the challenges and targets set by the state.

Table 2.2 provides a schematic overview of the NPHE, indicating goals, priorities and outcomes. Outcomes stated in the NPHE are not always measurable or clearly defined. The 2012 Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012) confirms that there are no significant shifts from the original White Paper of 1997, barring the focus on articulation in and between sectors, the language of description (with terms like the 'post-school education and training system', 'differentiation'), and the inclusion of the notion of the incremental introduction of free higher education.

TABLE 3.2: NATIONAL PLAN GOALS, PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

<table>
<tr><th>Goals</th><th>Priorities</th><th>Outcomes</th></tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a full spectrum of advanced educational opportunities for an expanding range of the population without any form of discrimination (cf White Paper 1.27)</td>
<td>

To increase the participation rate in higher education to meet the demand for high-level skills through a balanced production of graduates in different fields of study taking into account labour market trends.
To increase the number of graduates through improving the efficiency of the higher education system.
To link improvements in efficiency to improvements in quality.
To broaden the social base of higher education by increasing access to higher education of workers and professionals in pursuit of multi-skilling and re-skilling, and of adult learners who were denied access in the past.
To produce graduates with the skills and competencies required to participate in the modern world in the 21st century

</td>
<td>

Increased participation rate of 20% of the age group 20–24 in public higher education should be the target over the next 10–15 years

Benchmarks for Graduation Rates
<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Qualification-type</th><th colspan="2">Graduation rate</th></tr>
<tr><th>Contact</th><th>Distance</th></tr>
<tr><td>Up to 3 years: Undergraduate</td><td>25%</td><td>15%</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 years or more: Undergraduate</td><td>20%</td><td>10%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Postgraduate: up to Honours</td><td>60%</td><td>30%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Master's</td><td>33%</td><td>25%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Doctoral</td><td>20%</td><td>20%</td></tr>
</table>

Increasing the access of workers, mature learners and the disabled to higher education is an important policy goal in its own right and should be approached as such, rather than as an attempt to shore up falling enrolment.
Shift the balance in enrolment between the Humanities, Business and Commerce and Science, Engineering and Technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to a ratio of 40%: 30%: 30% respectively

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote equity of access and fair chances for success and advance redress for past inequalities (cf White Paper 1.14)</td>
<td>Reflect demographic realities in South Africa in student and staff composition and ensure that race and gender profiles of graduates reflect the profile of student enrolment.</td>
<td>'Increase in the participation rate should be made up principally of African and Coloured students so that their current under-representation is eroded' (CHE 2000:48). The Ministry would like to add that the increase in the participation rate must in addition target disabled students.
The Ministry will use the national planning requirements and the new funding framework as the primary mechanisms for ensuring that race and gender inequities are eradicated.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Source: Adapted from DoE, 2001.

The NPHE identified several strategic planning initiatives that would enable government to steer the system towards achievement of the goals. These are listed below under the following broad headings:

- Increased participation rate and graduate output; and
- Increased equity in access and success rates.

The details are captured below in Box 1.

Increased participation rate and graduate outputs

The Ministry will ensure efficiency improvements, including increasing and broadening enrolment through:

- Establishing planning targets as part of the three-year 'rolling' plan process for graduate outputs, including headcount and full-time equivalent (FTE) enrolment totals for the higher education system. The target will be to increase the total number of graduates by a minimum of 10%, i.e.10 000 graduates over the next five years.
- Linking the funding of student places and FTE enrolment at institutions to the numbers of graduates produced.
- Funding academic development programmes as an integral component of the new funding formula for higher education.
- Facilitating, in conjunction with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the streamlining of the procedures for obtaining study permits by Southern African Development Community (SADC) students.
- Requesting the South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association and the Committee of Technikon Principals jointly to advise on whether or not additional fee levies are necessary and, if so, what an appropriate additional fee levy would be.

Higher education institutions will have to indicate in their three-year rolling plans that they have developed:

- Strategies, including time frames and targets, to improve throughput, success and graduation rates in line with the efficiency benchmarks set by the Ministry.
- Strategies, including time frames, for reducing drop-out rates, especially of students who drop-out in good academic standing, but not because of financial reasons.
- Minimum criteria for automatic admission into different academic programmes.
- Selection processes to determine the suitability of applicants who do not meet the minimum criteria for automatic admission.
- Minimum criteria for the readmission of students and a limit on the number of times that a student would be allowed to repeat a course or a full year of study.
- Strategies, including time frames and targets, to broaden their recruitment base, in relation to workers and mature learners.
- Strategies, including time frames and targets, to increase the recruitment of students from the SADC region.

The Ministry will, over the next five to ten years, through various planning and funding incentives, change enrolment by field of study:

- Shift the balance in enrolment at the systemic level between the Humanities, Business and Commerce and Science, Engineering and Technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to a ratio of 40%: 30%: 30%.
- Increase enrolment in career-oriented programmes in all fields of study, with the emphasis on increasing enrolment in Information and Communications Technology.
- Increase enrolment in pre- and in-service teacher training, in particular in Mathematics, Science and Technology, based on a national teacher development plan.
- Encourage the development of programmes in marginalised fields of study, such as African languages, as well as the more general restructuring of curricula to reflect an orientation towards the African continent.

Each Higher education institutions will have to indicate in its institutional three-year 'rolling' plans:

- The institution's shape profile in terms of the balance between the Humanities, Business and Commerce and Science, Engineering and Technology programmes in relation to the institution's location, vision, mission and capacity and the government's human resource development strategy.
- The strategies and steps that the institution is taking to restructure the curricula content and framework of all programmes to ensure that they develop the cognitive skills necessary for all graduates.

BOX 1: GOALS AND INDICATORS FROM THE NPHE

Source: DoE, 2001:28, 40.

Increased equity in access and success rates

The Ministry will use various planning and funding levers to increase access and success of Black and women students in higher education. It will:

- Allocate funded student places on the proposed planning grid taking into account past institutional performance in enrolling and graduating Black and women students, as well as stated equity objectives and targets in the institutional three-year 'rolling' plans.
- Reduce funded student places in institutions whose equity plans are not satisfactory or whose performance are at variance with its equity plans.
- Include funding for academic development as an integral component of the new funding framework, with priority given to programme areas in which Black and women students are under-represented, and programme areas in which their success rates tend to be lower than those of White and male students.
- Request the National Student Financial Aid Scheme Board to review the role and evaluate the efficacy of the NSFAS in increasing access and participation rates, including the suitability of introducing a more targeted allocation of the NSFAS.
- Monitor the selection criteria and practices of institutions.
- Commission an investigation into developing an appropriate model for establishing a National Higher Education Information and Applications Service to facilitate and monitor race and gender access. As a first step, the investigation will evaluate the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Central Applications System as a basis for determining the framework and operating mechanisms for establishing a National Higher Education Information and Applications Service to be in operation by 2003.

Higher education institutions will have to indicate in their three-year 'rolling' plans the strategies, including time-frames they have put in place to:

- Increase the access of Black and women students in general. In particular, institutions should indicate the plans that they have in place to redress the situation if they currently have a total enrolment of fewer than 30% Black students or where the majority of Black students are enrolled in distance education programmes and/or satellite campuses.
- Redress the imbalance in the enrolment of students in different programmes, fields of specialisation or qualifications, in particular, postgraduate programmes.
- Redress imbalances in the success and graduation rates of students in different programmes, fields of specialisation or qualifications.
- Ensure that teaching/learning processes are sensitive to the needs of different students

BOX 2: GOALS AND INDICATORS FROM THE NPHE

Source: DoE, 2001:28, 40.

The NPHE framed the issue of access and linked it to the need for transformation in higher education, both in terms of responding to the needs of the twenty-first century and as a definitive move towards shedding the past. Access was formulated as a multi-dimensional concept that had to be tackled using a multi-pronged strategy. The value of the NPHE was that it recognised the role of institutions in interpreting goals and defined the parameters within which planning and funding would be used as incentives and disincentives. The NPHE firstly stressed that the issue of access had to be defined broadly[21] and could not be limited to access alone, but also to success in higher education and subsequently the labour market. Secondly, there was a recognition that higher education institutions would need to: actively reconsider admission and selection criteria, funding costs and set targets that can be measured; and put in place academic development initiatives to assist students who require support. Thirdly, there was recognition that planning, funding, and quality assurance processes would require detailed work and would have to proceed in a logical and cohesive

[21] Draws on Wally Morrow's (1994) distinction between formal and epistemological access.

way to enable achievement of the goals. The latter was critical, as it demonstrated a consciousness that the period following the release of the NPHE would be largely focused on operational concerns.

It can be argued that a flaw in the NPHE was that while some of the strategies identified were clearly defined, others belonged to the category of rhetoric, but without clearly identified strategic levers. This mix of clearly identified levers and diffuse statements of intention sent mixed signals to institutions that were required to comply with clear requirements. As alluded to earlier, the time lags between policy pronouncements and actual enactment complicated matters for institutions. As the interviews with individuals from the higher education sector confirmed, perceptions on the ground as to what government expected universities to do varied and interpretations depended on the university context. Universities were receiving signals from the DoE, but were not entirely sure what exactly was expected of them, in the absence of guidelines or clear instructions. Thus, some institutions entered into partnerships with private institutions, which could be interpreted as one strategy to increase access, but it was viewed by the DoE as being commercially driven and of poor quality (Badsha, 2004:2). Notwithstanding these reservations, the NPHE was a step in the direction of a strategic plan for the higher education sector. The extent to which the sector complied and was responsive is still to be seen.

Despite the critics who saw the DoE as being inactive, the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) policy was implemented in 2002, having been mooted in the 1997 White Paper, which signalled that institutional diversity was necessary for transformation. The purpose of the PQM was to develop a grid of learning programmes and qualifications per institution by subject area and level. The notion of mission and academic programme differentiation was put forward as the salient characteristics of public higher education institutions in SA. The first academic programme differentiation process ran from 2001–02. The aims of the process were to:

- address mission drift[22], and
- prevent duplication and overlap between institutions.

[22] Mission drift refers to deviation from expected programmes, different cohorts of students, academic orientation, research profiles and qualifications structures (Gibbons, 2004:24).

A storm arose from institutions, as this level of planning by the DoE was seen as intrusive and counter to the goal of widening access. On completion of this exercise, the stage was set for a formal restructuring of higher education and what became known as the 'size and shape' debate (SAUVCA, 2000).

At the end of 2003, the Minister of Education determined that the student enrolment planning processes, which are essential to the implementation of the new funding framework, would commence in 2004. The Minister stated that:

> *The Department of Education will during the first half of 2004 engage in a system-wide student enrolment planning exercise covering the academic years 2005 to 2007, to facilitate the implementation of the new funding formula and, in particular, to ensure that institutional enrolment plans are affordable and sustainable in the context of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. The enrolment planning exercise will involve the Department developing broad national and institutional enrolment projections indicating the student numbers that the Department will consider funding in the financial years up to 2009/2010 (enrolment for 2007 will generate block grants for the 2009/2010 financial year). The enrolment planning projections will be developed on the basis of (a) the goals and targets set in the National Plan for Higher Education; (b) the various projections contained in this Ministerial Statement, and (c) institutional student input and output data for years up to and including 2003* (Ministry of Education, 2004b).

Using the frame of analysis that focuses on the higher education institutional contexts, it is clear that the planning tools thus described were absorbed differently, unevenly, and in some cases, reinterpreted. At least two institutions were in financial crisis and faced dwindling numbers at the time the policy statement was advanced: some institutions had increased student fees, were exploring new forms of 'entrepreneurialism',[23] had diversified income streams or other behaviours partially prompted by policy levers, as well as other societal forces such as responsiveness to the needs of either the corporate world, government training needs or individuals. The delay between the publication of the NPHE and the commencement of planning exercises was long, which called into question the capacity of the state to

[23] Burton Clark (1998) advocated that universities had to engage in entrepreneurial activities to reduce their financial dependency on the state, increase their ability to generate revenue and enhance their ability to attract students.

implement. Thus, desired outcomes from institutions may have been evident, but not necessarily as a result of the policy instruments or planning tools.

Interviews conducted in 2007[24] revealed the following trends in perceptions, attitudes and knowledge of policy developments in the higher education sector. Broadly, there appeared to be two camps in the interviews; these fell naturally along the lines of those in government and those in institutions. There was consensus that in order to understand the impact of the myriad policy initiatives in higher education it was important to note that universities experienced these differently, depending on the circumstances of the university. If a university had recently merged, then access and equity featured strongly in its discussion and it also focused on interrogation of whether or not the merger actually advanced these twin goals. There was also criticism of the policy development process and whether or not the slew of policies released at different stages had coherence and worked in a synchronised way to advance goals. Thus, the over-riding belief amongst the interviewees for this research was that policies on enrolment planning and funding of higher education seemed to be at odds with the stated goals of widening access to higher education. Respondents almost unanimously offered the view that if the funding envelope had not increased and enrolment-planning exercises capped student numbers, it would not have been clear how growth was possible.

The fear expressed by respondents was that large institutions with multiple sites of delivery had been created through the merger process. A great deal of energy was invested in managing the actual merger process, with a strong focus on merging finance and human resource systems and the harmonisation of academic programmes. This included dealing with the very real issues of institutional culture and different governance systems. These time-consuming tasks detracted from the core business of the university and absorbed senior managers into rounds of endless meetings and strategic planning sessions. Respondents also expressed the view that the policy signals were not useful, as the work on the ground of merging institutions was far more complex than the simple statements or guidelines issued by the DoE.

The group of respondents representing government structures focused on the policy goals and expressed the view that policy development served as a trigger for advancing goals. There was also a realisation that resources were not used efficiently in the higher education system and that these inefficiencies were bleeding the system. The view was that the poor throughput

[24] Interviews were conducted as part of the research for the PhD with ten stakeholders in higher education.

rates and graduation rates, coupled with the high number of dropouts from the system, were indicators that universities had to do more to improve teaching and learning. They saw a need for curriculum renewal or transformation and focused on provision of funds for foundation programmes to bridge the gap between school and university. There was wide acknowledgement that the mergers seemed to be the only way to address the issues of duplication, wastage of resources and that the new institutional types would eventually bed down merger issues and begin to address access and equity in a meaningful way. Interestingly, the policy-maker group also felt that this was the only way to shake complacency at South African universities and trigger the kind of social transformation needed in these institutions.

In December 2002, the Ministry of Education published its proposals, which were subsequently approved by Cabinet, for the transformation and restructuring of the country's higher education institutional landscape. The legislature in turn passed a law mandating the merger and incorporation of the Public Higher Education institutions, resulting in the consolidation of universities and technikons into: eleven traditional universities, six 'comprehensive' universities and six universities of technology. In addition, two National Institutes of Higher Learning were established in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape. In 2012, the intention to create two new universities in these provinces (DHET, 2012:37) was announced. Jansen (2002a) pointed out that there were several problems with the mergers: firstly, they reduced access to rural students in a significant way; secondly, that the shift in the nature and character of the institutions meant that they attracted middle class students; and thirdly, there was a significant reduction in the number and types of institutions that would be available to students. This was an argument that gained significant currency, as the burden of restructuring shifted to institutions affected by the restructuring and detracted from the pursuit of institutional aspirations of widening access and diversifying qualification and programme offerings (CDE, 2002:6).

It has been pointed out by some analysts that the scale of restructuring diminished opportunities for access for the youth and that the unintended consequence was the increased costs of studying brought about partially by the geographical access issues (Stumpf, Papier, Needham, Nel, & Unit , 2009:7). A bigger issue at play is that it was not just the tinkering with the higher education system but the entire education sector that collectively created a reduction of opportunities. The point being made here was that with the closure of the

colleges of education, neglect of FET colleges and the restructuring of higher education, centres of teaching were consolidated and concentrated in specific geographical areas, thus limiting access to students, as well as increasing the cost of education for those who lived far from centres of teaching and learning.

In 2012, Minister Nzimande stated in his budget speech his intention to undo the merger of the University of Limpopo and to revisit the possibility of opening colleges in some provinces to focus on teacher education (Nzimande, 2012:1). This partial policy reversal will come at a significant cost to the state. It must be noted that the restructuring of higher education has, in recent years, been questioned, especially in relation to access being limited for students and management of multi-campus universities (Nzimande, 2012:1). Thus, the interrogation by Nzimande (2012) of mergers is in line with the thrust of the Green Paper and developmental goals of the country. The caveat necessarily has to be the enormous costs that would be incurred to undo mergers.

3.5. EVALUATION OF PLANNING

Funding, planning and enrolment in higher education are inextricably linked, especially in the South African higher education context. The connection and interplay amongst the three steering instruments is referred to in the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997), the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, the NPHE (DoE, 2001) the Green Paper on Post-Secondary Education (DHET, 2012). This section comprises a broad discussion of the planning initiatives undertaken by the government and the enrolment targets set for the higher education sector. In the next chapter there will be a detailed critical discussion of the funding of higher education and the outcomes in terms of widening access and expansion of the system.

While funding is required to expand enrolment, the planning instruments used by the Department of Education were and are still constrained by the limited purse, as well as the carrying capacity of the higher education sector. Despite the policy rhetoric of widening access, it will be demonstrated that higher education has not significantly expanded in line with demand. Bunting (2006:4-6) categorised the South African case into three phases:

1994–99: More is better
1999–2000: More is not better
2000–present: More but different.

This categorisation is useful as a lens to understand the policy shifts that occurred. Bunting essentially pointed to the nuanced policy shifts from massification to planned growth; with the realisation, in the middle period, that access without success was a clear waste of resources. In the last 13 years, which ties in with Bunting's categorisation of '*More but different'*, the debate has shifted from access with success to the need for a differentiated higher education system.

The early NCHE report focused on 'massification' and advanced the position that participation rates[25] should reach a target of 30 percent by 2005 (NCHE, 1996:7). The NPHE revised this figure to 20 percent by 2011 (DoE, 2001:19) and the target still stands. Both documents linked equity goals to massification, focusing on inclusivity as a central feature of the new higher education system. The White Paper released in 1996 introduced financial caution and argued for 'planned growth', rather than unbridled growth of the system. In the second phase, where growth in enrolment materialised, the budget for higher education was stretched to capacity, with a decline in student subsidy per student reported (Steyn & De Villiers, 2006; Bunting, 2006). The language of policy documents issued during this period focuses on the efficiency of the system, cost of production of graduates and financial wastage. Bunting (2006) argued that the last phase identified is a natural progression towards realisation of the goal of a differentiated system, as set out in the White Paper. This seems plausible, in that, after the restructuring of the higher education system, there was a clear need for an elaboration of institutional visions, missions and plans, as well as the clarification of the roles of the different institutional types in terms of the kinds of qualifications offered and the level at which qualifications were offered.

It is interesting to note that the Green Paper again introduces the idea of differentiation (DHET, 2012:39–41) and acknowledges that not much has happened to realise the goal. However, it stops short of expanding on exactly what is meant by differentiation. It further inserts the concept of differentiation and the historic legacies of the past as a distinct feature. However, the international literature on the subject of higher education differentiation points to several dimensions like functions of institutions or missions, which require consideration for a debate on differentiation (Huisman, 1995; Meek, 2003; Trow, 1979; Muller, 2003). Badsha and Cloete (2011) pointed out that there are variances in interpretations of differentiation, especially amongst institutions. They advocated a more nuanced approach to

[25] Participation rates (Gross Enrolment Ratio) are defined as the total headcount enrolment in the university system divided by the 20-24 year age group of the population DoE, 2001).

increasing participation rates based on a differentiated sector. This approach would focus on the institutional type in SA, the stated mission, goals and capacity, followed by a determination of each institution's contribution (in terms of specific programmes) to widening access. This would require concerted steering by government and an agreement pact between each institution and government regarding the mandate of the institution. The implication is that institutions would be funded in line with agreed mandates. This would require a funding formula that would take differentiation into account. For example, the 2010 DHET enrolment planning exercise did signal that the intention was to focus on all of the above, but acknowledged the limitations of the exercise and time constraints. It must be noted that the review of the funding formula and framework for higher education commissioned in 2011 by the DHET may provide further guidelines for funding to follow the specific mandates of institutions for a strong, differentiated higher education sector.

One of the initiatives of the DoE was to pursue planning of the higher education sector (DHET, 2011). Given that funding of higher education in SA is primarily linked to student numbers enrolled at universities, enrolment planning at the national level for institutions was targeted as a mechanism to disburse funds and ensure that universities enrolled students in line with their capacities and missions. Enrolment planning exists at the macro level as a tool used by government to determine the shape and size of the sector. In order to be effective it has to be an iterative process that focuses on the management of student enrolment growth at both national and institutional levels. In terms of the unfolding of this process, each institution arrives at an agreement with the DHET regarding the shape and size of the specific institution. The data is then aggregated by the DHET and is further finessed based on agreed growth trajectories for an increase in enrolment for SET and other scarce and critical skills areas. In 2010, the release of the performance management targets for the Minister of Higher Education and Training by the Presidency resulted in a further consideration to be added to the enrolment planning exercise (DHET, 2010); the planning had to be based on a realistic assessment of current institutional capacity, identified needs and support for expansion in specific high need areas. However, the response from the sector signalled quite clearly that the targets set by the Presidency were unrealistic and that no new funding had been allocated to enable achievement of these targets. The sector once again confronted policy thrusts by the state that were not bolstered by appropriate resourcing and which, in a sense, provides inappropriate buttressing for tangible deliverables or plans to be made by institutions.

Using the Bowe, *et al.* (1992) conceptual model of policy-making, the space for interpretation, contestation and negotiation is central to understanding the role of the state and of the actors in their contexts. In this model, the policy-making role of the state is subject to interaction and engagement, with some leeway for interpretation by institutions. This dynamic relationship is evident in the policy developments in higher education.

Earlier Kraak and Young (2001), Jansen (2001), CHE (2004b) and others noted that in terms of policy implementation, symbolic policy bursts obscured the absence of an active pursuit of the equity agenda by government. Thus, the broadly stated and more clearly focused indicators developed for higher education in the National Plan in 2001 could be viewed as policy statements not actively steered by policy implementation or processes. The National Plan, as analysed carefully for this research is a policy plan for the higher education sector, providing both a diagnostic of the higher education sector and specifying the targets that are to be attained by higher education institutions. The mechanisms for achievement of these targets are planning and funding. Given that at the time of the National Plan, the old funding formula (SAPSE), with minor changes, was being implemented and that the National Plan merely signals the commencement of three-year institutional rolling plans that would be linked to the missions and purposes of institutions, it cannot be stated that the mechanisms were in place for the steering of the higher education system.

The time lag between implementation of the new funding formula, analysis of institutional plans and student enrolment planning would be another three years, because of the uncertainty of funding allocation looming over institutions. Steyn and De Villiers (2006:54–5) argued that the new funding formula, despite being heralded as incentive-driven and linked to performance targets, was not unlike the old South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE)[26] formula inherited from the pre-1994 period. Thus, although there was a move to funding performance, it is still premature to assess if it can achieve the desired goals, as tangible results can only be assessed retrospectively.

The Ministers of Education and Finance approved a new funding framework for the public higher education system in December 2003, by which time there had been a decline in state allocations to institutions as a proportion of their income. In line with the prescripts of the White Paper of 1997, the new framework made the allocation of government grants a key

[26] The SAPSE formula originally introduced for universities and then later for technikons allocated funds based on student numbers at a specific institution.

steering mechanism for the public higher education system. In addition it also made funding incentive-driven by steering individual institutions towards attaining national policy goals. The 2003 framework was premised on the fact that there was an annual allocation made by the state to higher education. However, the responsibility for the distribution of funds to universities lay with the DoE.

In 2005, new shifts in the funding framework were introduced (Ministry of Education, 2005). The purpose of the changes was threefold, as per the analysis undertaken for purposes of this research:

(i) Institutions were set different input and output targets.

(ii) A new migration strategy of the old funding formula to the new was implemented, especially for the teaching input subsidy to take into account institutions' growth plans and institutions that could not grow because of capacity constraints. This meant that institutions were funded as per agreed totals, as opposed to numbers that exceeded agreed totals.

(iii) Funds were allocated to institutions to improve infrastructure and the quality of teaching, as well as to assist in increasing outputs in Science, Engineering and Technology.

This framework signalled some movement towards funding being directed to institutions in line with agreed missions and institutional plans to ensure that the differentiation inherent in the sector is supported fully by the funding. This move was based on the same principles set out for the enrolment planning exercise, but not fully realised.

The narrative on funding remains murky precisely because despite policy goals and objectives, the sector was almost rudderless in the absence of sufficient funding. Infrastructure funding allocated to higher education institutions by the state in the years 2009 to 2011 was insufficient to fully fund developments required by individual institutions. Given the delay in allocating funds for infrastructure from the 1990s to the late 2000s, the funding for new infrastructure was welcomed but the backlog in redress funding was raised by the sector as well as routine upgrading of existing infrastructure. The model of funding adopted was based on an analysis of the balance sheets of institutions, which, in turn, determined the amount the DoE/DHET expects each institution to self-fund for a specific infrastructure project. A percentage of the total infrastructure project cost is funded by the state. This model

while perhaps the only route available to the DoE/DHET to distribute funds from a limited purse for infrastructure development has triggered major development, but has placed pressure on individual institutions. Given the doubling up of the higher education system in terms of student numbers from 1994 to 2010, and the demands for an increase in SET enrolment, it is argued that infrastructure funding must continue to address the backlog, as well as new infrastructure needs, especially in the areas of SET and student housing. The current formula rewards research in terms of postgraduate students and research outputs. The funding formula operates in terms of volume – rewarding input and output, as opposed to quality.

The responsibility for quality is seen structurally as being in the realm of the CHE via the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) established in terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Conceptually, funding and quality are allocated to different bodies, with some measure of independence allowed, yet there is a level of interplay linked to funding being allocated for programmes that have been quality assured. There has been no research undertaken to date that explores whether or not the current conceptual model of the separation of powers for quality and funding has worked. Critical to the widening of access debate is an understanding that in the quest for expansion due attention needs to be paid to quality.

The above narrative demonstrates the close linkage between planning and funding in terms of the envisaged linkage that was flagged in White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) and the NPHE (DoE, 2001). At the end of each planning initiative, changes were made to the funding formula to ensure that institutional plans could be resourced. It is of course a truism that allocations to institutions fell short of the requirements of individual institutions. At no point were massive injections of funding added in the years under review to give credence to the goal of widening access. It could be argued that funds allocated annually allowed for a marginal growth in headcount and not for the levels of participation referred to in the key policy documents. In the next chapter the growth of the sector will be analysed reviewing both funding allocations by year and headcount enrolment. It will be demonstrated that although funding has been in line with inflation, it has not taken into account a high growth strategy – hence the marginal growth in student numbers.

The model of government funding of higher education was set out in the 1997 White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE). The following excerpts from Chapter 4 of the White Paper set out the basic principles:

- *'Fee-free higher education for students is not an affordable or sustainable option for SA. The costs of higher education should be shared equitably between public and private beneficiaries' (para. 4.7).*
- *'The Ministry will adopt goal-oriented incentives as an integral part of the public funding framework. That is, explicit incentives will be used to steer the development of the higher education system in accordance with national goals. This will be complemented by harnessing more private resources for higher education through, for example, various forms of employer contributions, bequests and donations, better management of institutional investments, contracts and consultancies …' (para. 4.10 and 4.11)*
- *'To maximize the flexibility of institutions under the new arrangements, institutions should determine their own fees. The basis on which fee levels are established must be transparent and subject to proper scrutiny within the institution, and must satisfy reasonable equity criteria' (para. 4.25).*

These principles underpin the funding framework, allocations to institutions, model of student financial aid and determine the principles on which fee setting at universities has worked. Despite minor changes to the funding framework, the principles set out in the White Paper remained the basis for planning and funding. Student financial aid was viewed as a critical strategic lever, which led to the creation of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in 1996 and which was formally established in terms of the NSFAS Act No 56 of 1999. The model of the scheme operated on allocations of loans and bursaries to students who fulfilled the criteria for the means test, which in turn determined the proportion of the award that could be allocated to the student. NSFAS's establishment was viewed by government as the instrument through which access could be widened by providing affordable loans for higher education to poor and working class communities. The NSFAS Act states in its preamble that the intention is to 'redress past discrimination and ensure representivity and equal access' (RSA, 1999:2). By 2010, more than 17 percent of students in higher education were on some form of a loan from NSFAS (DHET, 2010:2).

The ANC Conference in Polokwane in 2007 laid the ground for a renewal of the cry for 'free education' by adopting a formal resolution that speaks of the 'progressive introduction of free education until undergraduate level' (ANC, 2007). In 2009, the Minister of DHET proclaimed by gazette the terms of reference for the review of NSFAS (DHET, 2009). The overall

purpose of the review of the NSFAS was: to assess the strengths and shortcomings of the current scheme; and to advise the Minister on the short, medium and long-term needs in order for student financial aid to promote the twin goals of equity of access and providing free undergraduate education to students from working class and poor communities, who cannot afford further or higher education. The review made several recommendations, especially in relation to higher education. Relevant to the discussion on widening of access and provision of free education is the following recommendation:

> *... a higher education student financial aid model that progressively provides free higher education to undergraduate level for students from poor and working class communities. The model also provides student loans on favourable terms to higher education students from lower middle-income families* (DHET, 2010:124).

The report made several insightful recommendations based on the findings of students on NSFAS loans for whom the burden of debt was untenable, especially the changes to the interest regime for loans. As a consequence, during the period 2010–12 several changes were made that gave life to the recommendations of the Review Committee and provided a rough roadmap for the realisation of free undergraduate education. One major change directly addresses the 'burden of debt' problem and is simply that as of 1 April 2011, a student registered for full-time studies would not be charged interest on loans and interest would only accrue a year after completion of the degree (NSFAS Annual Report, 2011/12). A second radical shift in policy was the Final Year Programme of NSFAS that worked on the principle that if a student on a NSFAS loan successfully completes the requirements for the degree, then the amount owing for the final year would be converted into a bursary (NSFAS, 2011/12).

Following close on the heels of the NSFAS Ministerial Review Committee was the Ministerial Committee chaired by Cyril Ramaphosa to review the current funding formula. The terms of reference were broad, focusing both on the mechanical formula for distribution of funds to higher education, as well as focusing on the following aspects:

- Improving the responsiveness of the university system to the social and economic needs of SA;
- Improving equitable access;
- Improving quality and excellence in teaching and research;

- Improving student progression rates;
- Improving equity in the allocation of government funds amongst universities;
- Improving effectiveness and efficiency in the use of funds in higher education;
- Improving accountability;
- Ensuring transparency in funding allocations; and
- Facilitating financial stability and predictability in universities (DHET, 2011:1–2).

The merits or demerits of such a review have been debated in the public arena, with the argument being advanced that in order to achieve any of the stated intentions of such a review, there would have to be an increase in state funding of higher education.

Ball (1993:10–11) made the points that: policy texts 'are the products of compromises at various stages (at points of initial influence), in the micro-politics of legislative formulation, in the parliamentary process and in the politics and micro-politics of interest group articulation'; and secondly, that 'policies have their own momentum inside the state; purposes and intentions are reworked and re-oriented over time'. This introduces the concept of the state re-interpreting policies depending on government priorities at a particular time or the actors and interest that either dominate or are silent. Using this as a frame for analysis of the SA context, it allows for an understanding of the contestations and conflicts that have dominated the policy-making process and the extent to which these have permeated the meanings of policies. Ball pertinently contended that 'policy is not exterior to inequalities … it is also affected, inflected and deflected by them' (Ball, 1993:12). Applying this concept to the higher education sector in SA, this contention flags the critical role of institutions in the higher education sector, which are required to interpret, implement and assign values to policies in a bid to perform for the state. The notion of 'performativity' (Lyotard, 1984) could be ascribed to the South African environment, where education institutions are providers and students consumers. Institutions account to the state, and performance is monitored in terms of indicators, targets and goals. It could then be argued that government policy that emerges from 'contestation' is reinterpreted and reinvented at the institutional level and subject to more 'contestation'. However, parameters are drawn by the *policy text* and a combination of policy reforms constitutes 'an ensemble' (Ball, 1993:15) which then interplay to have effects. In other words, it is the cumulative impact of policies that have an impact on the sector. He made a distinction between: first order effects, which relate to changes in structure or

practices; and the second order, which absorbs the effects of first order effects on patterns of social justice, social access and opportunity (Ball, 1993:15).

Based on an analysis of the funding formula, student enrolment planning initiatives of the DoE, and wider institutional planning initiatives, it is clear that the extent to which the state can achieve targets is a moot point. There has been detailed policy analysis (CHE, 2004b; Jansen, 2001; Badsha & Cloete, 2011) interrogating whether equity of access has been subsumed by efficiency and effectiveness agendas. It is the contention of this thesis that policy analysts are correct and that this is verifiable from a close-reading of the texts, where emphasis has shifted since the early NCHE (1996) reports from 'massification' of the higher education system to 'planned growth' in the White Paper (DoE, 1997). This emphasis has found translation in the National Plan (DoE, 2001), The New Funding Formula (Ministry of Education, 2004b), Green Paper (DHET, 2012) and other policy planning instruments. From 2009 onwards there has been a discernible shift in the discourse with pronouncements made which highlight the relationship between widening of access at universities on the one hand, and economic growth and development of the country on the other.

Badat (2010:12) welcomed the creation of a new DHET and the reconceptualisation of the post-school landscape. He identified areas in higher education that require more than just resourcing; but a boldness of imagination to bed down the process of differentiation that commenced with the mergers, incorporations and mergers, as well the pressing need for differentiated programme-qualification mixes for institutions based on their missions. In an analysis of enrolment figures, participation rates and funding arrangements, Badat (2010) called for an improvement in pass and graduation rates, review of teaching, learning and the curriculum, as well as transformation of institutional culture (Badat, 2010:50). This triad of access-related themes, it is argued, must have, as a precondition, sufficient funding and strengthening of institutional capacities. The Green Paper, despite the over-riding focus on enrolment, argues again for precisely the same points that Badat raised (DHET, 2012:9).

Rensburg (2001:131) cogently argued that one of the dilemmas that confronted policy-makers and implementers was the 'simultaneity of transformation and the maintenance of the system'. It is noted that in 2011 Minister Nzimande used 'the fixing of the aeroplane while flying' metaphor when describing the work of the new department (1). He further added that matters were compounded by the movement of the ANC government from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)

strategy. The implications were that the assumptions underpinning policies and programmes had to be altered with the introduction of financial austerity amidst the early enthusiasm of rebuilding systems and addressing major social exclusion issues. Rensburg referred to this period as one wherein there was 'a significant lag between policy announcement and policy implementation' (Rensburg, 2001:125). Fataar (2003, 2006) and Kraak and Young (2001) have similarly argued that the fiscal restraint introduced by the introduction of GEAR ultimately eroded policies and programmes that initially demonstrated the commitment of the state to equity.

The Green Paper (DHET, 2012), which sets out the vision for the post-school system, recognises that insufficient resources have led to a lag in achieving equity of access and success. More importantly, it signals coherence in government's macro policy, as it aligns itself with the New Growth Path (Department of Economic Development, 2011a) and the Industrial Policy Action Plan (Department of Economic Development, 2011b) documents, which focus on the government's economic policy and locate the role of education and training as central to achievement of the country's development. The area of skills development is critical for economic growth and improving the quality of life for all South Africans. These focal points or priority areas are affirmed in key government documents, such as the current Medium Term Strategic Framework (The Presidency, 2008), the HRD strategy (HRDSA, 2009), as well as the National Skills Development Plan 2 (DHET, 2010) and the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012). The Fifteen Year Review (The Presidency, 2008) made a strong case for the critical importance of education and training in rupturing the cycle of inter-generational poverty.

> *Lasting and sustainable reduction of income inequality requires greater access of the poor to the labour market. The period under review has experienced trends that inhibit this access as much as enhancing it. Some, such as the economy's sectoral shift, have been noted. Others include the failure of the education system to enhance human capital sufficiently for it to serve as the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality. What is required is therefore both a restructuring of the economy and improvement in the quality of education, especially in poorer areas* (The Presidency, 2008:103).

Planning for the university sector in the context of the above policy developments had to be significantly different from earlier plans. The approach adopted in 2010 included a focus on

institutional plans, capacity in terms of infrastructure and staffing, as well as performance in key programme areas. Enrolment planning for the university sector had to be viewed in relation to the planned major expansion of the college sector, as well as the policy requirement to accommodate the growing need for increased participation by National Senior Certificate (NSC) and the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) candidates who were eligible for admission to certificate, diploma or degree programmes at a higher education institution. However, the enrolment planning process should not be seen as a panacea to address all system inefficiencies, but as a mechanism to assist the establishment of a single, but coherent, post-school system. In fact, it was argued in the DHET that the exercise of enrolment planning should be broadened to encompass institutional planning as a whole, rather than a piecemeal approach to the planning of the sector.

The Ministerial Statement on University Funding 2011/12 published in December 2010 (DHET) makes a coherent argument for the following principles to be reinforced:

- Access for NSC and NCV candidates must be prioritised;
- Access to occupational specific programmes to increase;
- Expansion of SET in line with the NPHE to continue;
- Increasing enrolment in Master and Doctorate programmes;
- Marginal increases in distance education provision; and
- Improvement in graduate output to ensure efficient utilisation of resources.

The next chapter will focus on the setting and achievement of enrolment targets by analysing data for the period 1994 to 2010. It will also look at the possible models for expansion of growth proposed in the Ministerial Statement 2010, the Green Paper (DHET, 2012) and the targets set by the Presidency for the Minister that are to be achieved by 2014 (The Presidency, 2010).

The Green Paper for the Post-School Education and Training System (DHET, 2012) broadly sketches the architecture of the new DHET and the vision for widening of access to different institutional typologies ranging from universities and FET colleges to private institutions and skills development institutions. The focus in terms of the university sector is confined largely to increasing enrolment in higher education, reviewing the resourcing and funding of the sector, expanding financial aid, as well as brief references to research output, differentiation and quality. As a policy document sketching the newly configured system it works in placing

the different institutional types in the sector and describing the vision for each sector. However, the university sector is narrowly described as a vehicle for increasing headcount enrolment, with no focus on research-intensive universities and the role of the sector in the knowledge economy.

What is clear from the narrative of policy development from 1994 is that social justice remains an abiding theme, although the instruments selected to achieve equity of access and widening of access differ. Lo (2010:1), in an analysis of reforms in education in Hong Kong, pointed out that for policy-makers 'education is a major state planning apparatus serving national economic goals'. This view is borne out in South Africa, analysing the Green Paper (DHET, 2012) and various other statements made on the current higher education policy narrowly, and the post-school system more generally. Policies are now linked to unemployment statistics, learnerships, internships, production of graduates for the knowledge economy and fine grained analysis of supply and demand linked to the economy. Bhorat and Lundall (2004) referred to the skills dissonance between expectations of the labour market and availability of graduates, hence the country's high unemployment rates. This language is evident in the broad policy outcome of the DHET, which is to develop 'a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path' (DHET, 2010). The issue of unemployed youth features in several policy documents and analysis from National Treasury, the Human Resource Development Strategy of SA (HRD-SA, 2011) and Cloete and Sheppard (2009), and remains a pressing concern. This is a shift from the 1990s, when the preoccupation of policy-makers was on widening access and narrowing the rift between and amongst higher education institutions based on apartheid illogic. One could argue that the synergies brought about by the creation of a post-school education and training landscape heighten government's focus on the link between the economy and skills development. The Minister's address at the launch of a Labour Market Intelligence Project reinforces this view:

> *There is no question that boosting the supply of skills has positive implications for both economic and social justice imperatives in South Africa. It ensures that the country has a continuous supply of the required skills for overall economic development while also contributing to individual mobility within the labour market* (4 September 2012).

Despite a growing coalescence between various policies, it is notable that the National Planning Commission (NPC) Diagnostic Report identifies higher education problems only as

being enrolment, throughput and graduates with the skills required for the economy (NPC, 2011:16). The United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and European Union (EU) countries have, over the last decade, focused on the same problems, with the constraint of resources and the rising cost of higher education taking centre stage. Though the model of funding is distinctly different from that in SA, the recent student tuition fee crisis in Canada in 2011 and 2012 shows how reduced state funding to universities leads to a corresponding shift of the burden to students in the form of tuition fees. Spikes in tuition fees in these countries led to widespread demonstrations by students who recognised that the role of the state as a primary funder of higher education was reducing. The burden of the rising cost of higher education has been placed with students and parents. Simply put, universities are reliant on state subsidy and student fees as primary income streams. Reduction in one, results in pressure on the other stream. The reduction of subsidy inadvertently results in universities increasing tuition fees placing the burden on the students. Lu (2011) detailed the beginnings of the protest in Canada and highlights the key figures that are of concern. In 1985, universities were funded 83 percent from government sources and 13 percent from tuition. By 2005, those numbers had changed to 64 and 24 percent respectively (Yu, 2011). Thus, the furore that erupted over tuition fees was directly linked to rising student debt, as well as unemployment of graduates. Unemployment of new graduates poses a severe threat to reduction of student debt as the principle is that graduates earning would be in a position to reduce debt by paying back. The crisis highlighted in Canada is one which has repeatedly played itself out in SA. Thus, the NSFAS review estimated that in 2009, institution debt was R 2, 7 billion (DHET, 2010:xv).

The UK witnessed violent student protest action over proposed tuition fee hikes and despite the guarantees of increase in student loans, the burden of debt is again guaranteed to grow. Despite some assurances from the government on ensuring that students from lower income groups have access to higher education, protestors took to the streets in both 2010 and 2011 (BBC, 2011). From April–August 2012, Chile experienced student protests, with demands focused on equitable education rights and appropriate government spending on the public school and university system. The above incidents resonate with the South African context, where the contribution of the state has reduced from a high of 80 percent to approximately 50 percent at some institutions. The rising cost of higher education and some of the reforms in most countries contain the rhetoric of equity, access and the need to widen participation rates yet the actual policy instruments used appear to work counter to these principles.

Sayed (2000) argued that the state devolves the responsibility for planning to the institution, but retains control over the master plan (Sayed, 2000:485). The reality is that funding allocations are determined by the state and an institution's plans are limited or expanded according to the resources available. In an analysis of policy development from 1994 to 2010, it appears that there have been no significant changes in the 'desire of the state to be an interventionist agent in restructuring the system' (Sayed, 2000:285). The legacy of apartheid in terms of education continues to dominate the discourse in policy texts and despite the major structural redesign of the mergers, incorporations and closures, the system is still not primed for significant expansion. Despite the claim that the state should play an interventionist role in order to focus on goals of redress and equity, the Green Paper (DoE, 1996:40) identifies the lack of capacity at the level of the state to actually make significant inroads. Badat (2010) pointed out that there are capacity constraints, both in the sector and in the department, to tackle the challenges facing the post-school system. The central argument made in this chapter is that despite what seems to be continual policy checks, reversals, contradictory agendas and advances, the success of the policy is dependent on the capacity of institutions to interpret and respond, and for government to create the enabling conditions for implementation.

3.6. CONCLUSION

The preceding analysis of the policy interventions reveals the following:

(i) The logical connectivity amongst the different policy initiatives is diluted by delays in policy implementation;

(ii) The time lag that exists between development of government initiated planning and the filter-down effect at institutions is a minimum of two years for minimal impact and significantly more for major impact;

(iii) The impact of planning does not take into account different contexts of institutions;

(iv) Planning interventions are long term and the policy shifts, gaps and reversals will have an effect on the long-term or medium-term goals;

(v) Planning scenarios are modelled on ideal socio-economic conditions and are not linked decisively to fluctuations in the economy and other variables;

(vi) Planning undertaken by government is subject to interpretation and implementation at the institutional level. The interpretation and implementation at institutional level are variables depending on expertise, resources and follow-through;

(vii) Targets set in terms of shifts in discipline areas assume that incentives offered by government will translate into student choices or preparedness on the part of students to select particular disciplines;

(viii) The impact of limited state funding has increased institutions' reliance on student fees radically. The impact of the cost of higher education for a student has a corresponding link with exclusion and access issues.

This chapter has provided a description of some of the major policy initiatives between 1994 and 2012. While not an exhaustive account of policy development and implementation, it serves as a guide to the key milestone moments in the period under review. The analysis confirms that widening of access remains an abiding goal for higher education, although it is now complicated by rising costs of higher education, inadequate flows from the basic education system to higher education, limited resources to support expansion, and shifts in the discourse of access linking it more closely to the economic development and growth path of the country. The following chapter will focus on the quantitative data and evaluate the extent to which growth of the sector has taken place in relation to the goal of widening access.

CHAPTER 4
HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCING AND ACCESS

> *An enabling policy framework that encompasses thoughtful state supervision, effective steering, predictability, continuity and consistency in policy is vitally necessary for higher education to realise its social purposes and goals. However, while an enabling policy framework is vitally important, it is on its own not enough. Such a framework must be also supported and reinforced by adequate state funding, otherwise the promise of higher education will be undermined by financial constraints* (Badat, 2010:18).

4.1. OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the growth of the higher education system in SA is reviewed through analysis of participation rates by race and gender, funding allocations, NSFAS, and the critical problem of inflows into and out of higher education. The funding of higher education has been identified as a necessary lever for the realisation of the goal of widening access in all key policy documents (DoE, 1997; NPHE, 2001; DHET, 2012). In the previous chapter the focus was on the narrative informing the policy development phase for the period 1994–2012. It is the contention in this thesis that sufficient and efficient resourcing of the higher education system is necessary for the expansion of the system to take place, both in terms of the needs of the country and in terms of addressing inequities of the past. Funding has been referred to in the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) as a strategic lever along with planning. The analysis that was undertaken during the research and which is discussed here will show that resourcing provided for a slow growth trajectory and that the massification rhetoric of 1994 was not resourced.

This chapter will demonstrate that policy implementation delays had consequences for institutions and transformation of the sector. Furthermore, the chapter will describe the analysis that was undertaken of the financing of higher education and whether or not resourcing was sufficient for the envisaged expansion of the sector. Affordability, as a dimension of access, is discussed in relation to NSFAS allocations. Both fiscal constraints in terms of state resourcing and the abilities of students to access higher education from an affordability perspective impact negatively on participation rates. Following on a discussion of the resourcing of higher education, analysis that was undertaken of participation rates in

the sector will be provided, with a view to evaluating progress against goals set out in the NPHE (DoE, 2001).

4.2. POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Policy reform measures instituted at government level have a time-lag with regard to implementation, as well being subject to interpretation at the institutional level. Consequently, there is a fairly substantial delay in the production of outputs or outcomes. In some cases, the desired outcomes are not achieved. Trowler (2002:6) argued that policy-making and implementation are 'contextually contingent'. In other words, policy-making and implementation are not viewed as following a 'rational-purposive account', as it is argued that this conception 'fails to capture the messiness of policy making and its implementation' (Trowler, 2002:7). The model put forward by Trowler is explained best by Reynolds and Saunders (1987:44):

> *... policy is expressed in a number of practices, e.g. the production of texts and rhetoric and the expression of project and national policy management, in school [and university], in classrooms, and in staffrooms. Policy is also expressed by different participants who exist in a matrix of differential, although not simply, hierarchic power. Finally, participants are both receivers and agents of policy and, as such, their 'production' of policy reflects priorities, pressures and interests characterising their location on an implementation staircase* (Trowler, 2002:7).

The model is salient to the analysis of the goal of widening access, as well as the policy-making process and the implementation thereof in SA. In the previous chapter, where policy formulation and implementation were discussed, the role of institutions and the various actors in the higher education sector were alluded to briefly. Through a series of interviews and analysis of the data, the relevance of the implementation staircase as a tool to understand the impact of multiple contexts on policy-making can be seen. The following diagram in Figure 4.1, adapted from Trowler (2002:9), clearly demonstrates the contexts that subject policy-making to interpretation and differential implementation. Critical players not included in the staircase are: external stakeholders, such as business; the labour market; potential users of the system; and other key government departments amongst others.

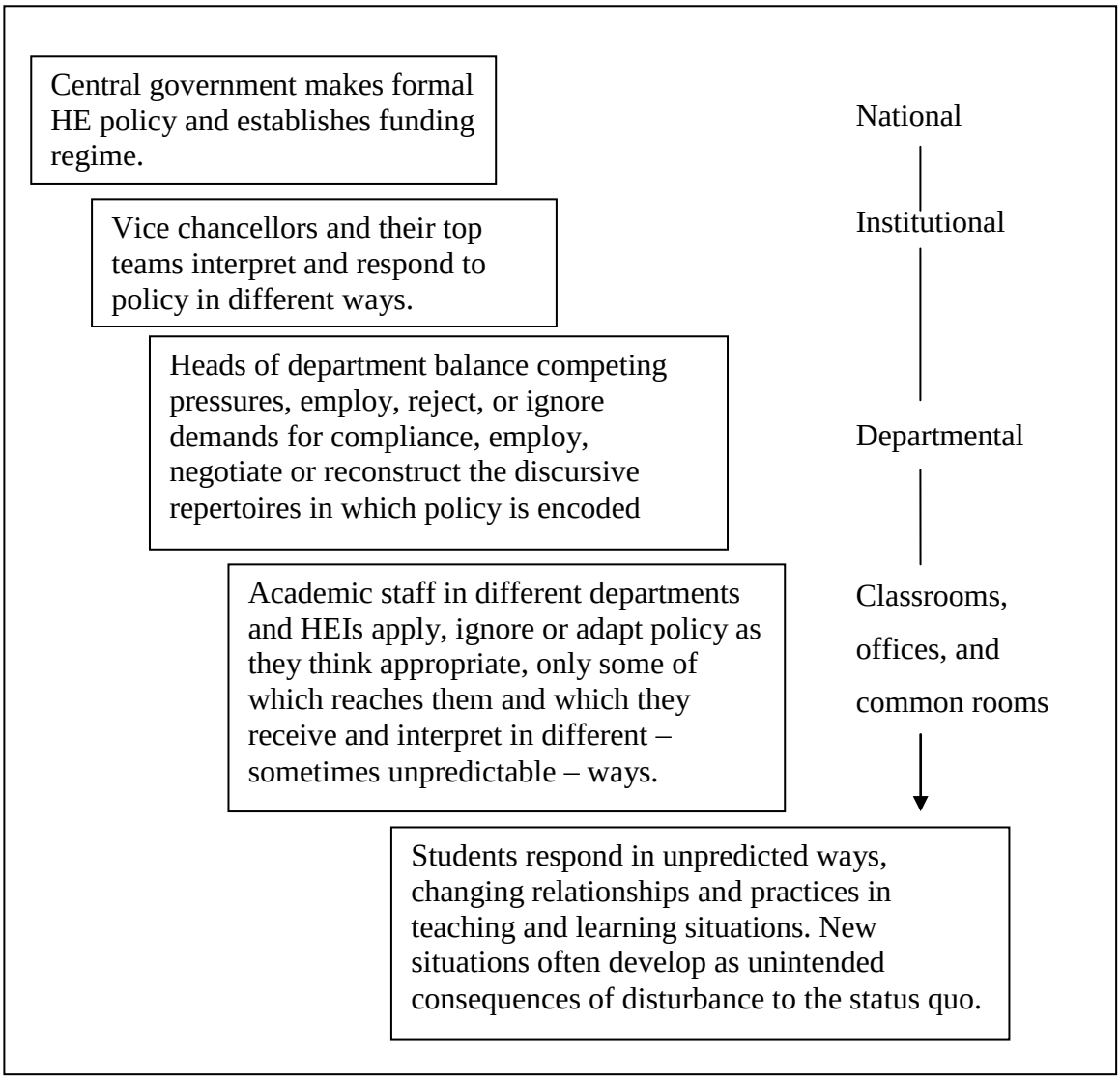


FIGURE 4.1: THE IMPLEMENTATION STAIRCASE ADAPTED FROM REYNOLDS AND SAUNDERS, 1987

Source: Trowler, 2002:9.

Policy analysts have argued that the belief that 'policy is linear and sequential' has to be discarded and that what we are faced with is 'complex, multi-layered, iterative and intersecting policy development and implementation' (CHE, 2004b:36). This dispenses with the view that once a problem has been identified and target outcomes are specified, implementation will take place and then the desired outputs and outcomes will logically follow. It is clear that in the real dynamic world, this is not the path that is followed. It is critical to assert that the linear, sequential view of policy neglects a multitude of policies that emanate from different government departments and governance structures in the country (national, provincial and local government). In addition, the dynamics of actors and agencies (higher education institutions and individuals in the system) are constantly interpreting and re-

interpreting policies. Transformation of the higher education system and the mission to achieve both 'high skills' and 'high growth' are not achievable if policy development and implementation take place in silos.

The goal of widening access and the several policy measures put in place in the post-1994 period were evaluated in the previous chapter. The focus was on government interventions specifically tracing the evolving policy primarily, as it focused on dismantling barriers to access for disadvantaged groups, as well as to widen access broadly in order to produce a sufficiently qualified cohort of graduates to participate in the reconstruction of society and contribute to the development of the economy. The latter two challenges of widening access and responsiveness make up a theme that reverberates in all policy documents starting with the NCHE (DoE, 1996).

It is difficult to establish a correlation between growth in enrolment and graduates directly to specific policy initiatives. This has perhaps been a central challenge in this research. However, as the analysis of the data will demonstrate, growth has occurred, although targets set by the government have not been achieved. Badat (2012:130) discussed the challenge of distinguishing between 'equity of access, and equity of opportunity and outcomes for historically disadvantaged social groups'. The argument made is that there may be many levers that could be used to facilitate access, but, critically, institutional systems and structures have to be geared toward supporting students in order to achieve the desired outcomes. In addition, Badat (2012) raised the question of whether or not sufficient opportunities exist for socially excluded students to access higher education and to have a fair chance of success once they are in the system. This is perhaps pointing to a divergence between social justice rhetoric and the reality that many of South Africa's institutions, practices and systems have not transformed.

As is the nature of quantitative data, the quality of graduates is not measurable, though some studies have pointed to factors like unemployability of graduates and readiness or fit for purpose graduates (Moleke, 2010). Griesel and Parker (2009), in a study titled *Graduate Attributes*, spoke of the chasm between higher education and the workplace:

> *Employers sometimes voice concern over the quality of graduates exiting from universities, while higher education feels that employers are not fully appreciative of what qualities and skills these graduates do possess.*

In this chapter, several graphs are used to demonstrate trends in higher education government allocations over a 16 year period. In addition to focusing on the size of the higher education sector, critical analysis undertaken of funding allocations by government to institutions is described. It is acknowledged that funding is one of the key levers identified by government to increase access, facilitate planned growth in appropriate areas, effect redress for the previously socially excluded and ensure the transformation of the higher education system. It will be demonstrated that despite the increased funding to the higher education sector, there has not been a real increase in the funds allocated and definitely not in the quantum required for the envisaged growth.

The legacy of apartheid in higher education cannot be addressed isolated from other socio-economic issues that are part of the South African social fabric. It is these socio-economic factors that have to be addressed simultaneously in order to effect the transformation that is required. As discussed earlier, funding of public higher education has two distinctive roles, in that it: operates to steer the system towards targets; and it reflects the commitment of the state to higher education as a public good. The inheritance of diverse forms of higher education institutions and multiple governance mechanisms from pre-1994 created a significant challenge for the DoE/DHET, as allocations had to be normalised across the sector given the divergence of funding mechanisms for different higher education institutions depending on the history and origin of each institution.

4.3. RESOURCING AS A PROBLEM

This section uses data made available from the HEMIS and other sources from the DoE/DHET. Analysis of the data demonstrates that the strain on financial resources is a serious limiting factor in promotion of inclusion and equity in higher education. The restricted inflows from the school system into higher education are a second factor contributing to exclusion from higher education.

The context of education needs further elaboration, as the inflows into higher education largely determine the extent to which participation rates increase. Furthermore, access restricted by diminished state support for higher education institutions suppresses the potential for growth in student numbers largely on financial grounds. These are by no means the only two factors, but they do provide an important perspective on the reality of low

participation in higher education. Social inequalities, as demonstrated earlier, deepen the lack of access to higher education.

The turbulence in higher education during the period 2000–2007, when mergers and incorporations were occurring and with the beleaguered HDIs finding themselves in a financial crisis, must be considered when discussing the issue of funding higher education. A conservative estimate places the expenditure on mergers at R 3 billion (Dibetle, 2008; Ministry of Higher Education and Training, 2011). It has not been exhaustively documented, as the cost of the mergers remain hidden, given that some components were funded by sources within universities and others by donor funds. Additional funding had to be provided to some historically disadvantaged universities that found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy.

> *In the 1998/1999 financial year, R27 million was available for institutional redress purposes and was allocated on the basis of the funding formula to all the historically Black institutions .... However, the R57 million available for institutional redress in the 1999/2000 financial year, was allocated to assist three institutions in severe financial distress* (DoE, 2001:14-15).

The under-funding of higher education and the bluntness of the SAPSE formula had already been identified by the NCHE (1996) and the White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997). Massification of the higher education system or tempered planned growth, redress and transformation objectives, as espoused by the White Paper (DoE, 1997), NPHE (DoE, 2001) and the New Funding Framework (Ministry of Education, 2004a), would require nuanced frameworks and logical policy development and implementation. What this translates to in current day terms is the following assessment that any review of funding must take cognisance of:

1. Recognition that higher education numbers have grown significantly since 1994;
2. State funding of higher education has not increased exponentially;
3. There are huge backlogs in terms of existing infrastructure that must be addressed;
4. Developments in technology have been largely funded by universities;
5. Increasing demands on a more holistic student experience place pressure on the internal structures of universities;
6. Decline in state funding in real terms has impacted on tuition fees shifting the burden for recovery of costs to the students.

4.4. FINANCE AND EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The previous chapter analysed some elements of the refinements to the funding formula that have been undertaken. The argument that is developed in this chapter is that the government commitment to the goal of access has not translated itself into the level of investment that is required. The under-funding has placed enormous pressure on institutions to rely on other sources of income, such as fees and other third stream income.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the levels of funding from the state to HEIs. As a percentage of the overall state budget, there has been no significant increase; neither has there been an increase as a percentage of GDP. As a percentage of GDP, state funding of higher education has actually declined from a high of 0,82 percent in 1996 to a low of 0,69 percent in 2010/11, with a marginal increase to 0,73 percent in the 2012/13 financial year. As a percentage of the government budget, from 3,08 percent in 1999/2000, it has consistently declined, reaching 2,47 percent in 2010/11. Badat (2010:18) made the point that ambitious expansion, redress and equity targets need to be adequately resourced or it could be a serious handicap.

TABLE 4.1: STATE ALLOCATIONS TO UNIVERSITIES

Years	State Allocation to Universities in Rm	% of Total State Budget	% of GDP
1995/96	4072.8	2.69	0.72
1996/97	5207.2	2.97	0.82
1997/98	5431.4	2.86	0.78
1998/99	6003	2.98	0.79
1999/2000	6610	3.08	0.79
2000/01	7072	3.02	0.74
2001/02	7532	2.86	0.72
2002/03	8019	2.75	0.67
2003/04	8926	2.72	0.68
2004/05	9879	2.68	0.68
2005/06	10780	2.59	0.67
2006/07	11755	2.50	0.64
2007/08	13057	2.41	0.63
2008/09	15120	2.38	0.66
2009/10	16742	2.24	0.69
2010/11	19108	2.36	0.69
2011/12	21997	2.47	0.73
2012/13	24131	2.49	0.73

Source: DHET, 2012.

Despite many appeals from the sector, the overall contribution has not sufficiently taken into account the growth in the higher education sector in terms of student numbers, aging infrastructure and the need for renewed investment in the system.

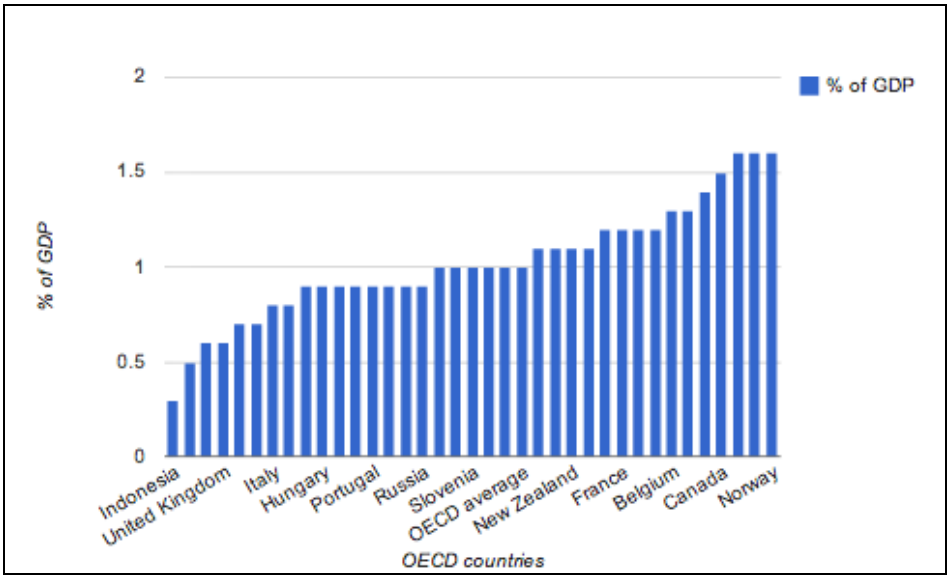


FIGURE 4.2: PERCENTAGE OF GDP SPENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Source: OECD, 2011.

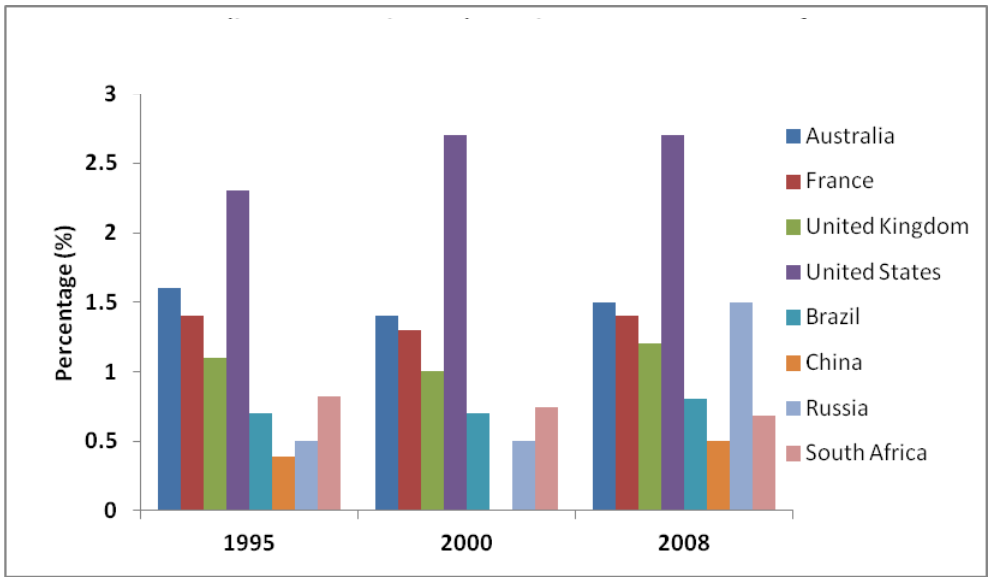


FIGURE 4.3: COMPARISON OF EXPENDITURE ON TERTIARY EDUCATION AS A PERCENTAGE OF GDP

Source: The World Bank, 2011.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 above provide a snapshot of the percentage of GDP spent on higher education. Figure 4.2 provides a comparative of a select number of countries that spent below one percent of GDP on higher education in 2008. Figure 4.3 presents data measured in time

intervals for 1995, 2000 and 2008 for a grouping of countries. Both figures demonstrate that developed countries allocate a high proportion of GDP to higher education compared to developing countries. The data presented in Figure 4.3 is particularly interesting, in that it shows the significant increase in investment made by the state in China and Brazil, which resulted in participation rates that increased significantly over the last 20 years.

For SA, as a developing country, it is clear that the trap of under-resourcing of higher education must be avoided. The history of differentiated resourcing of higher education institutions under apartheid continues to create dissonance in the sector as a whole. The reality is that former historically disadvantaged institutions have poorer infrastructure, attract poorer students and are unable to raise tuition fees. This dilemma creates undue financial pressure on these institutions. However, the sector as a whole has expanded and given the rising costs of inflation and higher academic salaries, there is a reasonable expectation that resources would be allocated to ensure sufficiency of funds. However, it has been demonstrated that the increases in institutional funding by the state have not kept pace with both growth and rising costs. The consequences will lead to decay of universities, the deterioration of the quality of education and shifting the resourcing of higher education to be the responsibility of students through increases in fees. The evidence has shown that increased investment in higher education by the state confirms the commitment to education as a public good and is a translation of rhetoric into practice (Docampo, 2007:1-3). The opposite is true when the state reduces funding impacting both on the quality of higher education provision, increased participation rates and the contribution of higher education to the skills set required for the economy. Pillay (2008:185) stated that government interventions are required in countries, especially when the dual purposes of higher education are required to be bolstered. These are firstly, the creation of equal opportunities for individuals and secondly, as a vehicle for social mobility. Pillay (2008), in the same study, focused on several SADC countries and concluded that there are gross inefficiencies, inadequate resourcing of higher education and inequities in the system (Pillay, 2008:189). The logical solution is for governments to fund higher education appropriately, however, other social justice issues usually take centre stage. The end result is that these countries are unable to produce a labour force with an adequate skills set for the economy. The issue of competing globally in the realm of knowledge production then moves to the back burner.

The NSFAS Ministerial Review (DHET, 2010:83) highlighted the need for adequate and appropriate state funding of higher education, noting that, 'the inequities of our institutional landscape have a direct bearing on the dependency of institutions on state funding, as opposed to other income streams'.

It has been argued that one of the unintended consequences of the funding formula was that it produced behavioural patterns amongst higher education institutions that were not always in line with national goals and expected outcomes (DoE, 2001). What this referred to is that the financial incentives embedded in the funding formula merely rewarded headcount enrolment. This spurred some institutions to engage in partnerships with private institutions to increase enrolment figures or, alternatively, to expand into distance education provision as a low cost model that also served to increase enrolment numbers. These perverse patterns and analysis of the new funding framework indicate that for funding to produce the desired outcomes, the instruments would have to be well-calibrated and synchronised with planning processes within institutions. In other words, a funding formula that merely rewarded headcount enrolment, without a concomitant focus on success in terms of graduate output, would create perverse behaviour at institutions. By 2005, the shift in the funding formula began to align with the policy rhetoric of access with success by including teaching output, which rewarded institutions for producing graduates.

Continuing with the analysis of funding allocated, the following table produces surprising results when funding allocations are linked to student numbers and corrected for inflation. As analysed below, it demonstrates that state provision per student has not kept up with rising inflation. Inflation rates have been calculated back to 1995 and used to recalculate the Rm nominal in 2010/2011 Rand. Table 4.2 below shows how expenditure in terms of the public subsidy per student has changed in real terms (i.e. after adjustment for inflation). Using this method, it is clear that in 1995/96 the per student allocation was R18 019 and that 15 years later it had increased to R21 399. Given the increasing cost of higher education, this represents a marginal growth in per student spending by the state.

Table 4.2 poses an important conundrum as to why the low level of investment by the state produced a corresponding growth in enrolment, albeit at a lesser multiple than anticipated both by the Department and the sector. The same period is characterised by low graduation rates, increased tuition fees and with several institutions experiencing a financial crisis and

mounting student debt[27]. The graduation rate may not correlate with investment or enrolment increases, as there may be multiple causes ranging from under-preparedness, personal choices and others. As a measure of effectiveness, the cost of producing graduates increased, which lends credence to the government's concern and monitoring of resources by institutions. Thus, resources could be managed efficiently, but may also not have been applied effectively to manage the access-success goal.

TABLE 4.2: HEMIS DATA FOR 1994–2011

Year	Students	R per student corrected for inflation
1995/96	557383	18 019
1996/97	574771	20 821
1997/98	569814	20 172
1998/99	559309	21 267
1999/2000	553800	22 503
2000/01	556667	22 725
2001/02	604939	21 051
2002/03	643248	19 319
2003/04	684470	19 101
2004/05	744444	19 169
2005/06	753036	19 997
2006/07	741380	21 172
2007/08	760889	21 373
2008/09	799491	21 126
2009/10	837779	20 843
2010/11	892936	21 399

Source: DHET, 2013.

This obviously requires intervention at the education system level in terms of strengthening the school system and reconceptualisation of FET colleges as feeders into the higher education system. Noting that the responsibility for teaching and learning rests with institutions, it is necessary to identify causes for the dismal graduation rates. In studies on access and success (Scott *et al*., 2007; Badsha & Cloete, 2011), it is palpably clear that graduation rates are problematic and Black students under-performing in comparison to White students. This phenomenon points once again to the shortcomings of the schooling system and the under-preparedness of students entering higher education.

[27] According to a HESA Report on Tuition Fees (2008) four major obstacles in relation to state funding of higher education are identified. These are 1) decline in state funding; 2) increase in student debt; 3) insufficiency of funds in NSFAS and 4) lack of a model to determine fees.

According to data analysed by the Financial and Fiscal Commission in 2012 (see Table 4.3), it is stated that:

> *In 2000–2010, the total income of public universities grew at an average rate of 11.6% in nominal rands and 5.2% in real rands. However, the growth rates were different for the three main funding categories. In real terms, government grants increased by an average annual rate of 3.3%, which was about half the increases in student fees (7.1%) and private income (6.4%)* (FFC, 2012:53).

TABLE 4.3: THE FINANCIAL AND FISCAL COMMISSION - INCOME IN 2000 COMPARED TO INCOME IN 2010

Income in 2000 compared to 2010 income (Rand millions)					
	2000	2010		Average annual growth 2000–2010	
		Nominal	Real	Nominal	Real
Government grants	6628	16655	9210	9.7%	3.3%
Student Fees	3381	12132	6709	13.6%	7.1%
Private Income	3591	12090	6686	12.9%	6.4%
Total	13600	40877	22605	11.6%	5.2%

Source: FFC, 2012.

Table 4.4 which is also based on the FFC data, further confirms that, in real terms, government funding per FTE enrolled student fell by 1.1 percent annually between 2000 and 2010, while student tuition fees per FTE enrolled student increased by 2.5 percent per year (FFC, 2012:54). These figures signify that the SA government's emphasis on the role of higher education has not been borne out by the expenditure patterns. The shift has placed pressure on institutions to increase fees and this has, in itself, placed a burden on the NSFAS, with demand outstripping supply.

TABLE 4.4: INCOME PER FTE

Income per FTE enrolled student (Rand thousands)					
	2000	2010		Average annual growth 2000–2010	
		Nominal	Real	Nominal	Real
Government grants	17.2	27.8	15.4	4.9%	-1.1%
Student Fees	8.8	20.2	11.	8.7%	2.5%
Private Income	9.3	20.2	11.1	8.0%	1.8%
Total	35.2	68.1	37.7	6.8%	0.7%

Source: FFC, 2012:54.

It has been demonstrated that state funding for higher education has not kept pace with increased enrolment figures. Any continuation of under-funding of higher education could make the sector precarious as it strives simultaneously for excellence and expansion. It has been argued (in Chapters 2 and 3) that the structural deficits in the education system, primarily as a result of apartheid, required serious and substantial investment in order for education to be accessible and to concurrently address the inherent inequalities of the system. Figure 4.4 demonstrates that the decline in expenditure on education is a cause for concern, as the primary and secondary FET sector provides a valuable inflow into higher education. The downward trend in expenditure for higher education is repeated in the schooling sector, as is evident in Figure 4.4. Reduction in funding in related sectors will longitudinally impact on higher education. It is evident from the illustration that overall state spending on education, as a sector, has been on a downward decline from 1995 to 2011, with a corresponding decline in school and university spend.

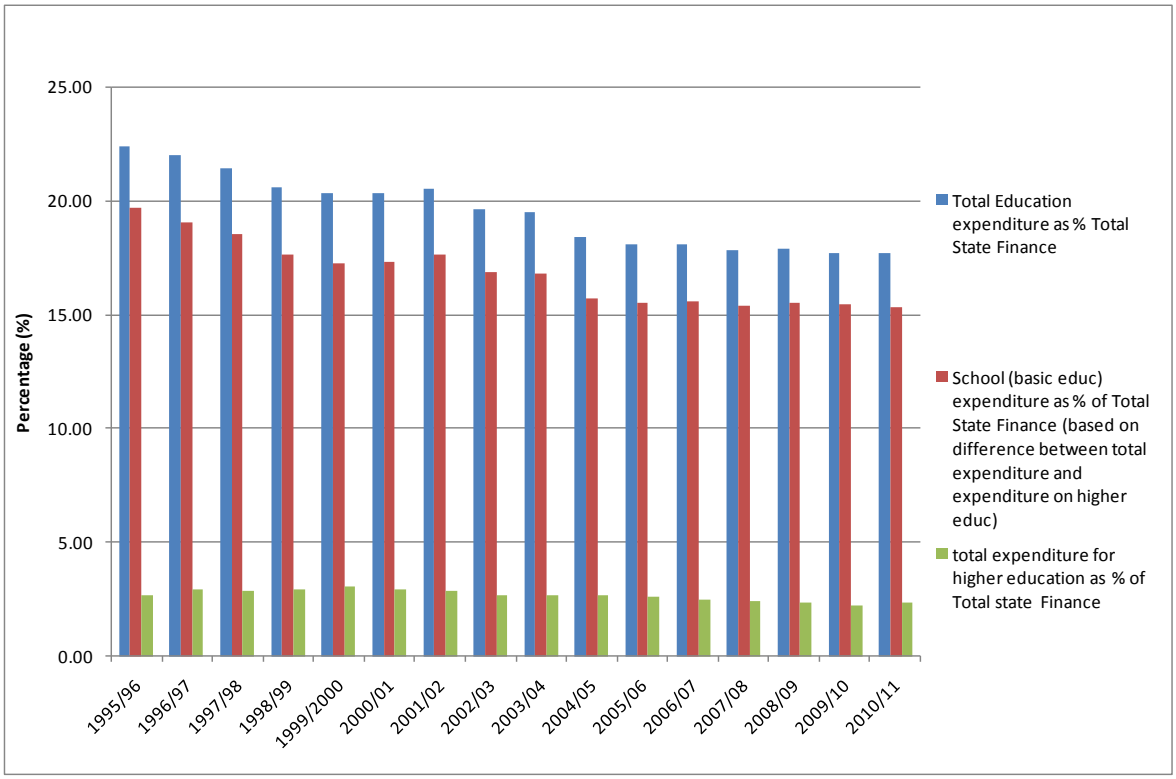


FIGURE 4.4: EXPENDITURE ON SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL STATE FINANCE

Source: DHET, 2012.

The financial allocations of the Department of Education/Department of Higher Education for the period 1994–2010 demonstrate that the dilemmas faced were the following:

(i) Maintaining the status quo and funding levels of all higher education institutions;

(ii) Minimising the negative impact on reduced funding;

(iii) Ensuring that per capita expenditure on students did not decrease, hence the need for enrolment caps;

(iv) Diversion of funds to targeted areas identified by post-democratic policy documents could detract from normal functioning of institutions. In other words, the increased focus on earmarked funds could jeopardise operations of universities by concomitant reductions in the block grant funds;

(v) Pressure on institutions to rely on student fees and private funds in the face of diminished state funding;

(vi) Equitable distribution of funds to institutions despite inequities of the past persisting;

(vii) The need to expand the sector in terms of institutional capacities for expansion yet at the same time address existing institutional infrastructure and capital growth plans.

4.5. ACCESS AND THE NUMBERS GAME

The previous section focused on the funding allocated to higher education, with special attention being paid to funding allocations to higher education by the state. It was concluded that the investment by the state was insufficient to attain the level of enrolment that would make the goal of widening access meaningful. This section deals with a close analysis of the data in relation to the term broadly used to denote participation in higher education. The participation rate is also known as the GER. It is calculated as follows:

The GER in Higher Education is defined as follows:

> GER = (Total headcount enrolment of all ages/ Total population in the 20–24 age cohort) x 100%.

The NPHE (DoE, 2001) used the GER as an indicator to measure success, as is the case in all countries. Of course, in order for the GER to be meaningful in the SA context, it would also have to be disaggregated by race to measure the goal of widening access in terms of race and gender categories. In 1994 participation rates in higher education were skewed and were not in line with the population demographics of the country. The Report of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE, 1996:91) argued that increases in participation

rates would be required in the African population and that SA would need increasing numbers of highly skilled workers. The NCHE pegged the participation rate of the 20 to 24-year-old age cohort at 21 percent in 1995 and optimistically predicted that this would increase to 30 percent over a ten year period. Thus, the prediction was that by 2005 there would be 1,5 million students enrolled in higher education (NCHE, 1996:99). The DHET in a further revision intimated that the participation rate could reach 30 percent by 2030 (DHET, 2012:45). As has been demonstrated above, investment to reach these projected participation rates would: firstly, need to be doubled; and secondly, the existing higher education system, comprising 23 universities, would have to be expanded.

The GER is a measure used internationally to understand the level of participation in higher education. The following table provides a comparison across a range of other middle income countries. It is evident from the table that SA is lagging far behind other middle income countries, at an estimated 17 percent GER.

TABLE 4.5: COMPARATIVE GER FOR A SELECTION OF COUNTRIES

Country	GER in HE (2008)
Argentina	68%
Chile	55%
Costa Rica	25%
Lebanon	52%
Malaysia	36%
Mauritius	26%
Panama	45%
South Africa	**17%**
Turkey	38%

Source: The World Bank, 2011.

Figure 4.5 below demonstrates the challenge of increasing the participation rate in line with population growth. The figure essentially points to a rising population in the 20 to 24-year-old group and again points to the need for extraordinary investment to break through the 17,8 percent GER or participation rate barrier.

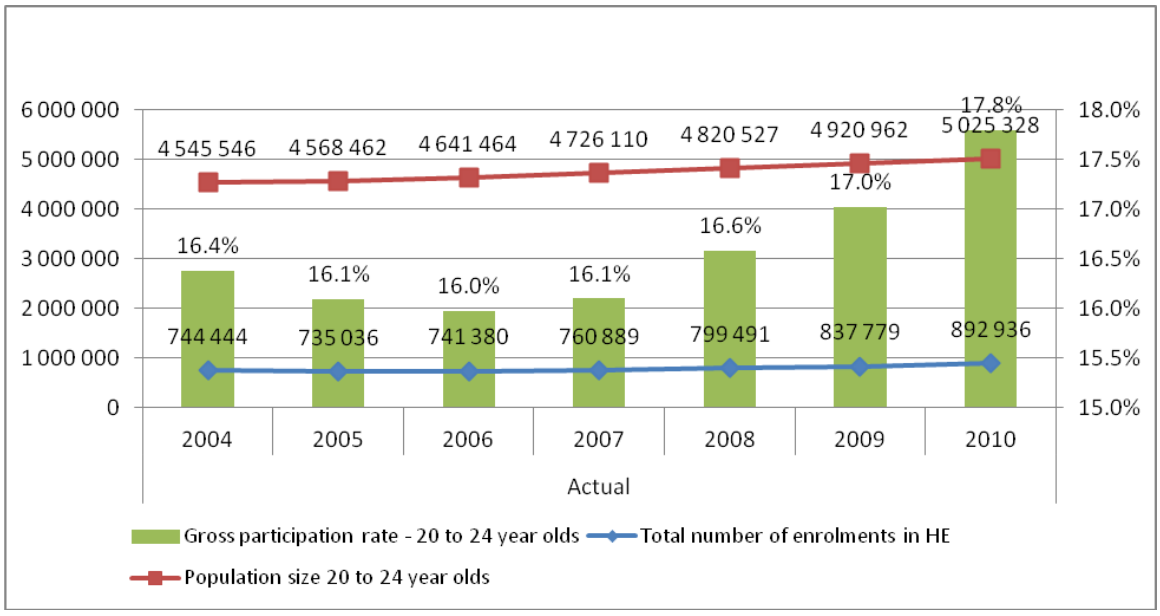


FIGURE 4.5: NATIONAL PARTICIPATION RATE: 2004–2010

Source: DHET, 2011.

Figure 4.6 shows that the NCHE predictions and calculations were misplaced, as gross participation rates did not increase between 1993 and 2000 and the participation rates of African students displayed an erratic trend. This trend is best illustrated by looking at enrolment by race and the population group numbers for the same year.

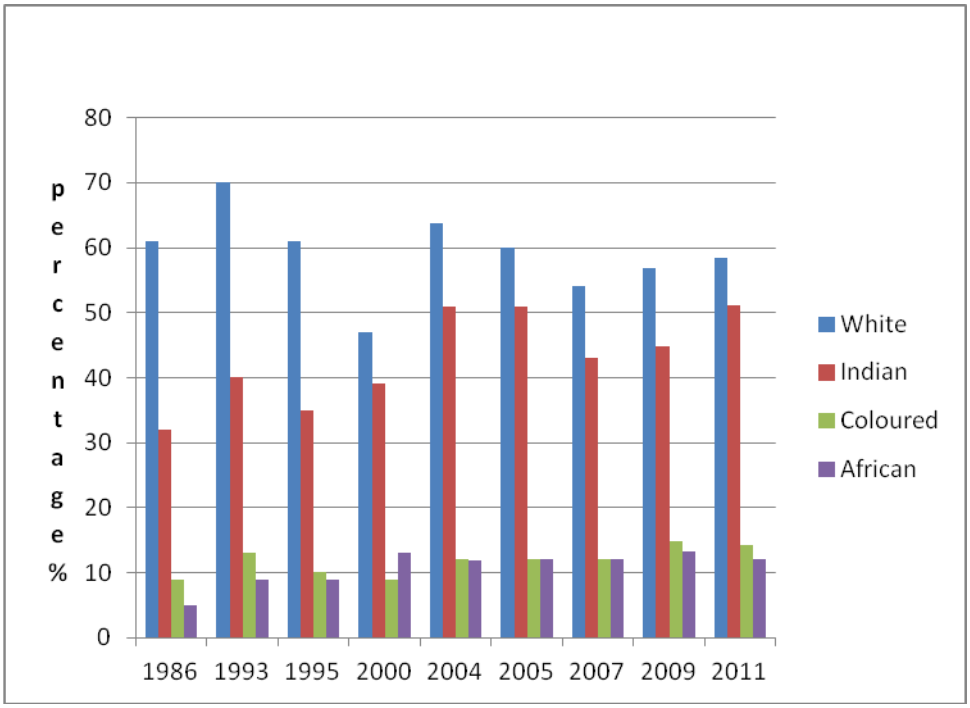


FIGURE 4.6: GROSS PARTICIPATION RATES BY RACE

Source: Bunting, 1994; DHET, 2013.

Table 4.6 provides the mid-year population estimates per race for the 20 to 24-year-olds in the population for the period 2001 to 2010. Table 4.7 provides the public university enrolment figures by race group for the same period. Using the formula for calculation of GER, the calculation is provided by race group. Table 4.8 provides the GER per race group for the same period. Over the period 2001 to 2010, the GER in total increased from 13.6 percent in 2001 to 17.8 percent in 2010.

TABLE 4.6: MID-YEAR POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR THE 20 TO 24-YEAR-OLDS IN THE POPULATION, 2001–2010

Year	Mid-year Population estimates : 20-24-year-olds in the Population				
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
2001	3,582,180	396,164	108,214	346,961	4,433,519
2002	3,647,854	387,227	108,443	326,936	4,470,460
2003	3,694,333	383,214	111,261	323,647	4,512,455
2004	3,731,113	379,605	113,570	321,258	4,545,546
2005	3,756,711	376,345	115,446	319,960	4,568,462
2006	3,831,139	376,639	116,605	317,081	4,641,464
2007	3,916,564	378,204	117,593	313,749	4,726,110
2008	4,010,639	381,006	118,528	310,354	4,820,527
2009	4,110,186	384,689	119,406	306,681	4,920,962
2010	4,214,147	389,115	119,556	302,510	5,025,328

Source: StatsSA, 2010.

TABLE 4.7: UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT ALL AGES, 2001 TO 2010

Year	University Headcount Enrolment					
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Unknown	Total Headcount Enrolment
2001	353,327	32,900	43,436	173,397	1,879	604,939
2002	377,072	37,906	47,567	178,871	1,832	643,248
2003	403,235	42,390	51,611	184,964	2,270	684,470
2004	453,621	46,091	54,326	188,714	1,692	744,444
2005	446,945	46,302	54,611	185,847	1,331	735,036
2006	451,107	48,538	54,859	184,667	2,209	741,380
2007	476,680	49,001	52,579	180,435	2,194	760,889
2008	515,058	51,647	52,401	178,140	2,245	799,491
2009	547,686	55,101	53,629	179,232	2,131	837,779
2010	595,791	58,176	54,492	178,190	6,294	892,943

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2011.

TABLE 4.8: HIGHER EDUCATION GROSS ENROLMENT RATE BY RACE

Year	GER based on Public University Enrolment Figures, 2001 to 2010				
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Total
2001	9.9%	8.3%	40.1%	50.0%	13.6%
2002	10.3%	9.8%	43.9%	54.7%	14.4%
2003	10.9%	11.1%	46.4%	57.1%	15.2%
2004	12.2%	12.1%	47.8%	58.7%	16.4%
2005	11.9%	12.3%	47.3%	58.1%	16.1%
2006	11.8%	12.9%	47.0%	58.2%	16.0%
2007	12.2%	13.0%	44.7%	57.5%	16.1%
2008	12.8%	13.6%	44.2%	57.4%	16.6%
2009	13.3%	14.3%	44.9%	58.4%	17.0%
2010	14.1%	15.0%	45.6%	58.9%	17.8%

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

The tables demonstrate that there has been a significant increase in the GER for all race groups, though the variances among the race groups are significant. By 2010 the GER for the various race groups was as follows: Africans – 14.1 percent; Coloureds – 15.0 percent; Indians – 45.6 percent; and Whites – 58.9 percent. This confirms that racial inequities continue to persist in terms of participation and that the proportional shifts that are required have shifted marginally. In relation to the goal of equity of access for all race groups, it is clear that new and different ways have to be devised either nationally or at the institutional level to change the patterns. Inflows from the school system would have to be considered, as the higher education system is dependent on the tier below for a pipeline. Data in terms of National Senior Certificate (NSC) performance by race is not available, though anecdotal evidence, based on the overall performance of schools, would suggest that there are insufficient numbers of African and Coloured students emerging who have the requisite subject choice for entrance to university.

Figure 4.7 displays the GER by gender, calculated as a percentage of the number of students (headcount) enrolled at public higher education (regardless of age) expressed as a percentage of the population, in the age group 20-24. The graph demonstrates that the trend in terms of female enrolment in higher education shows a modest increase, with a corresponding decrease in male participation. It has been argued that although there is an increase in female enrolment, 'the clustering is at the level of lower qualifications and in fields that are traditionally associated with females' (CHE, 2001:28). Figure 4.8 demonstrates that in terms

of female participation much progress has been made and it appears that this NPHE goal has been achieved.

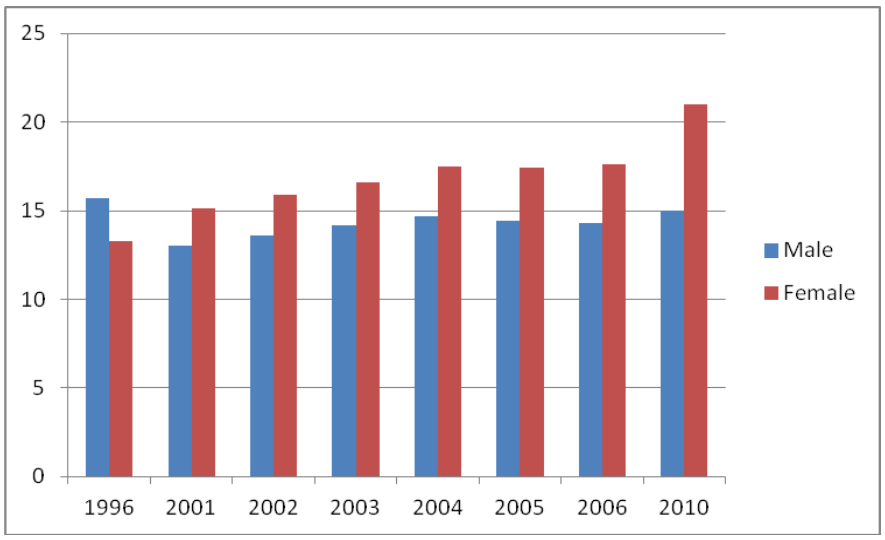


FIGURE 4.7: GROSS ENROLMENT RATIOS BY GENDER

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Analysts (e.g.: Bunting, 2002; Subotzky, 2003; CHE, 2004b) have pointed out that the enrolment trend demonstrated that African students were shifting to *Historically Advantaged Institutions* and into distance programmes with programme choices in the fields of Education and the Humanities. The problem is further compounded, in that gross participation rates have not shifted dramatically and the shift that has taken place is contrary to the targets of the NPHE, especially in relation to Science, Engineering and Technology. Researchers in higher education make a correlation between economic development of a country and participation rates. This argument is advanced by policy analysts in SA, who bemoan the fact that the country's participation rates are on par with low-income countries, as per World Bank statistics. Planning documents like the NPHE (DoE, 2001) advocated that by 2011, SA's target participation rate should be 20 percent. This would still leave SA in the same space as low-income countries, despite investment in higher education and more than 20 years of post-apartheid democracy. If the country aspires in terms of development to be globally competitive, it is clear that higher education participation rates have to improve significantly. The alternative is bleak and has been flagged as a critical disabling factor by the National Planning Commission (2011) and the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2011).

In highly industrialized countries, around 50 percent of the typical higher education-bound age group, of 18 to 23, are enrolled in various types of higher education institutions, compared with 21 percent in middle-income countries, and 6 percent in low-income countries. In most countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the level of participation in higher education is still below the 30 percent mark (World Bank, 1994:1).

4.6. AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS

Critical to achieving access is ensuring that participation is equitable and that affordability of higher education is not a barrier to access. Funding allocations by government declined over a period of 16 years, forcing institutions to move towards recovery via tuition fees. The model adopted in SA regarding the funding of higher education is one of shared responsibility. This means that the state provides base funding for higher education, but that students' parents and other stakeholders need to take responsibility for the deficit. In the analysis of the funding formula and its effects on institutions, it was concluded that the lack of growth in funding despite substantial growth in student numbers has resulted in institutions scrambling for alternative streams of income. Johnstone (2003:352-4) provided a perspective on student liability for fees by putting forward two inter-related arguments. The first is that there is a high cost per student at higher education institutions, which is linked to the nature of the academic enterprise; and secondly, the pressure placed on institutions by increased enrolment figures. Linked to this, Johnstone (2003) argued that developing countries operate on a limited tax base that is under pressure to deliver on other public needs, thus resulting in fiscal constraint on the part of government and thus leading to the concept of cost-sharing.

The South African situation requires some elucidation. Fiscal reform, as a result of replacement of the RDP strategy with GEAR, curtailed social spending and introduced efficiency and effectiveness as paramount goals, subordinating the 'education for all' promise and introducing the notion of incremental realisation of this goal. Affordability is a critical dimension of higher education and it could be argued that limited funding of higher education resulted in the unintended consequence of institutions increasing tuition costs (Pandor, 2006). The White Paper (DoE, 1997) introduced the concept of cost-sharing and it will be seen from the graphs presented below that the statutory body set up by the DoE to provide student loans on a recovery basis has performed adequately using certain innovations.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act 56 (RSA, 1999) was promulgated in November 1999. The purpose of the Act was:

> *To establish the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); to provide for the management, governance and administration of the NSFAS; to provide for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students at public higher education institutions and for the administration of such loans and bursaries; to provide for the recovery of loans; to provide for the repeal of the provision of Special Funds for Tertiary Education and Training Act, 1993; and to provide for matters connected therewith* (NSFAS, 2011:1).

The NSFAS Act established the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) as the successor-in-title to the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA). The innovations introduced by NSFAS can be summarised as follows:

1. Loan recipients pay back the loan once they are employed and earning above a threshold income;
2. Interest is charged at 2 percent above inflation;
3. Academic performance (success) results in conversion of loan into a bursary on a sliding scale;
4. Financial aid offices at higher education institutions serve as NSFAS agents;
5. Criteria to determine eligibility are broadly determined by NSFAS and interpreted by institutions.

The NPHE (DoE, 2001) and the White Paper (DoE, 1997) refer to the vital role that NSFAS can play in promoting access and success. NSFAS information derived from its Annual Reports indicated that by 2010 the maximum award had increased to approximately R56 000. The success of the NSFAS scheme is predicated on some of its unique features and the intense recovery campaign that is required to enable the recycling of funds several times over. Thus for example, in 2013, R 554 356 359 was re-injected into the NSFAS pool of funds for additional loans to students[28]. As a vehicle to address critical financial exclusion issues, it has been evaluated as being both a life-line for students and for institutions faced with student debt and declining numbers.

[28] Information from Acting CFO of NSFAS, 10 December 2013.

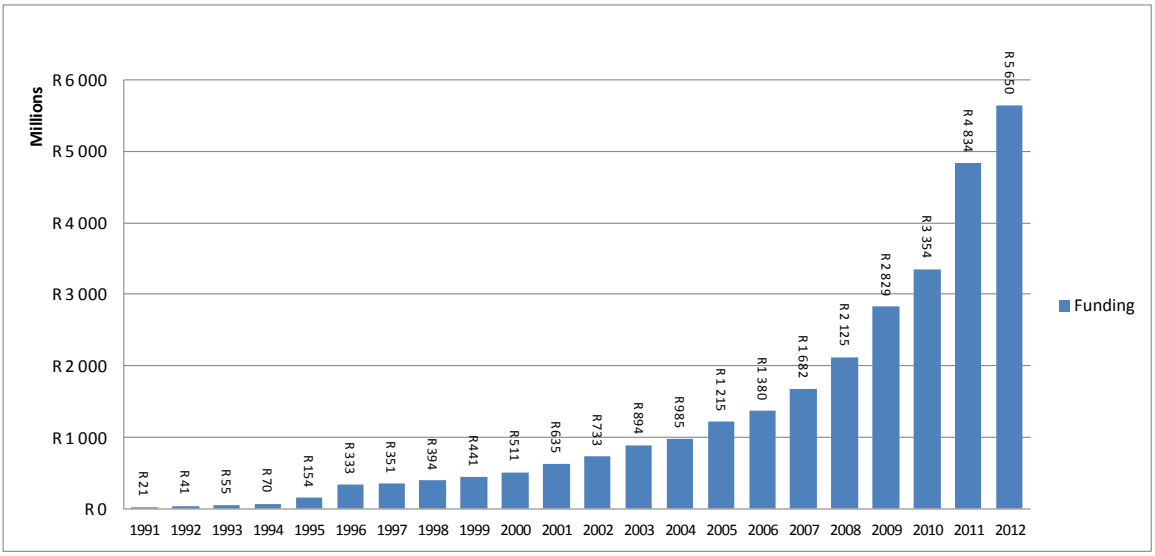


FIGURE 4.8: NSFAS ALLOCATIONS FROM 1991 TO 2012

Source: NSFAS, 2012.

Figure 4.8 demonstrates an exponential growth in the NSFAS allocations. The figures include DHET allocations, as well as funds from donor sources. Despite the increases, each year there is inevitably a shortage evinced by students resorting to strike action or calling on NSFAS to allocate more funds. The reality is that higher education in SA has increasingly become unaffordable for low to middle income students. In 2010, the Ministerial Review for the NSFAS argued that in a middle income country like SA there was a need to increase the quantum of funding allocated to a scheme like NSFAS, given that 25 percent of the students in higher education were on bursaries or loans. Of course student aid could accelerate access, but then it begs the question as to whether or not it would improve success.

It is evident that the rising cost of fees places enormous pressure on the amounts allocated to students as loans. In 2011, the maximum amount was R 54 000 and in 2012, R 60 000. The cost for tuition for a degree plus residence would easily be over R 70 000 at any of the premium universities. The Ministerial Review recognised that there is a double-edged sword in that students did not receive the full cost of study given the discrepancies between the tuition fees and the maximum award. In addition, universities received allocations and often top sliced the awards to students. This in effect, it is suggested, contributes to the ability of students to be successful in their studies (2010:39). It was proposed that the NSFAS model should follow the student rather than the institutional allocation model. Priority should be given to students who studied at no-fee paying schools, from poor municipalities or whose household incomes fell below the threshold of the SARS tax tables (xxi). The essence of the

argument was that there were simpler mechanisms to determine need and that the students should be able to apply directly to NSFAS without relying on institutional processes. In addition, the report concedes that the burden of debt for the student was excessive and that government would need to explore ways of implementing free education especially for low income groups. The injection of funds that would be required to implement such solutions was significant and it was clear that despite government's commitment to such an implementation plan, the affordability for the state would require policy machinations and concessions from the National Treasury.

4.7. INFLOWS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

The racial disparities in the participation rates are a cause for concern for instance Cloete and Sheppard (2009) showed that 2 812 471 South Africans in the 18 to 24-years-old age bracket are actively excluded from active engagement in the education system, termed NEET (Sheppard, 2009:40). The data presented is drawn from the 2007 Community Survey. According to data released by Stats SA in 2013, this figure has not improved, with 2 945 018 representing youth who either have no opportunity to enter university or who have completed some form of education or training, but who are classified as NEET. Table 4.9 suggests that there are significant numbers of this group between the ages of 18 and 24 who have not completed formal secondary education pointing to problems in the schooling system and suggesting that there are possible high dropout rates.

The NCHE (DoE, 1996) and the NPHE (DoE, 2001) recognised that the goal of widening access was contingent on improvements in the schooling system. There was an understanding that the inflows from the school system would need to be addressed before higher education could aspire to increased participation rates. Figure 4.10 and Table 4.10 are discussed together, as they depict the critical inflow variable of understanding epistemological access in terms of meeting the requirements for entrance into higher education. Figure 4.10 demonstrates an irregular pattern, with no discernible explanation for the dips and improvements seen. What the statistics in Table 4.10 indicate is that there is a worrying trend in the decline of NSC candidates who take the core subjects of Physical Sciences and Mathematics. Between 2008 and 2011, there were: 75 373 fewer candidates with Mathematics; and 36 715 fewer candidates with Physical Sciences. There is a visible decline in the actual numbers of candidates passing in both these key subjects. If the assumption is that higher education will expand, especially in SET, then the data presented is alarming, as,

contrary to expectations of increased outflows from the school system of candidates with the requisite subjects, there is a decline that is masked by using percentages.

TABLE 4.9: NEET STATUS

Census 2011: NEET Status by Highest level of education by Age in completed years								
Qualification Level	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**Total**
Primary or less	46 206	53 174	59 887	65 222	62 882	66 984	64 606	**418 961**
Secondary education less than Grade 10	50 029	60 540	68 085	73 137	68 686	68 609	65 101	**454 187**
Grade 10 or higher but less than Grade 12	55 441	86 303	122 612	149 002	154 796	160 027	154 148	**882 329**
Grade 12 / NTC III	52 578	115 832	164 288	192 456	195 224	192 762	185 662	**1 098 802**
Certificate with Grade 12 / Std 10	1 005	2 674	4 592	6 318	7 313	7 627	7 738	**37 267**
Diploma with Grade 12 / Std 10	262	810	1 864	3 391	4 811	5 776	5 981	**22 895**
Higher Diploma	-	-	900	1 870	2 722	3 366	3 453	**12 311**
Post Higher Diploma Master's; Doctoral Diploma	-	-	88	178	233	273	324	**1 096**
Bachelors Degree	-	-	298	727	1 571	2 123	2 517	**7 236**
Bachelors Degree and Postgraduate Diploma/B-Tech	-	-	-	175	316	439	525	**1 455**
Honours degree	-	-	-	-	379	705	765	**1 849**
Higher Degree Master's / PhD	-	-	-	-	156	219	322	**697**
Other	332	564	820	987	1 050	1 078	1 099	**5 930**
Total	**205 855**	**319 897**	**423 436**	**493 463**	**500 138**	**509 989**	**492 240**	**2 945 018**

Source: StatsSA, 2011.

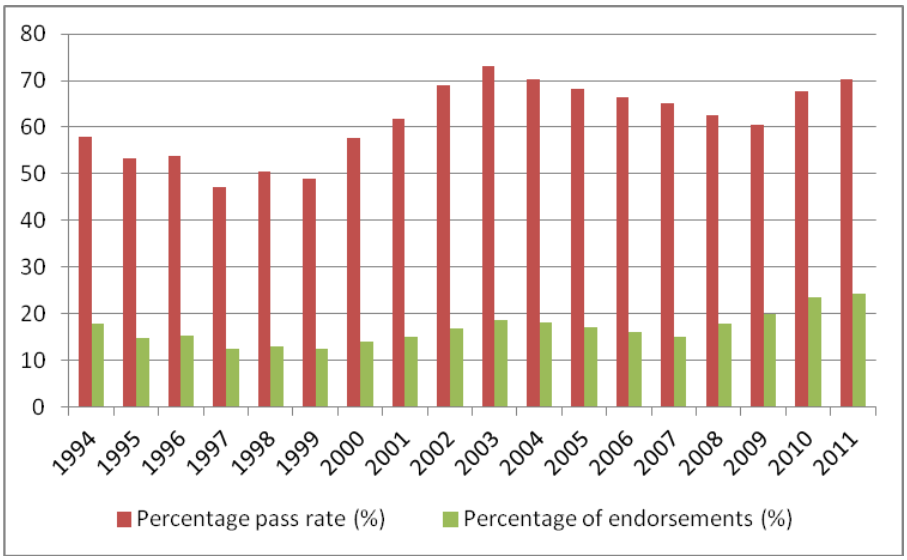


FIGURE 4.9: MATRICULATION PASS RATES 1994–2011

Source: RSA, 2012.

TABLE 4.10: SNAPSHOT VIEW 2008–2011

NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS IN PERSPECTIVE				
National Performance	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
No of Candidates	533 561	552 073	537 543	496 090
No of passes	334 239	334 716	364 147	348 117
% of passes	62,6%	60,6%	67,8%	70,2%
Mathematics	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
No of Candidates	300 008	290 407	263 034	224 635
No of passes (30% +)	136 184	133 505	124 749	104 033
% of passes (30% +)	45,4%	46,0%	47,4%	46,3%
Physical Sciences	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**
No of candidates	217 300	220 882	205 364	180 585
No of passes (30% +)	119 206	81 356	98 260	96 441
% of passes	54,9%	36,8%	47,8%	53,4%

Source: RSA, 2012.

At the outset it must be stated that both analysts and government officials have cautioned against a simplistic analysis of pass rates of the NSC (Kanjee, 2004). Historically, pass rates have been used as an important performance indicator of schools and an unreliable, though used indicator, of possible entry into higher education or the employment market. Each phase and each year of the matriculation statistics has to be linked to changes instituted in the school sector initiated since 1994 as part of the democratic government's reform processes. Thus, in 1996 the first provincial Senior Certificate examinations were written, with a pass rate

achievement of 54 percent. The following year sees a decline that has been attributed to many factors, from a shortage of teachers, to retrenchment of teachers and processes used for standardisation and differential marking techniques across the nine provinces (Reddy, 2004). In the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) study, Naidoo, despite working with admittedly uneven data sets, estimated that in 1996 the percentage of students who attained an exemption was 15 percent and that this shifted to 18,6 percent in 2003 (13). Thus, less than 20 percent of the students qualifying could enter universities. However, as stated above, in order to use the statistics, fine-grained analysis would be required to drill into subject combinations and language choices. In order to create a predictive statistical tool based on matriculation results would require more data than currently available. Access to higher education is compounded by different admission requirements for universities and technikons, as well based on each institution's admission requirements. In the HSRC study, Kivilu (2004) concluded that 'the continued disparities in matric performance across income and race groups' are a matter for concern (Kivilu, 2004:34). Kallaway (2006), in a study of one province's performance using schools of different categories (e.g. Model C, Rural, Township), demonstrated that equity in performance is still compromised by racial categories (former White schools, former Coloured schools), as well as by geographical location. Performance is linked to differential resources of schools and an array of variables that relate to facets of social exclusion.

Jansen argued that the statistics require interrogation, despite the Department of Education displaying optimism over the increase in the pass rates, as there are other numbers that must be factored into the analysis.

> *… only 489 000 students sat for the examination in 2000 compared to 511 000 in 1999. Furthermore, the nine percent increase in pass rates is widely regarded as a 'once-off' event explained in large part, by the elimination of repeaters from the system (60 000 repeaters wrote in 1999 but only 6000 in 2000) and the mass migration of students to standard grade subjects (65 000 fewer students sat for the university admission examination in 2000 compared to 1999*) (Jansen, 2001:6).

In the discussion of the Matriculation pass rates, it has been argued that the pass rates are a limited predictive tool for determining inflow into higher education. Cosser, Du Toit and Visser (2004:259) undertook a detailed tracer study of matriculants and their final destination. He pointed out that there are several variables that interlock learner inclination, i.e.:

affordability, category of Senior Certificate pass, the points system used by higher education institutions and the number of study places at institutions and on programmes. The following can be added to this list: poverty, household context, employment pressure, geographical location and hidden costs of higher education learning, language proficiency, health, and the required cultural capital to enter higher education.

Figure 4.11 depicts a steady decline in Mathematics Higher Grade passes from 1995, with 2001 being a turning point, where it is evident that there was an increase. Researchers have posited several views for the trend, but as with the matriculation results, it is complex to unpack (Kahn & Kallaway in Kanjee, 2004). Kahn (quoted in Reddy, 2004:135) argued that in 2003–2004 the numbers of African students qualifying with Mathematics Higher Grade and Physical Science Higher Grade 'were sufficient to populate all first year engineering courses'. The inhibiting factors are financial and social exclusion, as well as personal choice on the part of the potential student.

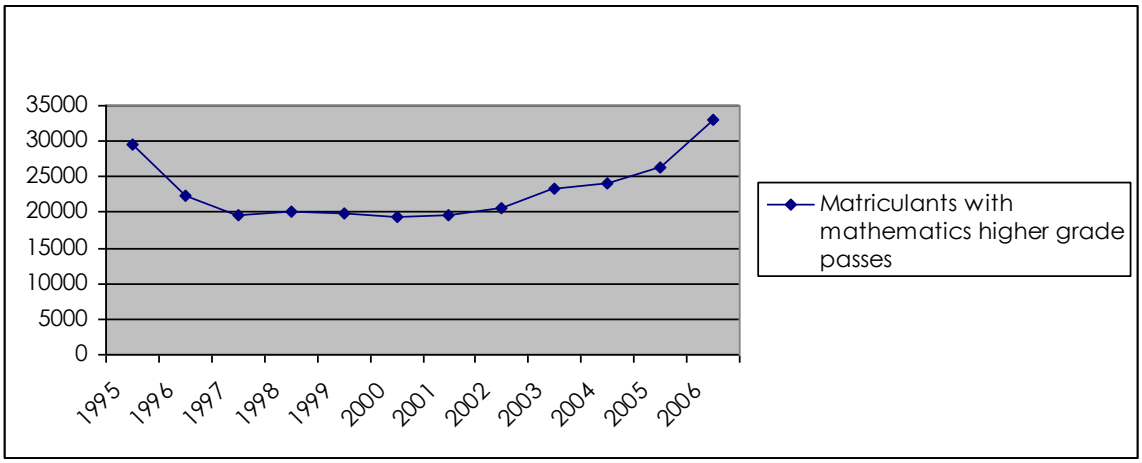


FIGURE 4.10: MATRICULANTS WITH MATHEMATICS HG 1995–2006

Source: The Presidency, 2007.

The 16 year period under review has thrown up challenges in the form of both addressing the legacy of apartheid and inequitable distribution of resources, as well as ensuring the responsiveness of the higher education sector for the challenges of the 21st century. This dual purpose has seen policy shifts, adjustments, compromises and active steering on the part of the state. Thus, transformation of the broad sector through the eradication of historically imposed institutional identities, as well as pursuing the goal of widening access to higher education has made attainment of the goals particularly difficult to evaluate.

Firstly, as much as government has urged and inserted into the discourse, the shift from elitist participation in higher education to massification, there are fiscal restraints. Secondly, the restructuring of higher education and the size and shape issues created new challenges for both institutions and the government. Thirdly, it has been difficult to ensure equitable distribution of resources across institutions given the history of inequitable distribution, and provide a measure of redress funding to institutions. A tracing of the policy trajectory for the period demonstrates that policy rhetoric and ideal positions adopted in early policy documents were impossible to implement with the immediacy required. Fourthly, the challenges of the knowledge society and globalisation are factors that are layered amongst the myriad challenges of South African society. A fifth issue for consideration is that inequalities of society have created deeply entrenched barriers for access to higher education.

It is clear from the interrogation of policy initiatives in the SA higher education context that a policy approach that is limited by focusing only on higher education will not work unless it is 'joined up' with other policy interventions across other departments in government. This requirement for coherence in policy-making resonates with the belief that exclusion issues in education can only be addressed if the macro socio-economic conditions are tackled. A sixth issue for consideration is that access has been interpreted differently at the institutional level and the policy discourse at state level is often at variance with practice on the ground. Lastly, state steering can dislodge institutions from achieving outcomes if implementation is not co-ordinated, synchronised and implemented at critical junctures. An example of the latter is the disruption to institutions during mergers that distract institutions from the pursuit of goals such as widening access, increasing enrolment and graduates in SET.

Recent calls for closer alignment between the labour market and a deeper understanding of the skills set required for the economy are a step in the right direction (DHET, 2012). The vestiges of apartheid still remain, as graduate unemployment shows a worrying trend. It is estimated that the number of graduates without employment range between 255 000 (StatsSA, 2009) and 600 000 (Adcorp labour market analyst, Loane Sharp, 2011). An alternative analysis which is far more rigorous in terms of the primary data utilised, suggests that graduate unemployment is a 'myth' (Van der Bergh & Van Broekhuizen, 2012). It is argued by them that based on an analysis of the higher education graduate profiles and the labour market survey, there have been erroneous assumptions made on the extent of the problem. It does confirm the need for stronger engagement between employers and the higher education

sector in order for nuanced understandings of the skills required and the kind of graduate required for the economy. Of course, it must be countered that the slow growth of the South African economy over the past five years, coupled with retrenchments in specific sectors, has also contributed to the high figures of unemployed graduates.

The challenge is for the higher education sector to focus on growth in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology and for strategic partnerships to be formed with employers to create opportunities for work experience, internships and job placement. The complexion of the supply and demand issues in SA is tainted by legacy discrimination, racially skewed policies and disparate education systems based on race. It is unimaginable that the higher education system could correct itself in just 19 years. The economy, despite major incentives put in place for Black Economic Empowerment and what is often referred to as 'targeting equity' programmes in the workplace, still displays patterns of disadvantage based on race and gender. Supply and demand issues that bedevil SA are similar to international trends in terms of rising costs of higher education and decline in investment in the sector. It still remains a unique conundrum based primarily on the complex task of undoing centuries of unequal education and social exclusion policies and practices.

4.8. THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ECONOMY

Moleke (2003) suggested that graduate employment prospects are affected by three important factors: the number of jobs requiring graduate level skills; the number of new graduates entering the labour force; and the ability of new graduates to connect with job openings (Moleke, 2003:1). In the context of SA's economy, which is growing, but also experiencing structural changes, and the growth in the general labour force and general trends of unemployment, this is a useful perspective for evaluating what is happening in terms of graduate unemployment.

Although SA's economy has not grown at the rates that had been hoped, there has been fairly steady and rising growth over the past few years (DPRU, 2006:4). Edgren (2005) compared SA to several other emerging economies that, he argued, are similar to SA in various ways, particularly Latin American and the former Soviet economies. During the 1990s, African and Latin America economies grew by 2.6 and 2.9 percent, on average (Edgren, 2005:3). SA's growth rate was lower, but corresponded broadly to the average of countries in Sub-Saharan

Africa and only different slightly to the average of Latin American countries (Edgren, 2005:3).

The average growth rate of the economy is not sufficient to fully understand the development of that economy, however, particularly given the complexity of most emerging economies. In comparing seven emerging economies (South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, Poland, Turkey and Slovakia) between 1990 and 2001, Edgren (2005) identified that some have maintained a heavy reliance on primary exports, particularly mineral exports, and others have moved more strongly into manufacturing, for example Malaysia (Edgren, 2005:3). He argued that SA did well in increasing the share of GDP of manufacturing, but that primary exports are still high in comparison to similar emerging economies. He suggested that the proportion of high-tech products (5% of total manufacturing exports at the time) was still low (Edgren, 2005:4). This presupposes an economy that is moving toward a stronger manufacturing sector, but which to some extent is still reliant on low-tech products and the primary sector.

Exports, in general, play an important role in the growth of the South African economy. Kraak (2004a) argued that exports in SA grew by 5.5 percent a year between 1991 and 2000 (Kraak, 2004a:38). He presented SA's recent economic development as consisting of reasonable to moderate growth coupled with fiscal discipline, in order to reduce debt and unnecessary public spending, and an expansionary pro-poor budget regime (Kraak, 2004a). When this is further broken down by sector, it is very clear that SA is beginning to develop a system that is similar to that found in other emerging economies (Edgren, 2005), with a mining sector that is contracting, a booming manufacturing sector and a services sector that is growing steadily and increasingly becoming a very large economic activity sector (DPRU, 2006:25). Industry trends also suggest that the services sector will remain the fastest growing sector of the South African economy (DPRU, 2006:25). The implication of this is that the demand for labour will also shift between sectors and that there will be structural changes in the kind of labour that is required. This trend can already be seen in SA. Across industries, employment growth has tended to favour those with higher levels of education. Moleke (2003) argued that the highest increase in employment between 1995 and 1999 was among professionals (72.6%), managers (37.8%) and crafters (25.2%) (Moleke, 2003:2). Kaiser and O'Heron (2005) suggested that in the context of an economy that is developing towards being a knowledge-based economy, and which has a very strong focus on high-tech manufacturing and the services sector, participation in higher education is often seen as an economic

imperative. They suggested that pressure to increase participation numbers in education, and particularly in higher education, results from this type of economic development (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:21).

Kaiser and O'Heron (2005:21) considered the involvement of federal governments in various countries in the development of higher education for purposes of stimulating and sustaining economic development. In Canada, they suggested, there has been a federal government focus on increasing the institutional capacity of the higher education sector in order to take on more students, although in recent years (1977–1995) this has been represented largely by federal funding for individual student access to higher education, rather than direct investment in institutions (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:22). The 2002 Innovation Strategy of the Canadian government, however, reaffirmed a commitment to increasing access to higher education across the population (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:23). In the Netherlands, where "the direct continuation rate from upper secondary education to higher education has almost reached its limit around 80%" (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:26), the focus is on ensuring improved access for under-represented groups, a focus on upper-secondary vocational graduates and improved completion rates (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:27). In Sweden, access had previously been controlled strictly, but from 2001 policy direction has focused on increasing enrolment and opening new paths to higher education (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:28). The UK's 50 percent participation target and intention to widen access to higher education were introduced in 1999 (Kaiser, *et al.,* 2005:31). This policy was introduced in the UK to increase both global economic competitiveness and social inclusion (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:31). In the United States of America (USA), there is a general commitment to broadening access to higher education, but the federal system has made a nation-wide strategy difficult (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:36). The operational strategies used to reach these targets range from cooperative planning, increased investment and funding to government-stipulated recruitment strategies and targets (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005). In terms of policy, Kaiser and O'Heron (2005) argued that there are three different approaches to this: the first being to increase access directly; the second to increase the capacity of higher educational institutions; and the third to increase the productivity/throughput rate of higher educational institutions (Kaiser & O'Heron, 2005:37-38).

It has been demonstrated in this chapter that the interventions run by both the DoE and DHET have not confronted the problems of access boldly, with inadequate shifts occurring in

participation rates, enrolment figures and graduates. In SA, tertiary participation rates are far lower than those in developed nations (such as the nations discussed above) and are also, according to Edgren (2005), relatively low for a developing nation and which he suggested may be partly due to the fact that tertiary enrolment only began to grow significantly after 1998 (Edgren, 2005:11). He noted that South African enrolment figures are roughly half those of South East Asian economies, such as Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia (Edgren, 2005:11).

Unemployment, and particularly graduate unemployment in SA, must therefore be considered in the context of a growing economy that is also experiencing structural changes, in line with the changes experienced in other emerging economies and that have been linked in other economies, to pressure for the expansion of access to tertiary education. In 1994, unemployment was estimated to be less than 20 percent, using the 'narrow' definition, and 30 percent, using the 'broad or expanded' definition (Seekings, 2007:15). In 2001, the rate of unemployment was 26.4 percent using the narrow definition of unemployment and 37 percent when calculated based on the broader definition of unemployment (Kraak, 2004a:40). In 2003, it peaked at 31.2 percent (narrow) and 42.5 percent (broad). In 2004, by the narrow definition, unemployment was 27.9 percent (Branson, 2006:1). This suggests a broad problem of unemployment that, although not growing as it was during the early part of the decade, is still highly problematic. In 2012, the figure still hovered around 25,5 percent, with no significant dip seen, again raising the issue of graduate employment and fitness of graduates for the needs of the economy (Potelwa, 2012).

There are radically divergent views on graduate unemployment, which are salient primarily because of the link to access to higher education and the requirement to have a 'skilled and capable workforce' for the economic development of the country (DHET, 2009:11). Bhorat and Lundall (2004), DPRU (2006) and National Treasury (2011) argued that there has been an increase in unemployment amongst graduates that signals a major problem either with the preparedness of graduates or a mismatch between the skills required and the skills produced. Alternatively, it could also be a reflection of the economic downturn in the country. Van der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012) made a compelling case and, by detailed interrogation of the statistics used to analyse graduate unemployment, pointed out that there is no significant trend in graduate unemployment and more research work is required to accurately gauge

skills required and the alignment of graduate skills sets to the workplace requirements (Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012:21).

Seekings (2007) argued that there exists a broad academic consensus that levels of poverty worsened in the 1990s, despite differences in methodology, interpretation and definitions. He furthermore suggested that SA's poverty situation is driven by unemployment and deagrarianisation, with unemployment being particularly strongly linked to income poverty (Seekings, 2007:15). High unemployment levels are therefore driving widespread poverty.

This situation of average economic growth, coupled with rising unemployment and resultant poverty, has led some commentators to argue that SA is in the grip of so-called 'job-less growth' (Seeking, 2007). Bhorat (quoted in Seekings, 2007), however, argued that SA has, in fact, created jobs, creating as many as two million jobs between 1995 and 2004 (Seekings, 2007:17). The DPRU report suggested that overall employment in SA increased by 29 percent between 1995 and 2005, from 9.5 million to 12.3 million (DPRU, 2006:9). This would suggest that there is some growth in employment in SA, but that the economy is simply not growing fast enough to, or is structurally unable to, absorb the new entrants to the labour market.

This would suggest that what SA is experiencing is not, in fact, jobless growth. This situation is partly due to the rapid growth of the labour force in SA. The labour force is defined as “all people aged 15 to 65 who are willing and able to work” (DPRU, 2006:5). According to Edgren (2005), SA saw a remarkable increase in the labour force of four percent per year in the 1990s (Edgren, 2005:7). Although this could be attributed partly to unreliable statistics prior to 1994, it still represents a rapidly growing proportion of the population entering the work force and an active search for employment every year. By the narrow definition, the South African labour force grew from 11.5 million in 1995, to 16.8 million in 2005 (DPRU, 2006:5). This is a huge increase in the number of people seeking employment and dramatically affects the ability of the economy to absorb the growing labour force.

It must also be noted that a large proportion of the growth in the labour force is coming from young adults entering the labour force (DPRU, 2006:5). By 2005, 15 to 34-year-olds accounted for 60 percent of the labour force, compared to 54 percent in 1995 (DPRU, 2006:7). The labour force has also become more educated, with: a decrease in labour force participants with less than a Grade 9 education; and an increase, accounting for 66.3 percent

of the growth in the labour force, in labour force participants who have completed Grade 10, 11 or 12 (DPRU, 2006:9). Between 1995 and 2005, the employed population tended to become older (DPRU, 2006:9). As a result, the DPRU report suggested that, "the combination of more young people entering the labour force and more middle-aged people getting the jobs have caused the unemployed to become younger" (DPRU, 2006:10). Young people under the age of 35, in 2005 accounted for 75.7 percent of the change in unemployment (DPRU, 2006:10).

The rapidly growing labour force is partly to blame for the growing unemployment. The DPRU report, however, argued that structural change in the economy and changes in labour demand patterns are also contributory factors (2006:6). The liberalisation of the South African market has led to an increase in competition and increasing pressure for South African businesses to increase productivity in order to be competitive internationally, which (when combined with a shift away from primary to secondary and tertiary (service) industries) has led to a change in the nature of the demand for labour in SA (DPRU, 2006:6). The past few years have seen a fairly strong increase in the productivity of South African industries, largely through the introduction of more capital-intensive methods, particularly in the area of manufacturing (DPRU, 2006:6). With these developments, there has also been downward pressure on the factor costs, including labour, which has affected wages (DPRU, 2006:6).

The DPRU report also suggested that the non-wage cost of labour – related to employment practices and labour regulations – also plays a role in disincentivising labour-intensive economic development (DPRU, 2006:7). The result has been economic development that has favoured capital-intensive and skill-intensive industrial development, rather than labour-intensive development (DPRU, 2006:6). This has created a bias in employment creation against low-skill workers (DPRU, 2006), who would normally make up the bulk of those employed in labour-intensive industries. Edgren (2005) argued that the real wages of unskilled workers have actually declined since 1999 (Edgren, 2005:34). This represents a drop in the demand for unskilled labour. The DPRU report also identified an "increase in demand for skilled labour at the cost of unskilled labour" (DPRU, 2006:6). By 2005, for example, the percentage share of unskilled employment (as a share of total employment) had contracted to 29.8 percent from 31.1 percent in 1995; while the share of semi-skilled workers had risen from 47.9 to 48.5 percent and the share of skilled workers from 19.8 to 21.5 percent (DPRU, 2006:7).

Kraak (2004b), however, argued that the shift from low-skill industrial development to a more high-skill environment must be further disaggregated, particularly in the context of a developing country/emerging economy. He discussed three different levels of skill in terms of employees. The first of these is the low skill levels or unskilled labour (Kraak, 2004b). As illustrated above, the demand for unskilled labour has decreased, with an associated decrease in the income of unskilled labourers (Edgren, 2005). The second level is the intermediate level, the level of skilled labour (Kraak, 2004b). The final band of skills is the highly skilled labour.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to the skills shortage in high skills fields (Cosser, 2003; DoL, 2005; DHA, 2006; Woolard Kneebone, & Lee, 2003). Kraak (2004a) argued that the demand for high-skill labour might have been overestimated. In particular, he argued that the transition from more labour-intensive industries, those associated with skilled labour, has not been as rapid and uniform as has been suggested and that, as a result, the high-skill environments are not as prevalent as some commentators have suggested. In particular, he suggested that there is a very strong need for intermediate skills (Kraak, 2004b). He quoted a 2000 HSRC survey that showed the greatest areas of difficulty in finding skills was amongst 'technical' or 'craft' personnel (Kraak, 2004b:76). This is supported by the DPRU report that suggested that while the real wages of highly skilled workers declined between 1970 and 1999, the income of skilled workers rose by approximately ten percent during that time (DPRU, 2006:7). This suggests that the market values these skills in particular. Intermediate skills are therefore the focus of the shift in many industries, rather than only a growth in demand for high-end skills. This would seem to suggest that there would be increased demand for those with diplomas and certificates. This notion has been taken on board in the Green Paper (DHET, 2012), with rapid expansion planned for FET colleges from the current registration of 657 690 in 2012 to 4 million by 2030 (DHET, 2013).

The DPRU (2006) report suggested that the skills shortage or skills mismatch is particularly acute in three areas (2006). The first of these is in the area of artisans and other technically trained workers (DPRU, 2006) – Kraak's intermediate skills. This would seem to support the argument that there is a strong shortage in those with intermediate skills. The second area of concern is supervisory or management level employment (DPRU, 2006) There seems to be industry consensus that this skills gap can only be filled by those with experience and, although some 'pipeline programmes' exist in industry, there are many companies who

attempt to recruit staff straight into these management-level positions, often resulting in poaching across industries (DPRU, 2006:45). The DPRU (2006) suggested that this skills gap is recognised by industry, but that industry does not seem to use skills development opportunities, such as learnerships, to develop these skills (DPRU, 2006:45). The final area of concern identified is related to the quality and skills of graduates. The DPRU (2006) report suggested that there is extensive concern about the skills level of graduates, particularly those coming from Historically Black/Previously Disadvantaged institutions, meaning that extensive training and investment is required before the these employees are able to assume higher-level responsibilities and to contribute to productivity, particularly before they are able to assume management responsibilities (DPRU, 2006:41).

The DPRU report also suggested that a growing number of graduates are not necessarily being employed (DPRU, 2006:2). While the report acknowledged that graduate unemployment is insignificant in the context of broader unemployment, it highlighted the current trend of rapidly growing unemployment among graduates as being very worrying (DPRU, 2006): 71 percent of unemployed people in SA (broad definition) have a Grade 11 or lower qualification (DPRU, 2006:i). Those with a diploma, degree, technical qualification or other post-matric qualification comprise only three percent of the unemployed in the country (DPRU, 2006:i). At the same time, unemployment rates for those with tertiary education have increased by almost 50 percent – from 6.6 to 9.7 percent between 1995 and 2005 – the largest change for any educational group (DPRU, 2006:10). Within the group of tertiary unemployed, less than one in five hold a degree, with 82 percent of them holding a diploma (DPRU, 2006:i). This is contrary to what was anticipated above, but suggests that there may be differences in employment based on factors other than whether or not an individual has a tertiary qualification of some sort or some basic skills. It suggests that the labour market is more ready and primed to absorb more highly qualified graduates in specific fields like SET or Business and Management. This implication has been identified by the DHET (2012) and in earlier policy documents (DoE, 2001). From an international perspective, the spectre of graduate unemployment haunted the Arab Spring and reports from the World Bank confirm that this is major problem confronting most countries (World Bank, 2012).

When general unemployment statistics are broken down further, it becomes clear that there is a bias towards particular groups. The first of these is that young people experience the highest levels of unemployment in the country. DPRU (2006), for example, suggested that the 1995

statistics reflect that 15 to 24-year-olds were the group least likely to find employment (DPRU, 2006:12). Those in the 35 to 44-years age group were 21 percent more likely to be employed than 15 to 24-year-olds (DPRU, 2006:12). Although this situation has improved, in 2004, 34 to 44-year-olds were still 2.5 percent more likely to find employment (DPRU, 2006:12). Those with a tertiary education sometimes experience high rates of unemployment because they are young and lack work experience. A general increase in the level of education in most of the population, with rising numbers of graduates, has also raised the level at which a tertiary qualification separates an individual from other potential employees, changing the likelihood of finding employment (DPRU, 2006:13). According to the ILO (2014:11), 74.5 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 were unemployed in 2013. The NEET problem referred to by Cloete (2009) as the 'ticking bomb' for South Africa, is one that has parallels with other countries in the world. The unemployment in SA may be linked to race, qualification types and fields of study but increasingly over the last ten years, is a problem that has roots in the turbulent economies of the world. The ILO report confirms that the crisis shows no signs of abating in the foreseeable future with initiatives required that tackle the global financial crisis, poverty reduction and the risks of tenuous informal unemployment (9). 'The global youth unemployment rate is expected to edge up to 13.2 per cent in 2014, with increases projected in the three Asian regions and in the Middle East, partially offset by a projected decline in the Developed Economies and European Union region' (2014: 21).

Race has become a less important factor in predicting employment possibilities of graduates in SA, but a 2008 report suggests that African graduates are still less likely to find employment than their White counterparts and are likely, on average to earn less than White employees (Gower, 2008). Moleke (2003) suggested that African students were likely to take longer to find employment and thus experience more prolonged unemployment (Moleke, 2003:7). There are also differences in the prospects of various race groups within particular areas of study. The DPRU (2006) report found that African graduates were likely to take longer to find employment; particularly in the field of the Humanities and the Arts and that the only area where they were more likely to find employment immediately than other race groups was in engineering (DPRU, 2006:18).

Several commentators (Moleke, 2003; Gower, 2008) suggested that there is a further difference between employment prospects based on the institution at which the student studied, particularly if the institution was a Historically Black institution (HDI) or a

Historically White institution (HWI). For example, Gower quoted an HSRC study that suggested that White graduates experienced a 14 percent unemployment rate compared to 24 percent for African graduates from HDIs in the business and commerce sectors (Gower, 2008).

This is partly related to the fact that graduates from HDIs tend to include a higher percentage of students who have graduated in fields that offer lower employment prospects (DPRU, 2006:15). Students with general degrees, such as those graduating with degrees in the Humanities and the Arts or Economic and Management Sciences, tend to take longer to find employment than those in particular, professional fields (DPRU, 2006). In a labour market that values specific skills and where there is a particularly high demand in the Maths, Science and Technology areas, graduates with a Humanities qualification are less likely to find employment and will probably take longer to become employed and particularly to become employed at higher managerial and supervisory levels. Altman (2007:12) illustrated that 70 percent of Black students study the Humanities, Social Sciences and Education compared to only 44 percent of White students, which is also very worrying.

The field of study chosen by students has a serious impact on employment prospects. Kraak (2004b), for example, argued that the enrolment and graduate throughput in the field of engineering at more technically focused institutions (technikons) has decreased, despite rising demand for skills in those areas (Kraak, 2004b:80). He noted a shift away from these 'harder', more technical skills, to 'softer' qualifications, such as Business Studies (Kraak, 2004b:80).

Several commentators have explored the reasons why students might choose fields that are not aligned with high-demand areas in the economy (DPRU, 2006; Moleke, 2003). They suggested that this is partly related to information asymmetry in the market (DPRU, 2006:17). Moleke (2003) found that 48.6 percent of graduates involved in a particular study would choose a different course if they were to choose again, suggesting, she argued, that entrants to courses were not necessarily informed about the course of study and the implications for future employment (Moleke, 2003:35). The highest percentage of those who would choose a different course of study if they could choose again were in the Humanities and the Arts (63%) and Education (69.7%) (Moleke, 2003:35). Another suggestion raised by Moleke (2003) and discussed in the DPRU (2006) report is that students select a field of study based on the entrance requirements, with more scientific and professional fields having more stringent entrance requirements than fields such as the Humanities and the Arts (DPRU,

2006:17). This may also be linked to poor performance in Maths and Science at a secondary school level (DPRU, 2006:19). This situation is effectively illustrated by considering the 2003 Mathematics Higher Grade pass rate: only 26.8 percent of those passing Mathematics Higher Grade were Black, meaning that the proportion of Black students entering priority fields was likely to be fairly low. It is also important to note that the general performance of South African secondary school students in Science and Mathematics is poor – in the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), SA performed worst out of the 50 participating countries (Scott, Yeld, & Hendry, 2007:33-34).

The type of qualification (degree vs non-degree) also plays a part in employment prospects. The DPRU report suggested that the share of tertiary graduates who are unemployed and who hold diplomas and certificates has increased from 80.9 percent in 1995 to 82 percent in 2005 (DPRU, 2006:15). They suggested that Africans with a tertiary diploma or certificate accounted for 73.2 percent of the tertiary unemployed in 2005 (DPRU, 2006:15). In their view, this is partly related to the fact that the number of Africans entering tertiary education increased dramatically in that period, meaning that the size of the population is far larger, but that it is also related to the field of study, with the fields with lower employment prospects being more prevalent at HDIs (DPRU, 2006:15). Having a tertiary qualification is less important than the level of the qualification and the field of study in terms of job prospects. In terms of enrolment in tertiary education, it is suggested that SA's enrolment rate, as a percentage of the total population aged 20-24, is relatively low; but the discrepancies between groups is highlighted, particularly the lack of Black and female students enrolled in key SET, professional and graduate programmes (Scott, *et al.*, 2007:10).

Akoojee and McGrath (2005) discussed the issue level of qualification in terms of unemployment in their consideration of the rates of return to education. They suggest that, despite debate in this area, higher education does tend to produce higher returns. This would seem to suggest that unemployment would decrease relative to an increase in education level (graduates should experience much lower levels of unemployment) (Akoojee & McGrath, 2005:22-23). Akoojee and McGrath (2005) also pointed out that one very strong reason for the lack of return on education investment is poor quality education, which is an important issue, given the systematic under-funding of certain institutions in the past and the ongoing struggle to raise the quality of education at those institutions (Akoojee & McGrath, 2005:23). The rapidly increasing graduate unemployment rates in recent years would seem to suggest

that other factors discussed above – chosen field of study, lack of faith in quality of education at particular institutions, skills mismatch between graduate skills and market demand – are affecting graduates in particular sectors, rather than graduate unemployment being a universal problem. In fact, research undertaken by Branson, *et al.* (Cloete, 2009:47), indicates that the return on post-secondary education improves with an increase in earnings: rising from 170 - 220 percent for certificate and diploma holders to 250 - 400 percent for those with degrees.

Akoojee and McGrath (2005:4) suggested that, "Although there is a clear commitment across government to developing the skills that are required for faster employment growth, it is apparent that SA faces very serious challenges in achieving its goals with respect to the first economy". They suggested this is related to: tensions around implementation strategies; weaknesses in capacity to implement; institutions that are fragile and not necessarily context-relevant; funding challenges and tensions between national and provincial implementation; and policy approaches (Akoojee & McGrath, 2005:4).

This suggests that, despite a growing economy, with a shift away from the employment of unskilled labourers, as well as an increase in the employment of professionals and highly skilled individuals, being a graduate is not sufficient to predict high-level and immediate employment. Instead, the type of qualification, the field of study, the institution attended and the age of the graduate play a key role in determining where, if and how quickly he/she will find employment.

4.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the funding and resourcing of higher education at the state level to the important dimension of affordability. Improvements in the overall participation rates in higher education have not materialised for a variety of reasons, which have been discussed in this chapter. It has been demonstrated that inadequate state funding exerts pressure on institutions to shift the burden of costs to the student. The SA government has in NSFAS a vehicle that enables students from low income households to access higher education through loan schemes. It, of course, despite quadrupling in allocations over the 16 year period, falls far short of demand.

The high skills demands of the economy require higher education to produce graduates, especially in SET, to promote both global competitiveness and productivity of the country. It is demonstrated that despite high returns, both individually and socially, for graduates, race

still features in terms of the outflows from higher education into the economy. The absorption rate for Black graduates is still lower than for White graduates, which could impact on the vision for a diversified economy and the transformative potential of higher education.

The next chapter will focus on evaluating the extent to which the goal of widening access, as set out in the NPHE (DoE, 2001), has translated in the higher education sector. The evaluation will take into account the specific sub-goals of the NPHE (DoE, 2001) and the reconfigured higher education system.

CHAPTER 5
EVALUATING PROGRESS AGAINST THE GOAL OF WIDENING ACCESS

Not everything that can be counted counts; and not everything that counts can be counted (Albert Einstein).

5.1. OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the extent to which the goal of widening access has been achieved. Chapter 1 set out the parameters of this research and included a motivation as to why access was prioritised as a goal. Since 1994, policy reforms and varied implementation processes have been initiated by the government. In line with the conceptual framework of this thesis, is the awareness that it is the role of universities and strategic shifts in their admission practices that would be critical in enabling widening of access. The higher education system has been resized and reshaped since 1994, with a move from the traditional universities and technikons model to an increasingly differentiated system. The system now has traditional universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology, but actual institutional numbers reduced from 36 (21 universities and 15 technikons) to 23 (11 traditional universities, six universities of technology and six comprehensives).

Reflections on the NCHE (DoE, 1996) predictions confirmed that 'massification was the first proposal that attempted to resolve the equity-development tension since increased participation was supposed to provide greater opportunity for access (equity), while also producing more high-level skills that were necessary for economic growth and development' (Cloete, Fehnel, Maassen, Moja, Perold, & Gibbon, 2002:97). The White Paper (DoE, 1997) opted for equity, efficiency and planned growth and did not advocate massification. The result, in terms of policy options, could be evaluated as a compromise position, which is borne out by the gradual growth trajectory that has occurred and is evaluated in this chapter. In 1994, the university and technikon sector (noting also the divide between historically White institutions and historically Black institutions) had to swim and adapt quite quickly to address equity and redress challenges. It has been documented that in the period between 1995 and 2000, historically Black universities experienced a decline in enrolment, as students voted with their feet and moved to historically White institutions (CHE, 2000). The actual

numbers did not grow exponentially, with reports of approximately 79 000 more Black students in 1999 than in 1995 (Bunting & Cloete, 2006:15).

There is little or no research focusing on the admission policies of universities and technikons pre and post-1994 and this is identified as an area that merits further study. Suffice it to say that by 1995 admissions policies were revised by all universities in line with the democratic dispensation, with variations between universities. Although little attention was paid to issues of student diversity, affordability, programme choice of students and institutional readiness, numbers began to swell. The CHE indicates that by 1990, when discussions began with the ANC, the signs were clear that change would occur; historically White institutions had commenced admitting students through permit loopholes (CHE, 2004b:61).

By 2000, the discourse of government shifted from matters of equity to efficiency, thus changing the discourse to success, as opposed to only access.

The following goals were identified in the DoE (2001) and are evaluated in this chapter:

1. Increase the participation rate to 20 percent for the age group 20–24 in the next 10–15 years;
2. Increase participation, success and graduation rates of Black students in general and African and Coloured students in particular;
3. Improve graduates to 100 000 per annum;
4. Shift the balance in enrolment between the Humanities, Business and Commerce, and Science, Engineering and Technology from the current ratio of 49:26:25 percent to a ratio of 40:30:30 percent.
5. Improvement in that: over six percent of total graduates would be Master's graduates; and over one percent would be Doctorate graduates.

An analysis of the quantitative data will demonstrate the extent to which the above performance indicators have been met. The evaluation will be limited, in that the quality of graduates will not be subjected to scrutiny.

5.2. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

It is important to point out that since 1994 the government has undertaken self-evaluation of higher education, as well as other sectors, using the performance indicators set by the DoE

(The Presidency, 2011:50). The Presidency Report consists of quantitative measurements over a period of time. As useful as the data is, it does not recommend or suggest what action should be taken to change the course, especially if the required progress in respect of specific milestones does not occur. Admittedly, the performance indicators are tied in to an individual government department's Programme of Action (The Presidency, 2011:5). The DHET, as the line department for higher education and training, undertakes analogous evaluations (DHET Annual Report, 2011/12) which are measured against the same indicators that (with some modification) derive from the NPHE (DoE, 2001). Since its inception, the CHE (2009) has embarked on several evaluations of the system, though these have not made radical suggestions for changing the course of direction. Government has by its own admission confirmed that targets set have not been achieved (DHET, 2012) and proposes some policy tweaks, although it is guilty of setting new targets without any financial calculation of what this would cost the state. It is noted that DoE (2001) targets have provided the basis for all evaluations and (with minor variations) remain the 'apex' policy document for higher education.

The usage of performance indicators is an accepted tool for determining progress in all fields, especially health and education. The difficulty with the language of the DoE (2001) is that there is limited precision in the targets or indicators set, which makes progress difficult to monitor on a yearly basis. The basic premise of the DoE (2001) and all subsequent policy documents emerging from the department was to establish goals for the higher education sector that were tied to financial incentives. More precisely stated, the DoE attempted to establish a compact with institutions premised on: firstly, universities being public institutions; and secondly, universities being state funded institutions though with alternative streams of income of a varying degree. Embedded in the above two principles is the recognition that universities are autonomous and in terms of governance, accountable to Councils. By setting national goals and priorities, the intention was to drive the system in a specific direction, as well as set out the principles and values that should underpin institutional behaviour. The proposed pathway was to further negotiate a specific set of targets with each institution, which would enable annual evaluation of institutional performance. The SA system, as discussed by Kogan (quoted in Cloete & Bunting, 2004:13), followed on the heels of the UK system specifically initiated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Kogan (quoted in Cloete & Bunting, 2004:13) stated:

The selection and use of performance indicators are significantly affected by the broader policy context, the nature of the state and the resource allocation mechanisms embedded within that.

Both systems, the UK and the SA when instituted, provoked uproars from universities who viewed these as threats to institutional autonomy. The DoE had opted for a route that identified the performance indicators, allocated resources accordingly and most importantly, inserted accountability measures in place. Having noted the ambitious goals for higher education in SA, it seemed clear that in addition to performance indicators, the state would tie resource allocation to delivery. The extent to which this has been successful is doubtful, as there have been no penalties instituted for universities who under-perform. The monitoring of the higher education system has been a 'light touch' approach quite unlike the deliberate design and execution of plans for higher education in countries like China and Brazil.

5.3. THE JOURNEY OF ACCESS

The NPHE (DoE, 2001) is a policy document and framework that emerged six years post-democracy. It advocated a process that would be undertaken by the line department in order to achieve the identified outcomes for the higher education sector. These processes, including policy development and implementation, were evaluated in the previous chapter. The outputs listed above are summarised from the NPHE and are by no means an exhaustive listing. Funding was evaluated in Chapter 4 primarily for its role as a strategic lever and the recognition in the NPHE that funding levels were inadequate to address all the outputs required. The proposal in the DoE (2001) was then to link 'planning and funding' based on agreed outcomes with each institution. It was concluded in the chapter that funding levels allowed for a modest expansion with below inflation increases for the period 1994–2010. It was also concluded that in order for the goal to have been realised fully, funding would have had to have doubled and institutional capacities increased.

Participation rates are an important determinant of progress in the sector and have been evaluated by total participation rates for the sector, and by race and gender. Unlike Australia, which is able to determine participation rates for lower income groups, SA data does not make provision for this useful category. Headcount enrolment is presented in Figure 5.1 for the period 1994 to 2010. In 1990, the headcount enrolment was 396 000 and in 1993, it was 473 000 (DHET, 2012). The figure below suggests erratic growth patterns, with peaks in

1996, 2004 and then 2010. Between 1994 and 2010, the actual headcount enrolment number increased by 397 580. The years 1997–1999 and 2005 show negative growth, with no reasons for this found. The overall annual increase between 1994 and 2010 was 3,75 percent. It could be argued that many students registered with private providers who were registered by the Department of Education in 2000; but, more importantly, there is evidence that suggests that the affordability of higher education was posing a serious threat to access (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:212, 213). Inflows into the higher education system were evaluated in the previous chapter. It was concluded that restricted inflows of candidates from the school system would compromise higher education growth plans. An HSRC study, "Elusive Equity", points to the improvement in percentage pass rates, but a decline in actual candidates sitting for the Senior Certificate, for the period 1994–2001 – referring to SA's inadequacy to perform in education on the 'powerful shadow of SA's past' (Fiske & Ladd, 2005). By 2010, it was clear that a participation rate of 20 percent was not achievable. Unlike the radical transformation of higher education seen in countries like Brazil, Malaysia and China, which saw a trebling of the numbers in the same timeframe, the SA system was on a course of increasing numbers erratically by 20 000 to 50 000 per year. Figure 5.1 includes returning students, as well as students entering for the first-time. By 2011, 59 percent of the enrolment was in contact education and 41 percent in distance education. A more depressing account would involve discussion of the dismal success rates and graduation rates, with students occupying places instead of flowing through the system. For example, according to the DoE cohort study, only 30 percent of the intake of 2000 had graduated from a three year degree (CHE, 2007:12).

Between 2000 and 2004, the system grew by 187 777 yet the corresponding funding per student declined in the same period (see Table 4.2, Chapter 4). The erratic patterns of growth called for closer steering of the higher education system by government. By 2002, the Department had announced the restructuring of the higher education landscape and concluded a PQM exercise with institutions, which introduced a form of performance measurement into the equation, as they evaluated enrolment figures and graduates in specific programmes and qualifications. This was followed by the commencement of institutional planning exercises with institutions and the introduction of what was termed a more 'equitable' funding formula for higher education (CHE, 2004b:34). These initiatives, though decried by the sector, were a demonstration of active policy driving and direct intervention by the DoE towards active steering of the system.

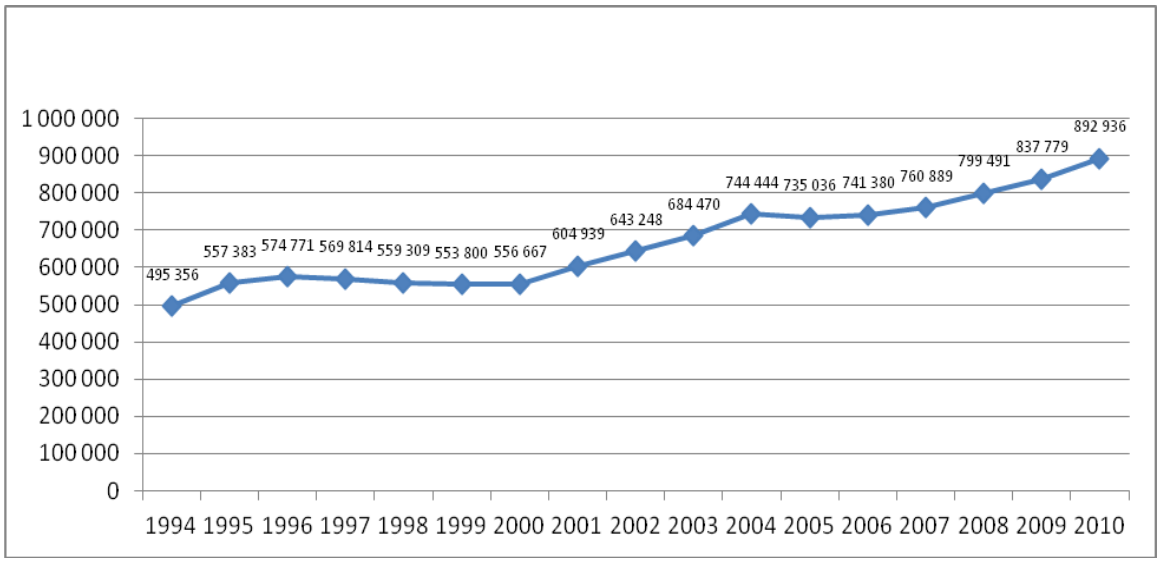


FIGURE 5.1: HEADCOUNT ENROLMENT BETWEEN 1994–2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

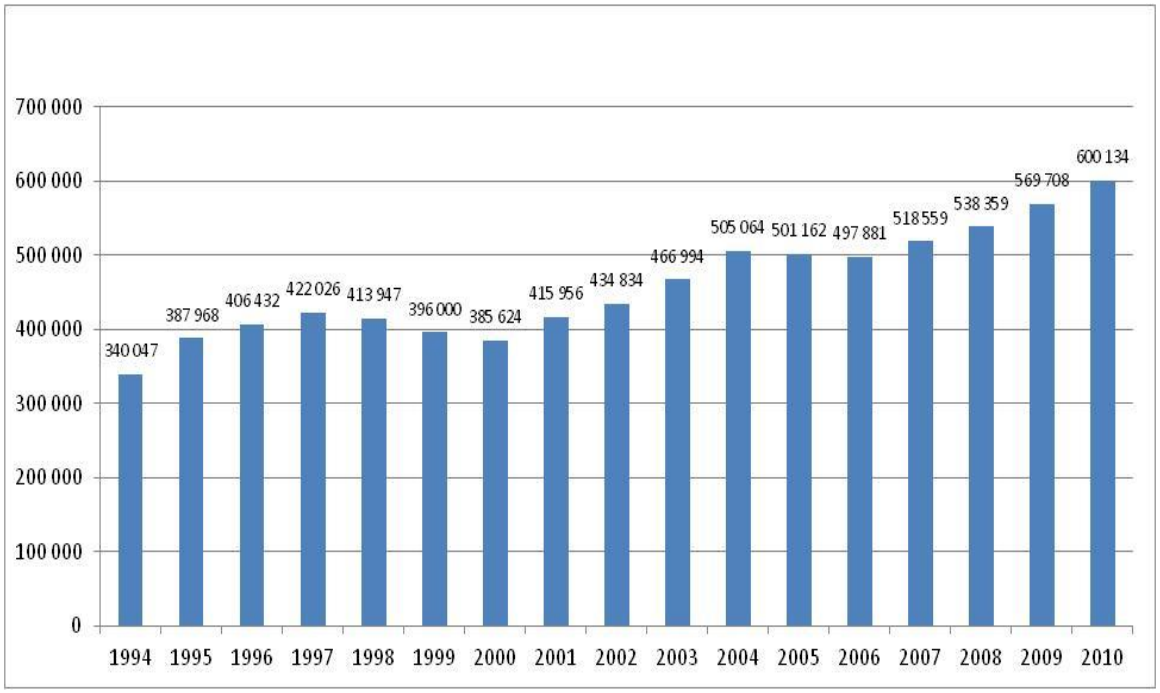


FIGURE 5.2: FTE ENROLMENT BETWEEN 1994 AND 2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Figure 5.2 denotes the number of FTEs[29] in the higher education system. FTEs will always be lower in the system than headcount enrolment, as students are either studying part-time or doing a few courses that may be less than an FTE equivalent qualification. The usage of FTEs is significant, in that government funding is tied to this figure, rather than to the headcount

[29] Credit load of a student calculated and used for subsidy purposes.

enrolment figure. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 present the growth in enrolment between 1994 and 2010, firstly by headcount enrolment, and secondly by full-time equivalent enrolment. Both graphs demonstrate that growth has been limited and not as envisaged in the NCHE (1996) and White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) projections. However, each year, with the release of the NSC results, a stampede for a place at university occurs, with approximately only 180 000 spaces open for students entering university for the first time (Magubane, 2013). The government response has been to persuade students to opt for vocational training at the 50 FET colleges. The problem with FET colleges is with: perceptions of outdated curricula; appropriate career pathing for students; and the vexed problem of the NCV being equivalent to the NSC, rather than a step upward on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (JET, 2010).

The DoE (2001:28) advocated provision of access to non-traditional learners. Institutional responses indicate that despite the policy signals, this grouping has not really entered higher education in significant numbers. Admission policies, selection criteria and entrance requirements to universities tend to focus more on traditional models of the NSC or its equivalents.

5.4. INSTITUTIONAL VARIANCES IN ACCESS PATTERNS

The Minister of Native Affairs in 1953, Hendrik Verwoerd, stated:

> *There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice?* (Christie, 1985:12).

The education legacy inherited by SA has been described in detail by various policy analysts (CHE, 2004b; Bunting, 1994; Cooper & Subotzky, 2001). Earlier chapters in this thesis have described the structural and systemic factors that delineated the sector by race. A complex governing system had been instituted, which meant that for higher education, universities were created in the TBVC states, in self-governing territories and under various racially defined government departments. Thus, falling under the House of Delegates (Indians) was the University of Durban-Westville and under the House of Representatives (Coloured) was the University of the Western Cape. Both of these institutions were designated for specific race groups, with governance responsibility shifting from the designated departments at various junctures (CHE, 2004b:22).

In terms of legislation, there were key Acts that provided the framework that ensured that access to education broadly, and higher education specifically, was skewed along racial lines. The Bantu Education Act 47 of 1953 (RSA, 1953) legalised apartheid as it made provision for education institutions to be separated at all levels based on race. The Act was catastrophic in terms of the impact as it created deeply entrenched patterns and structures of exclusion. This Act was followed by the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which provided for African universities to be established and further entrenched racial divides in higher education. The objective of the Act was:

> *To provide for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of university colleges for non-white persons; for the admission of students to and their instruction at university colleges; for the limitation of the admission of non-white students to certain university institutions; and for other incidental matters* (Act 45 of 1959:484).

It has been documented that the impact of this legislation, along with other concomitant legislation, would have a devastating impact on long-term social exclusion of Blacks from higher education (CHE, 2004b). Apart from the establishment of universities for African students, it was specifically targeted at the exclusion of Africans, Coloureds and Indians from any other universities unless permission was obtained from the Minister. The suite of legislation governing higher education in the period before 1994 had the following features, which have had far-reaching consequences for the higher education system as a whole and which continue to haunt and bedevil integration of the system:

1. Complex and different, but separate, governance arrangements for universities and technikons;
2. Different models of funding;
3. Admission policies based on racial classification;
4. In some universities, separate teaching and learning facilities.

Some of the consequences are described below:

> *The Afrikaans-medium universities – Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Orange Free State and (after Afrikaans had become an established language) Stellenbosch – had from their foundation restricted admission to whites. Of the English-medium universities, Rhodes was all-white and Fort Hare in practice non-white; the*

remaining three, while more open, were by no means fully multi-racial. Natal admitted non-whites, but kept its classes racially segregated. Cape Town and Witwatersrand admitted students to courses without regard to race but applied a strict colour-bar in social and sporting events (Lapping, 1986:183).

Figure 5.3 provides the average annual growth rate for African student enrolment of a select group of universities between 1994 and 2010. NMMU, NWU, UFS, UJ and UKZN figures incorporate headcount enrolment figures from the merged institutions.

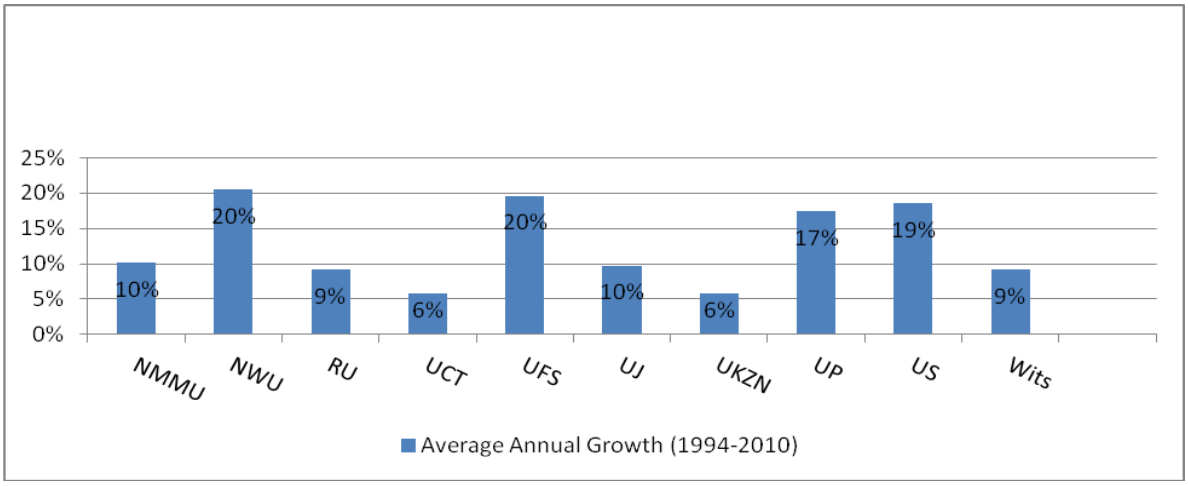


FIGURE 5.3: AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: 1994–2010 OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES

Source: DHET, HEMIs, 2012.

It must be noted, as an example, that a university like the University of Potchefstroom (PUCHE)[30] merged with a university like the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO) in 2004 to establish North-West University (NWU), which would account for the spike in growth given the racial profile of UNIBO. The 20 percent average annual growth for NWU is high, but can be accounted for by the merger. There has been criticism of NWU, with assertions that African students are diverted to the Mafekeng campus or to distance education programmes. Once again, the quantitative data does not probe these aspects.

If one looks at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the average annual growth is six and nine percent respectively. In terms of actual growth, UCT moved from 2940 African students in 1994 to 7052 in 2010. Wits University shifted far more significantly, actual headcount enrolment figures from 3975 in 1994 to 16 670 in 2010. Despite the significant annual growth rate for the University of Stellenbosch,

[30] A historically Afrikaans university.

it must be noted that the institution was operating from a low base of African enrolment: 222 students in 1994 and 3811 in 2010. As an overall percentage of enrolled students, African students represent 14 percent of the total enrolment headcount. The language policy of the university could be identified as a barrier to broadening access, as the majority of undergraduate programmes are presented in Afrikaans (www.sun.ac.za/language-at-sun). The University of the Free State (UFS), which incorporated the QwaQwa campus of the University of the North and the Vista Campus in Bloemfontein in 2004, offers a parallel medium policy with some teaching in Sesotho. The latter two institutions were mainly for African students and would contribute to the significant growth in numbers for the UFS, with an average annual growth rate of 20 percent. In actual headcount numbers, this represented an increase from 906 in 1994 to 18 407 in 2010. Rhodes University and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) show similar growth patterns, with no visible spikes in growth for either institution. UJ has had a radical shift in headcount enrolment, with an average annual growth of ten percent. A result of the merger between Wits Technikon, Vista Daveyton and Soweto as well as Rand Afrikaans University, the African representation was at 74 percent of total enrolment in 2010, with a decline in the actual number of White students.

A respondent, interviewed for the purposes of this research, provided some insight into shifts in admissions policies at a former Afrikaans university. He stated that the Council of the university had calculated that growth would be impossible if the pool of students was limited to White Afrikaans speaking students. This informed institutional admission policy changes, which opened the doors for other races to be admitted[31].

The purpose of the vignettes provided above is to analyse growth in specific universities measured between 1994 and 2010. The analysis demonstrates uneven patterns of growth for African students enrolled at each university. The growth is linked to institutional histories and in some cases, language policies. The impact of the mergers on leapfrogging growth in specific institutions has also been discussed. A phenomenon that did occur as documented in the NPHE (DoE, 2001), was the flight from historically Black universities to historically White universities. There was a reported increase in numbers of Black students in distance. For example, in 1999 46 percent of all African students were in distance education (DoE, 2001:38). At the time, perceptions were that standards were better at these institutions, the

[31] Based on an interview with a representative from a former Afrikaans university.

infrastructure was of a higher level and most importantly, students could access these institutions.

Having considered a sample of universities as a precursor to a detailed analysis of the sectoral movements in race, it is clear that this presents a 'narrow indicator of equity' (CHE, 2004b:60). In other words, the major dimensions of equity of access are not considered, e.g. funding restraints, limitations in terms of programmatic access in specific disciplines and different levels of study. It is useful in that it serves as a measure of the change in the racial composition of the higher education sector. In the absence of specific benchmarks for growth of specific population groups either in the NPHE or any other policy document, it is difficult to measure if *sufficient* progress has been made. Pronouncements can be made regarding the increase in numbers and the change in participation by race and gender between 1994 and 2010.

5.5. ACCESS: RACE

Figure 5.4 represents headcount enrolment by race from 1994 to 2010. African headcount enrolment shows almost a trebling of the numbers, with a decline of 43 643 in White students between 1994 and 2010. In 1994, Blacks (African, Coloured and Indian) represented 55 percent of the total number of students enrolled or 273 516 of the headcount. In 2010, Blacks represented 80 percent of the total number of students enrolled or 706 451 of the headcount (Figure 5.5). Given that the size of the sector may be inadequate for the demand for some form of post-secondary education, the growth represents significant improvement.

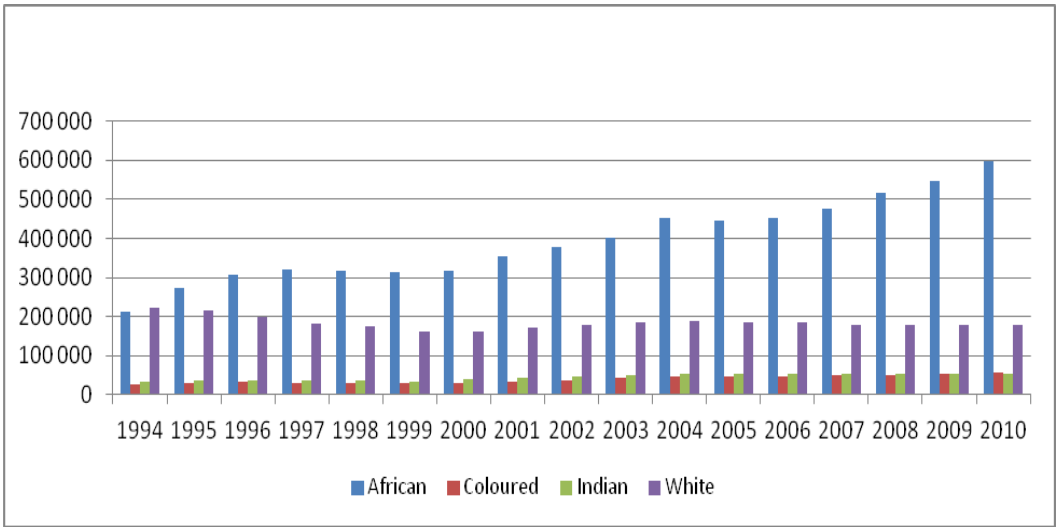


FIGURE 5.4: HEADCOUNT ENROLMENT BY RACE

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

TABLE 5.1: COMPARATIVE ENROLMENT BY RACE FOR 2000 AND 2010

	Number of Students		Percentage of Students		Growth Rate
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000 - 2010
African	317998	595963	57.75%	67.18%	6.48%
Coloured	30106	58219	5.47%	6.56%	6.82%
Indian	39558	54537	7.18%	6.15%	3.26%
White	163004	178346	29.60%	20.11%	0.90%
TOTAL	**550666**	**887065**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**4.88%**

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Table 5.1 provides a comparison of growth in the numbers of students by race between 2000 and 2010. Noting that the NPHE (DoE, 2001) does not provide an estimation (based on the population data) of numbers of students who should be participating in higher education by race, it is difficult to evaluate whether or not the growth rates calculated indicate progress. The table is useful, in that it shows the growth in all races, but a noticeable slowing down in terms of White participation, with a growth rate of 0,9 percent between 2000 and 2010.

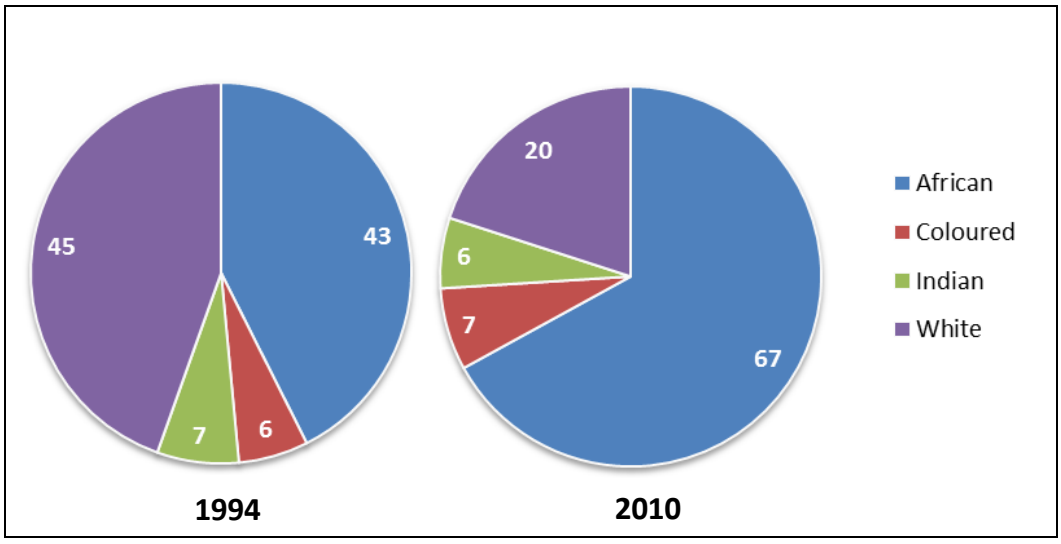


FIGURE 5.5: PERCENTAGE ENROLMENT BY RACE, 1994 AND 2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

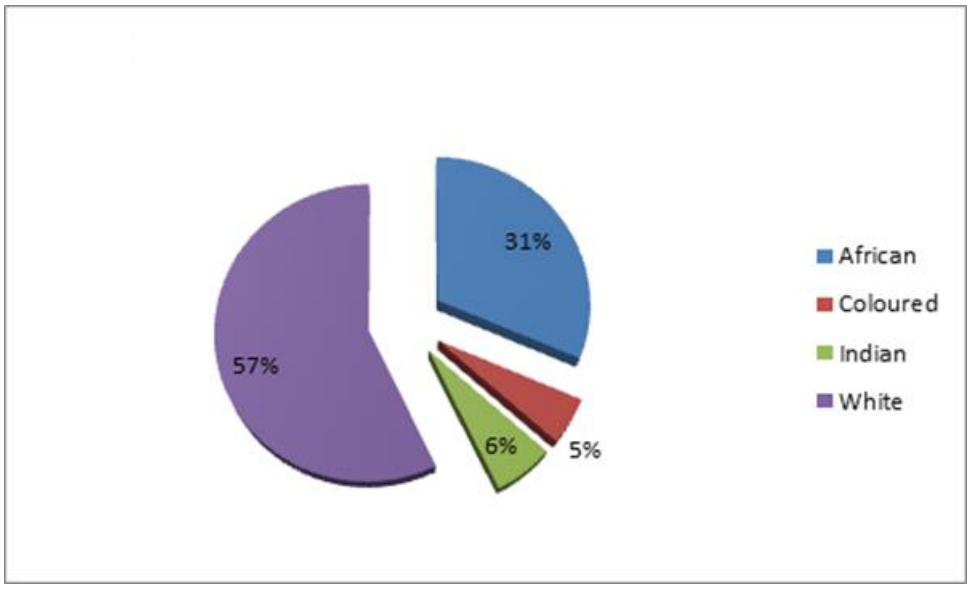


FIGURE 5.6: PERCENTAGE GRADUATES BY RACE, 1994

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

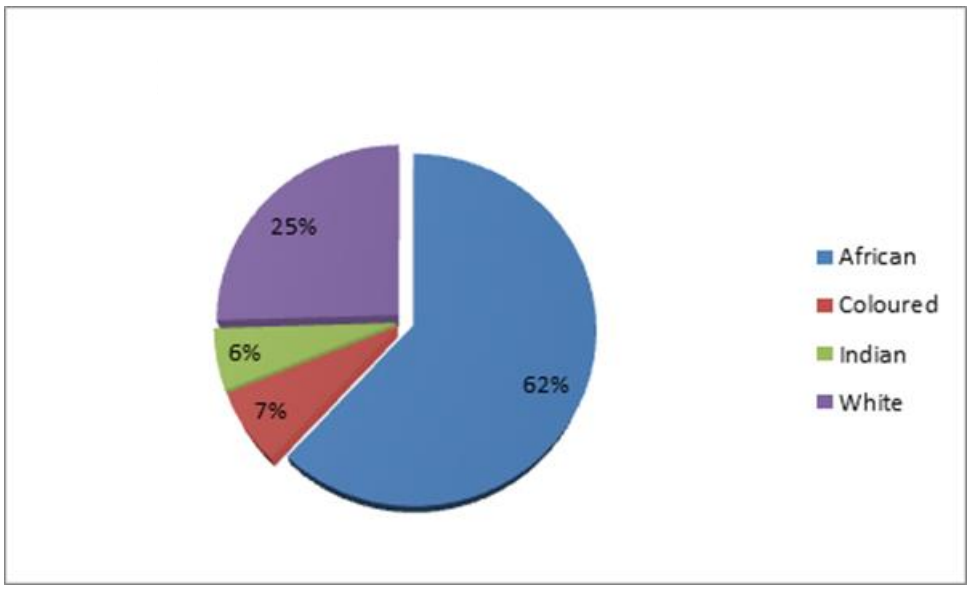
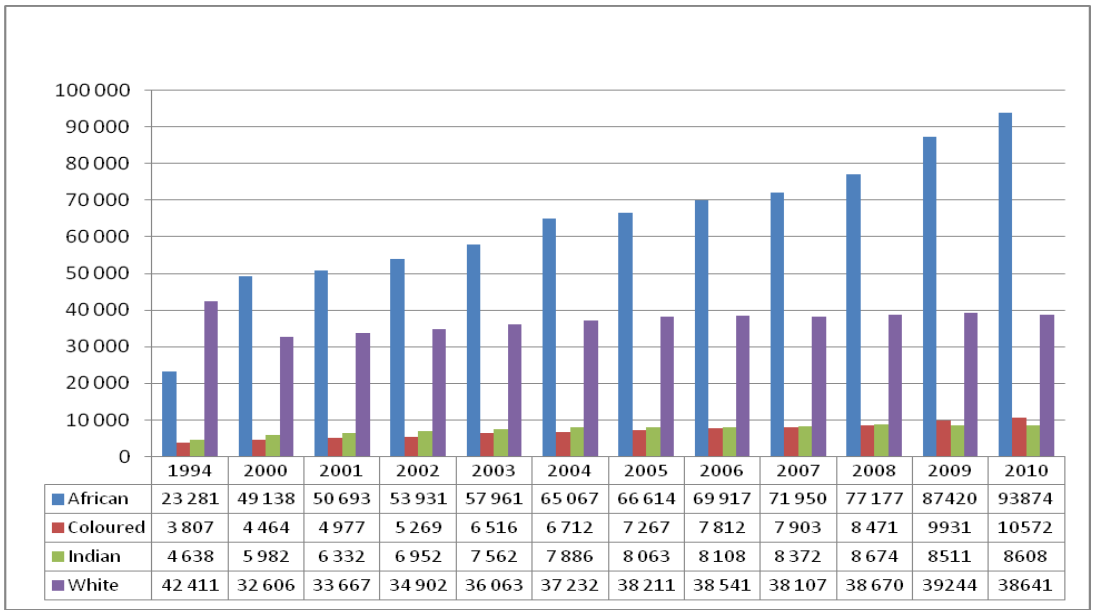


FIGURE 5.7: PERCENTAGE GRADUATES BY RACE, 2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Figures 5.6 and 5.7 present graduates by race in percentages for 1994 and 2010 respectively. Africans in 1994 constituted 31 percent of the total graduates for the system. By 2010, African graduates represented 62 percent of the total graduates for the system. In 1994, 42 percent of graduates were Black and by 2010 the figure increased to 75 percent. Figure 5.8 depicts the number of graduates by race from 1994 and then from 2000 to 2010. Despite consistent growth, the number of graduates is meaningless in the absence of cohort studies, reviewing attrition rates and analysis of the success of students who enter for the first-time.

However, by the year 2002, the total number of graduates (101 047) exceeded the goal of 100 000 per annum. It can be concluded that this indicator was achieved. By 2010 (151 695), the number of total graduates had more than doubled from 1994 (74 137).



	1994	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
African	23 281	49 138	50 693	53 931	57 961	65 067	66 614	69 917	71 950	77 177	87420	93874
Coloured	3 807	4 464	4 977	5 269	6 516	6 712	7 267	7 812	7 903	8 471	9931	10572
Indian	4 638	5 982	6 332	6 952	7 562	7 886	8 063	8 108	8 372	8 674	8511	8608
White	42 411	32 606	33 667	34 902	36 063	37 232	38 211	38 541	38 107	38 670	39244	38641

FIGURE 5.8: GRADUATES BY RACE 1994, 2000–2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

TABLE 5.2: PERCENTAGE OF FIRST TIME ENTERING STUDENTS WHO GRADUATE IN FIVE YEARS BY TYPE OF QUALIFICATION

Subject Area	Black	White	All
Professional Bachelor's Degree (4 year programme)			
Business/Management	33	83	60
Engineering	32	64	54
Languages	26	65	42
Law	21	48	31
General Academic Bachelor's Degree (3 year programme)			
Business/Management	33	72	50
Life and Physical Sciences	31	63	47
Mathematical Sciences	35	63	51
Languages	32	68	47
Social Sciences	34	68	53
National Diploma (3 year programme)			
Business/Management	31	44	33
Computer Science	33	43	34
Engineering	16	28	17
Social Services/Public Administration	29	23	29

Source: Fisher and Scott, 2011:8.

According to Fisher and Scott (2011:8), there are major variances in graduation rates from different types of programmes. Citing a study undertaken by Scott, Yeld and Hendry (2007), the graduation rate for a four year degree is 36 percent for degree programmes and 26 percent for vocational programmes. As pointed out earlier, a narrow focus on just the number of graduates or numbers enrolled could be misleading. Table 5.2, replicated from Fisher and Scott (2011:8) and derived from the Scott, *et al.* (2007) study, demonstrates the extent of the problem. It is clear in Table 5.2 that there are major variances in performance between Black and White students. If equity of access is linked to equity of success, then more effort is required at the institutional level to ensure student success. This study is derived from the cohort methodology, which tracks by student identity the performance of individual students using a specific year as the starting point and the duration of the degree. The performance of Black students (with a low of 17% in Engineering or between 31% and 35% for a three year degree programme) is a dismal tale of disproportionate performance. More than 65 percent of Black students will take longer than five years to complete a three year degree. Fisher and Scott (2011:10) concluded that the completion rate for South African students is 30 percent, as opposed to an average of 69 percent for OECD countries.

5.6. GENDER EQUITY

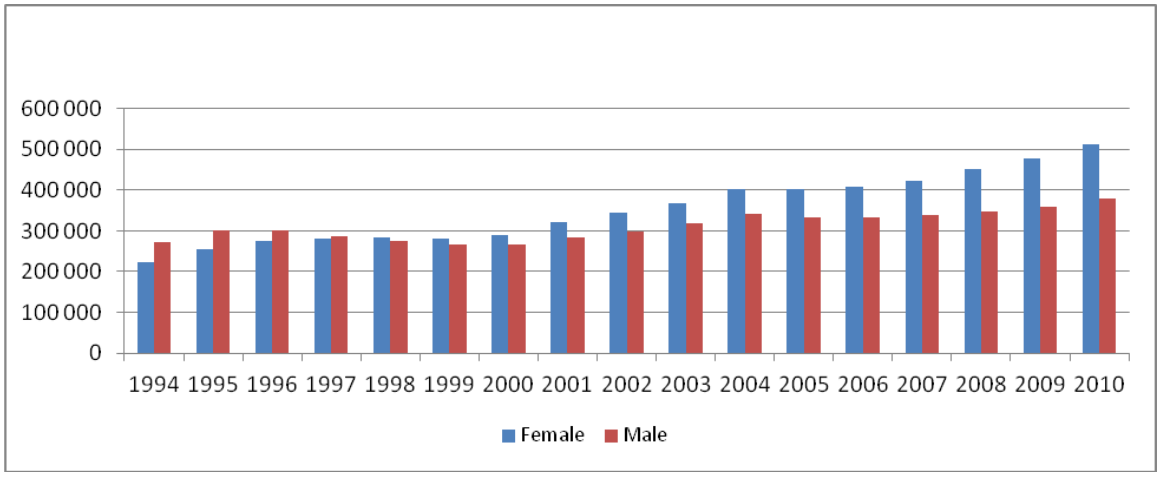


FIGURE 5.9: HEADCOUNT ENROLMENT BY GENDER

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Gender equity as measured in 1993, reflects the following composition: women made up 43 percent (202 000 out of 473 000) of the enrolment in 1993; by 2010 they constituted 57 percent (512 573 out of 892 923) of the student body (CHE, 2004b). Figure 5.10 denotes this progress. Continuing with the analysis based on gender, Figure 5.11 represents the number of

graduates over three distinct years: 1994, 2000 and 2010. The growth for females is significant over the years and shows a steady upward trend, in line with enrolment figures.

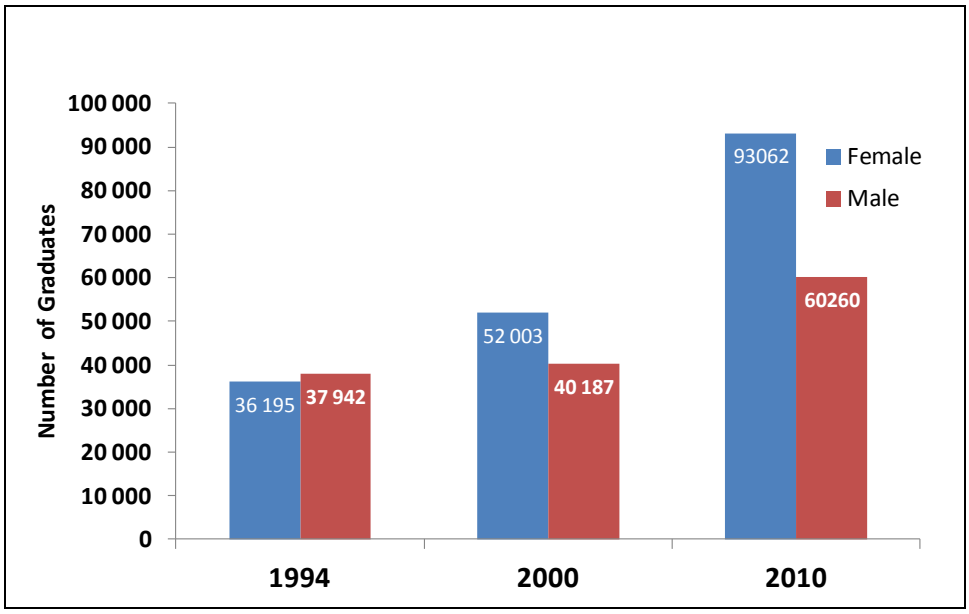


FIGURE 5.10: TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADUATES BY GENDER – 1994, 2000 AND 2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Equity of access has to be matched with equity of success. Improvements in success rates will in the long term impact on improved graduation rates. The DoE (2001:47-48) identified several levers:

1. Institutions to state equity objectives and targets;
2. Reduce funding if equity targets are not achieved;
3. Funding for academic development programmes;
4. Role of NSFAS to be evaluated;
5. Monitor the selection criteria and practices of institutions;
6. Development of a monitoring mechanism like the National Higher Education Information and Application Service for specifically race and gender access;
7. Increase access of Black women and the disabled, with focused institutional plans to address these specific goals;
8. Redress the imbalances between and amongst institutions;
9. Ensure that teaching and learning are sensitive to the needs of a diverse population.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 provide a contrast between 2005 and 2010, measuring growth of graduates by qualification level delineated by race and gender. The trends identified by the CHE

(2004b:72) have not changed with the growth in the number of students with an undergraduate diploma and more measured growth in students with an undergraduate degree. Given the country's aspiration to drive the numbers of postgraduate graduates, the growth at the Master's and Doctorate levels is low. Significant growth is evident for African males and females at the undergraduate level, but no radical movement is seen at the postgraduate level.

TABLE 5.3: GRADUATES ACCORDING TO LEVEL, RACE, AND GENDER FOR THE PERIODS 2005 AND 2010

	2005					2010				
Race and Gender	**UG Diplomas**	**UG Degrees**	**PG up to Master's**	**Master's**	**Doctors**	**UG Diplomas**	**UG Degrees**	**PG up to Master's**	**Master's**	**Doctors**
African Female	20380	11909	7024	1058	104	28817	18131	9706	1499	165
African Male	11261	9143	3871	1627	237	14452	13322	5341	2061	378
Indian Female	627	2699	1003	295	39	643	2857	1243	406	52
Indian Male	520	1806	671	359	44	492	1833	721	307	54
Coloured Female	1407	1800	867	223	26	1982	2790	1709	271	34
Coloured Male	1005	1116	537	244	42	1145	1576	793	225	47
White Female	2146	11434	5308	2019	355	1687	11590	6205	1945	340
White Male	2071	8426	3931	2181	340	1778	8866	4093	1795	341
Total	39417	48333	23212	8006	1187	50996	60965	29811	8509	1411
Total Female	24560	27842	14202	3595	524	33129	35368	18863	4121	591
Total Male	14857	20491	9010	4411	663	17867	25597	10948	4388	820
Total African	31641	21052	10895	2685	341	43629	31453	15047	3560	543
Total Indian	1147	4505	1674	654	83	1135	4690	2964	713	106
Total Coloured	2412	2916	1404	467	68	3127	4366	2502	496	81
Total White	4217	19860	9239	4200	695	3465	20456	10298	3740	681

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Table 5.4 shows negative growth for White males and females at all levels. In line with the growth in female enrolment, there is evidence of an increase in the number of female graduates. It has been argued by Fisher and Scott (2011:10) that efficient graduation rates can only be improved if success rates are improved. The domino effect of poor success rates is the increase in the length of time taken by a student to complete a programme. This phenomenon will be discussed elsewhere in this Chapter. Figure 5.12 points to discernible differences in performance analysed by race and signals that if the success rate for Black students does not

reach the level of White students, there will be consequences in terms of the availability of Black graduates in the long-term. The implication is that interventions are required at the institutional level to ensure that students succeed in the programmes of their choice. This may include teaching and learning interventions, extended curricula and more importantly, a focus on the institutional culture if that poses an impediment to students.

TABLE 5.4: GROWTH RATE OF GRADUATES BY LEVEL, RACE AND GENDER: 2005 TO 2010

	Growth Rates 2005 -2010					
Race and Gender	**UG Diplomas**	**UG Degrees**	**PG up to Masters**	**Masters**	**Doctors**	**All Levels**
African Female	7.2%	8.8%	6.7%	7.2%	9.7%	7.6%
African Male	5.1%	7.8%	6.6%	4.8%	9.8%	6.3%
Indian Female	0.5%	1.1%	4.4%	6.6%	5.9%	2.2%
Indian Male	-1.1%	0.3%	1.4%	-3.1%	4.2%	0.0%
Coloured Female	7.1%	9.2%	14.5%	4.0%	5.5%	9.4%
Coloured Male	2.6%	7.1%	8.1%	-1.6%	2.3%	5.2%
White Female	-4.7%	0.3%	3.2%	-0.7%	-0.9%	0.5%
White Male	-3.0%	1.0%	0.8%	-3.8%	0.1%	-0.1%
TOTAL	**5.3%**	**4.8%**	**5.1%**	**1.2%**	**3.5%**	**4.8%**
Total Female	6.2%	4.9%	5.8%	2.8%	2.4%	5.4%
Total Male	3.8%	4.6%	4.0%	-0.1%	4.3%	3.8%
Toatal African	6.5%	8.4%	6.7%	5.8%	9.8%	7.1%
Total Indian	-0.2%	0.8%	3.2%	1.7%	5.0%	1.3%
Total Coloured	5.3%	8.4%	12.2%	1.2%	3.6%	7.8%
Total White	-3.9%	0.6%	2.2%	-2.3%	-0.4%	0.2%

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

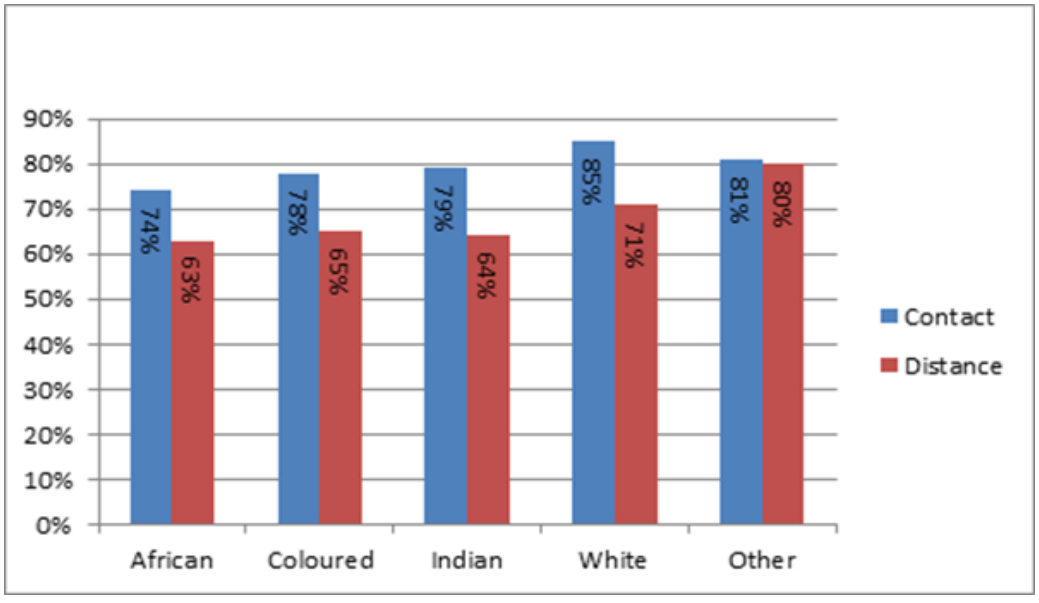


FIGURE 5.11: 2010 SUCCESS RATES BY RACE AND MODE OF DELIVERY

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

As Soudien, Michaels, Mthembi-Mahanyele, Nkomo, Nyanda, Nyoka, Seepe, Shisana and Villa-Vicencio (2008:36) pointed out, there was a narrow interpretation of transformation by institutions. This interpretation referred to policies, procedures, systems and structures that ensured that equity of access, as required in terms of the Constitution of the country, were adapted and changed. A broader interpretation required delving into institutional culture and the lived experience of students in diverse institutions. The quantitative data does not highlight the experiences documented in the Ministerial Report, focusing instead on the actual number of students and the growth thereof as an analysis of the extent to which access was provided. Of course, the inherent danger of this approach is masking the difficulties encountered by students at the different universities, which difficulties range from language to perceptions of unequal treatment, lack of social cohesion and social exclusion from established practices at institutions, performance in terms of success and the reality of being a Black student on a historically White campus. The key recommendations made by the Ministerial Committee partially address some of the above issues, but stop short of a big stick approach. The recommendations essentially focus on mainstreaming Foundation programmes, because of perceptions of stigmatisation, with a proposal regarding possibility of a four year undergraduate degree, unambiguous admission and selection policies and admission criteria, as well as a review of orientation programmes (Soudien *et al.*, 2008:81).

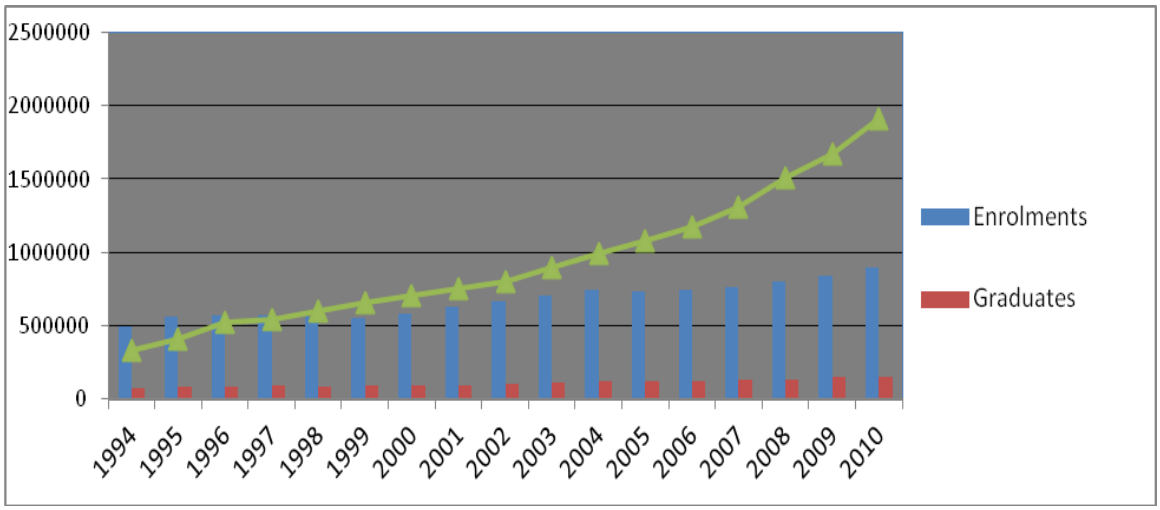


FIGURE 5.12: ENROLMENT, GRADUATES AND FUNDING

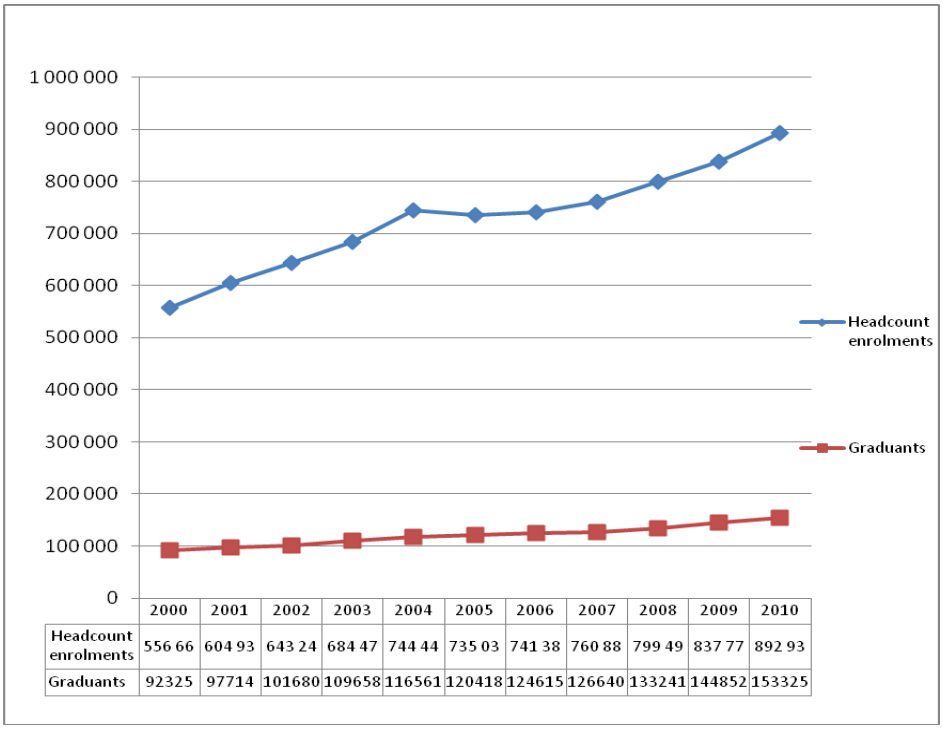
Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Figure 5.12 provides a comprehensive picture of enrolment, graduates and higher education funding for 1994–2010. It displays clearly the uneven pattern of growth in both enrolment figures and graduates produced in the system. As a graph, it has limited usage in that other

variables affecting both enrolment and graduates are not included. It is useful in that it does point to the erratic patterns in both enrolment and graduates and heightens awareness of the access and success debates. As the NPHE (DoE, 2001), Student Enrolment Planning policy document (Ministry of Education, 2005) and the new funding formula iterate (Ministry of Education, 2005), the efficiency and effectiveness of resource usage is critical if the country is to produce graduates for the economy. The starkest distinction between the SAPSE model and the new funding formula lies in the former being market-driven and the latter being linked to planning and 'steering' in cycles of three years. Contrasted against the earlier policy rhetoric of massification and education for all, the policy instrument of the funding formula advocates moderate planned growth.

Despite the goal of access being foregrounded since 1994, the current dropout rates and low graduation rates are proving very costly for the South African system. This is linked to students gaining access to higher education institutions, but not completing their studies for a variety of reasons. It is estimated that more than a billion Rand of the ten billion Rand allocated for higher education is wasted, because access is not accompanied by success (Badsha, 2004:1). A recent report by the Financial and Fiscal Commission (2012:5) signalled that overall block grant allocations to universities declined over the period 2000 to 2011, along with an increased focus on earmarked grants. The result is that the decline in the investment by the state has to some degree impacted on the steep incline in student fees as a second income stream for universities.

A contrast graph depicting enrolment and graduates between 2000 and 2010 suggests an average growth of three percent in enrolment and an 8, 82 percent average growth for graduates (see Figure 5.13). Given that the goal for increase in graduates is related quite closely to the country's vision for economic growth, the number of graduates produced is still dismally low. The NPC (2012) acknowledges this as a problem, but fails to identify any serious interventions that could remedy the situation either in the short or long term. This holds true for the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2012), in which the diagnosis of the problems in higher education are sound, though no compelling solutions or a concerted deliberate pathway are identified for progress beyond the quagmire of the current system.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Headcount enrolments	556 66	604 93	643 24	684 47	744 44	735 03	741 38	760 88	799 49	837 77	892 93
Graduants	92325	97714	101680	109658	116561	120418	124615	126640	133241	144852	153325

FIGURE 5.13: GROWTH OF ENROLMENT AND GRADUATES: 2000–2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

The analysis of the data for the higher education sector in terms of student access and success has to be carefully viewed in light of the goals of the DoE (2001). A major issue that emerges when interpreting the data is that the performance measured is undertaken in the absence of milestones. The ambiguity of targets set in the DoE (2001) renders any discussion of the performance fluid, in that improvements from a base year can be analysed and overall growth of the sector sliced by race and gender. No finite determination can be made as to whether or not: progress has been as predicted; targets have been met. The limitations of the goals and performance indicators stated in the DoE (2001) hinder a rigorous analysis of the performance.

5.7. ACCESS, SUCCESS AND FIELDS OF STUDY

The previous section analysed the performance of the higher education sector in terms of enrolment and graduations for the 16 year period under review. The DoE (2001) advanced the arguments of the White Paper 1997 in relation to the needs of the economy and the graduates required. To this end, it was proposed that for the SA economy to be competitive, enrolment in the Social Sciences and Humanities had to be reduced. This required careful steering of the system towards Science, Engineering and Technology.

The DoE (2001) presents an indicative target for shifting enrolment figures from dominance in the Humanities to an increased figure in SET. In 2001, the ratio stood at 49:26:25 for: the Humanities; Business and Engineering; and SET (DoE, 2001:30). The plan indicates that this should shift over the next five to ten years (starting in 2001) to 40:30:30 percent respectively. There has been critical consensus that the achievement of SET targets would continue to be compromised by the weaknesses of the school system to produce sufficient numbers for absorption into the higher education system (CHE, 2004b; Fisher & Scott, 2011). By 2010, the proportion of students enrolled in SET had reached 28 percent. It was argued that this shift will be achieved by improvements to funding for SET programmes and the introduction of Programme Qualification Mixes as a steering tool for institutions to seek approval from the Department of Education for programmes to be funded (DoE, 2005). Figure 5.14 signals that despite many incentives being put in place, the country has still not achieved the desired target. The average annual growth between 1994 and 2010 for SET graduates was 4,65 percent.

Figure 5.14 depicts enrolment in the broad categories of Humanities, Education, SET and Business and Management. The near doubling of enrolment in Science from 1994 to 2010 is significant, given the discussion on the number of potential applicants from the pool from the school sector. Detailed discussion on the potential danger of the reduction of academically qualified entrants from the school sector has been undertaken in Chapter 4.

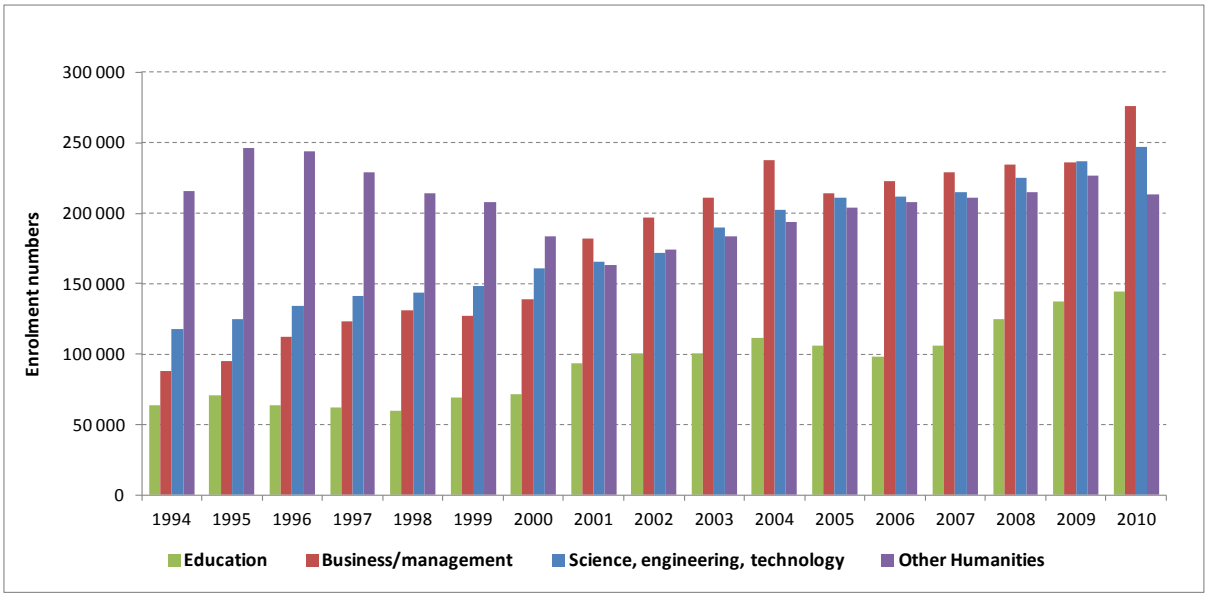


FIGURE 5.14: ENROLMENT BY FIELD OF STUDY, 1994–2010

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Table 5.5 compares average annual increases in the fields in five year blocks. The growth in Education could be attributed to the increase in state bursary schemes for teachers, though the shortage of teachers is specifically in the fields of Science and Mathematics, as well as at the Foundation Phase. The growth in SET slows down for the period 2006 to 2010 implying that the target set by the DoE (2001) could be problematic to achieve. It must be noted that the drive to improve enrolment in Education and SET is further stressed in the government's Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) targets for the Ministry for Higher Education and Training and for the Department of Science and Technology (DST). The emphasis on these specific areas since 2009 has forced universities to commit specifically in these areas in terms of enrolment targets and graduate output (DHET, 2012).

TABLE 5.5: AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE PER FIELD OF STUDY

Field of Study	Average Annual Increase: 1994–1999	Average Annual Increase: 2000–2005	Average Annual Increase: 2006–2010
SET	4,7%	5,6%	3,1%
Business/Management	7,6%	9,1%	4,3%
Education	1,7%	8,1%	8,0%
Other Humanities	-0,8%	2,1%	0,5%

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Figure 5.15 breaks down undergraduate graduates in the three broad fields. Thus, despite the growth in enrolment for SET, the graduate output is stagnant. If the benchmark is set for 30 percent of total undergraduate output to be in SET, then further interventions at the institutional level will be required to improve graduate output. The 28 percent in SET has remained constant in the last five year period and will require a concerted drive in improvement of teaching and learning at institutions.

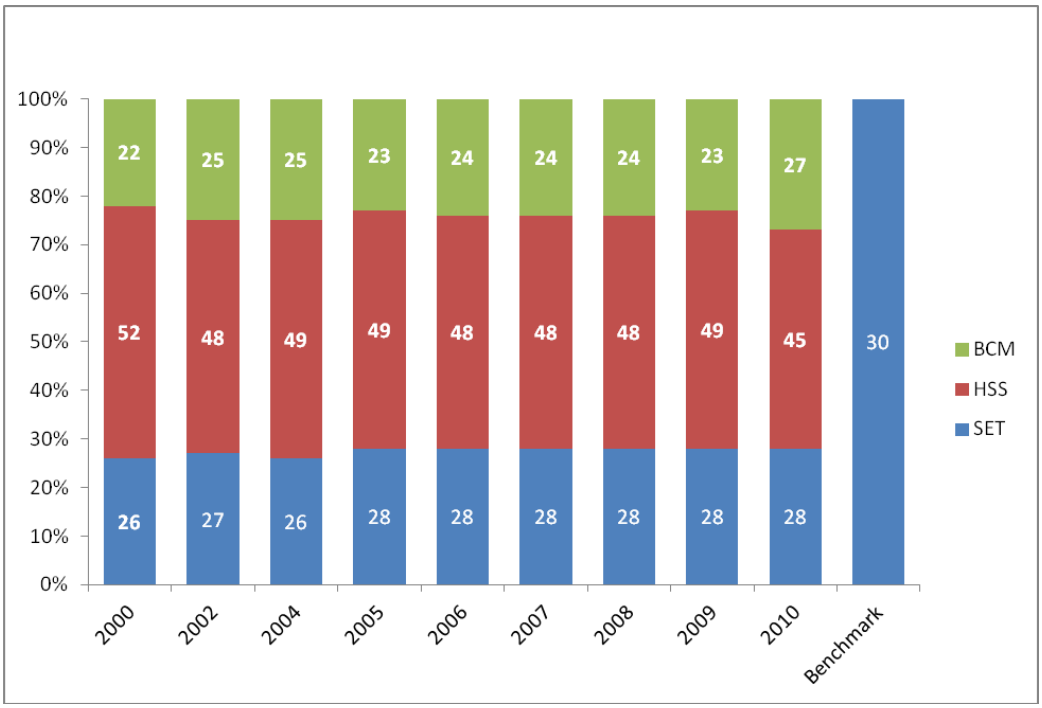


FIGURE 5.15: UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATES BY FIELD OF STUDY

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

Figure 5.16 demonstrates that there has been a growth in the number of SET graduates; but, in keeping with Figure 5.15, the number of graduates has increased, although there is no growth in terms of percentage of total graduates. According to the SA Development Indicators Report (The Presidency, 2011:51), issues of throughput and insufficient supply of Science and Maths candidates from the school system can be identified as reasons for the slow growth in the number of graduates.

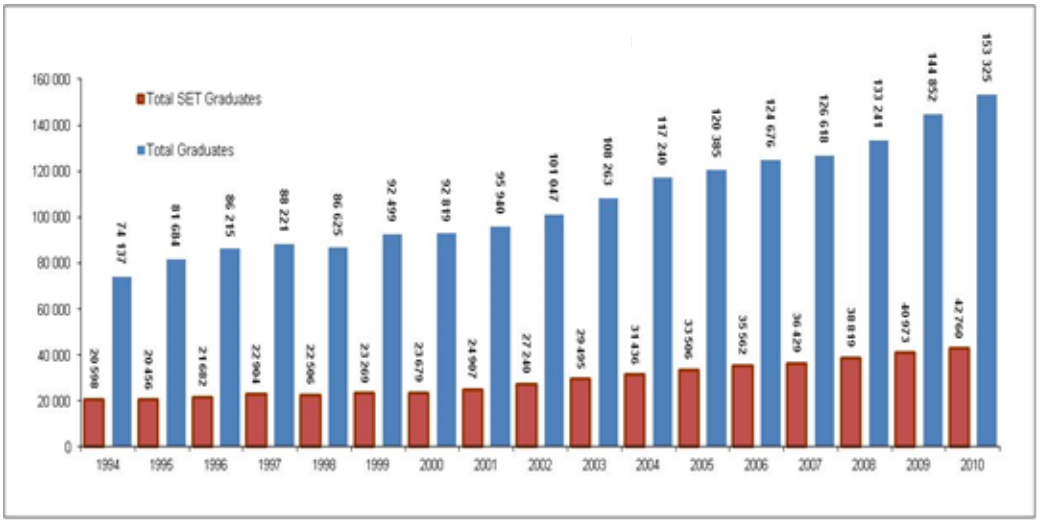


FIGURE 5.16: TOTAL ENROLMENT, TOTAL GRADUATES AND SET GRADUATES

Source: DHET, HEMIS, 2012.

5.8. CONCLUSION

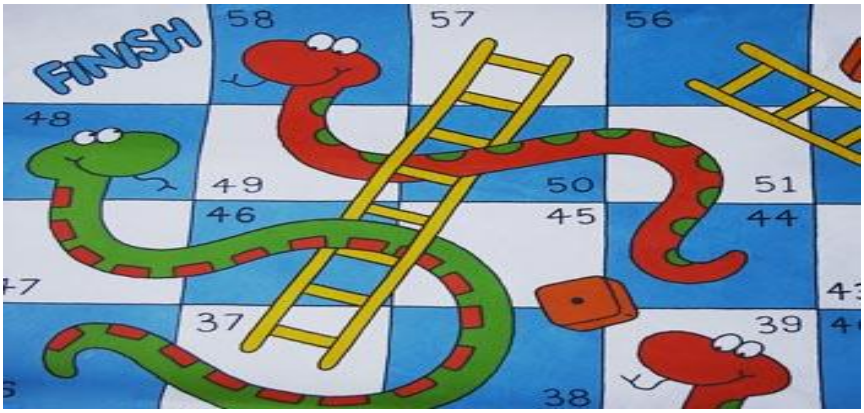
There has been much doom and gloom associated with the performance of the higher education sector. Measurement of equity of access and equality of access has been the subject of many policy documents (DoE, 1997; DoE, 2001, DHET, 2012), as well as for analysts. This chapter has demonstrated that there have been significant gains in terms of widening participation and access to higher education specifically analysed in terms of race, enrolment by field of study, and level of study. The flip side of the coin is measurement of success. The Scott, *et al*. (2007) study showed that there are variances in performance and completion of studies based on race. The dominant discourse from the 1990s to about 2001 was framed by widening of access and creating opportunities for the marginalised race groups. It was clear that accountability, defined as success in higher education, emerged as a discussion at the instigation of the DoE, as studies indicated that there was a high dropout rate in the first year and that the throughput rate was compromised (Bunting, 1994; Cloete, *et al.*, 2002).

The DHET publishes the Trends in Macro-Indicators in Education Report each year. Whilst it is not a performance report in the strictest sense, it does analyse some equity indicators like inputs (enrolment) and outcomes (graduation rates and success rates). The concluding chapter will suggest frameworks that could be used to evaluate and monitor goals set by a country, recognising the shortcomings of data collection mechanisms to inform evaluation and monitoring.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

It is indeed a terrible game of snakes and ladders. Each time we move ahead we come crashing down. We must not under-estimate the impact of apartheid (Kirti Menon, 2012).



6.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the main findings and conclusions of the thesis. Previous chapters have explored the complexity in the measurement of goals in higher education detailing the difficulties associated with national aggregated assessment versus institutional performance. Data analysis and collection, especially in relation to access to higher education are complex and often marooned in databases or shelved, as it is unclear what could be construed as 'good' progress, leaving unanswered the questions of what should be measured and how. This chapter focuses on the key findings, as well as the implications of the analysis for policy-makers in South Africa. It will consider the limitations of the thesis, discussing what its weaknesses are, and what still remains to be accounted for. Finally, there is reflection on the contribution the thesis makes to knowledge.

6.2. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

This thesis commenced with setting out the parameters for research into achieving the goal of widening access to higher education in SA. The time frame selected for review was the period between 1994 and 2010. The primary question was to evaluate the extent to which policy reform in higher education in SA was successful in realising the goal of widening access. As

the analysis demonstrated, it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between policies and institutional responses. While reforms may have had specific intentions, the time lag between a reform and action and interpretation by the institutions is considerable. Secondly, the intention was to develop an evaluative framework for the purpose of assessment of the extent to which access for socially excluded groups had been successful. Chapter 1 has outlined the nature of the problem and the approach adopted for the purpose of this thesis. Chapter 2 has provided a detailed literature review (both nationally and internationally) on the complexity of the equity and access issues focusing particularly on the SA analysts. What emerges strongly is the divergence of views on how government's attainment of the goals should have been approached, as well as rigorous critique of policy-making in that period. There appears to be a measure of consensus that government policies and implementation plans did not stridently address the complexity of equity and access issues. Of note is the question seen throughout the literature, i.e. whether or not SA had to abandon transformation and equity goals in favour of more measured and planned growth due to the confines of fiscal restraint. This tension between equity and transformation is evident in the discussion of the policy reforms.

Chapter 3 has evaluated the planning initiatives of the government, which include the policy environment, as well as implementation instruments from the same period. Critical debates on the 'steering' of the higher education system by the state were explored and an evaluation undertaken regarding the direction or course set being in line with the goals. The relationship between access and affordability, sufficiency and adequacy of the pool of possible entrants to the system, and if the current size and shape of higher education is appropriately configured for expansion are themes that were explored and analysed. In addition, the planning was interrogated in relation to whether all initiatives by the government were in line with the goal of widening access. As is the case with most higher education planning initiatives, the autonomy of institutions often proves to be a barrier affecting the reception and acceptance of the policy reforms. It is also highlighted that institutional bureaucratic practices, policies and systems have to change and these processes are not subject to external scrutiny.

No discussion on higher education expansion can occur without an understanding of the financing and resourcing implications. Funding, as a strategic lever to the expansion of higher education, has been analysed in Chapter 4. It is concluded that state funding of higher education over the period was more in line with a slow growth strategy, as opposed to massification. Additionally, the insufficiency of funds to universities has forced institutions to

shift the burden of the cost of higher education, to increases in tuition fees for students. This rollover effect has sharpened the edge of the affordability dimension of access. While this has been a trend internationally, the impact of high tuition costs in SA has the potential to subvert progress in the widening of access to higher education. The NSFAS loan scheme has been under severe pressure with demand for loans outstripping the financial resources available. Thus, if the intention was to provide access to previously disadvantaged individuals, those from lower class backgrounds, then despite the loans available, alternative sources of funding have to be accessed. Once again, the reality of the financial resources available forms a constraint to widening access.

In Chapter 5, a logical follow-up to the affordability-access debate and wrestling with the issue of access to higher education for the socially excluded was provided, with a focus on making sense of data from the schooling sectors and the higher education sector, and tracking progress across the period 1994–2010. The evaluation of the data suggests that although much progress has been made there are many constraining factors that impede access to higher education. It is also apparent that in order to evaluate progress, targets set by the government need to be more precisely defined and data collected from institutions must be sufficiently specified in order for comparisons across institutions. It is also demonstrated that the reduced inflows from the school sector with students having the requisite subjects and marks to access higher education is an impediment. It is argued that higher education reform cannot be viewed narrowly without taking into account the problems associated with the schooling system and the limitation in terms of actual available spaces at universities.

Finally in this chapter, a two-step evaluative framework is proposed that will enable measurement of progress against specific objectives, taking into account the institutional policy context that determines who enters higher education and who does not. It is concluded that while there has been no shortage of evaluation of state policies and plans, little or no attention has been paid to institutional contexts wherein practices and policies determine access. The proposed framework requires institutional audits to complement data collection and analysis; in turn, these will provide valuable information on the extent to which macro policies have been translated into institutional contexts.

The ‘struggle’ for access to be dominant on the policy agenda is visible in policy rhetoric and it was the objective of this research to evaluate the policy reforms implemented and the extent to which outcomes envisaged and articulated in government documents have materialised

concretely. The theoretical framework used to analyse policy draws on the work of Bowe, *et al.* (1992) and Ball (1993), confirming that 'it is a constantly changing series of texts whose expression and interpretation vary according to the context in which the texts are being put into practice' (Bowe, *et al*., 1992:ix). This has proved to be a useful lens, and frames the conclusions that are derived in this chapter.

The question that was explored during the research phase and which is discussed in this thesis is whether or not SA is able to achieve goals and objectives working in a constitutional democracy. Gumede (2009:7) pointed out that the East Asian development states reached goals set out by the governments of the time, albeit under undemocratic conditions. The East Asian countries worked on ensuring that capital, citizens and civil society were geared towards achievement of the goals with sufficient buy-in and push through. As Sen (Gumede, 2009:9) pointed out, development 'is a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy' and that 'development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedoms: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states'. This thesis has demonstrated that in discussion of education policy reforms, the major concerns of poverty, unemployment and other forms of security have to be considered. It is also argued that 'joined up' policy is the only solution as isolated tinkering within a sector will detract from achievement of outcomes like widening of access.

Gumede (2009:11) reminds readers that the apartheid state displayed the determination to drive through reforms similar to the strategy used in the East Asian states. He identified eight conditions under which reforms can be driven successfully:

- Political will to drive a development and modernisation project;
- Prior experience of development;
- Efficient and independent public bureaucracy;
- Central co-ordination to drive economic transformation;
- Getting the policy mix right – sequencing and agility;
- Integrated long-term development, with legitimacy and buy-in;
- Partnerships between labour, government, business and civil society; and
- International environment.

This thesis has focused on the legacy of apartheid and the deeply unequal society that remains a ticking time-bomb. This 'relative deprivation' could become a major threat to development, as it requires a significant skewing of resources by the state to address growth, social justice and equity issues. Decisive government action is a precondition for ensuring that the success of higher education is linked to the ability of the government to invest revenue and resources in both sustainable economic development and the provision of the necessary regulatory and enabling environment for an accountable higher education system. There are several case studies, especially from East Asian countries, where there has been successful channelling of resources towards economic growth recognising the critical importance of education in the development of the country. The outcomes achieved in these case studies are attributable to the governance, management and allocation of resources to fund the vision of these countries (Gumede, 2009).

The contention of this thesis is that in countries where there is civil war or war, systematic erosion of equality by removal of key civil rights or natural disasters (in the form of earthquakes or tsunamis), systemic reconstruction requires central steering and major investment in all inter-related sectors in order to ensure that the goals and objectives that are set are rapidly achieved. Sierra Leone, for example, has battled to maintain a higher education system after a brutal civil war that has been ongoing since the 1990s. Despite a population of over five million, the higher education system has been in crisis, with inflows from schooling severely compromised because of low completion rates at the secondary level, bankrupt universities and qualifications not being commensurate with the needs of the country (Sierra Leone Telegraph, 21 July 2013). In the period following the end of the conflict, programmes were initiated that were radical in both conceptualisation and implementation (UNICEF, 2011:38). An example of this was the CREPS (Complementary Rapid Education for Primary Schools) – UNICEF initiative which compressed six years of primary education into three years. The evaluation of the programme concluded that it was an intervention that provided an option for children to make up for lost time and simultaneously by offering a psychosocial component, dealt with the trauma of the war and the impact on individuals (Ibid., 39).

This example illustrates the need for coherent planned reforms that tackle the problem with drastic measures. In SA, there has been a calmness in the approach to reform of the higher education sector. Barring the ruffling of feathers during the restructuring of the system, institutions have not been held to account in terms of key questions like access to whom and

success for whom. The cautionary respect for institutional autonomy has framed policy reforms and thus the determined and conscious drive to push for widening access has been restrained.

The question is whether or not one can compare the situation of troubled countries with the unique set of circumstances of SA. Iraq has had 30 or more years of conflict, with the physical infrastructure of universities ruined, limited educational supplies and a flight of academics from the country creating a major human capital deficit. Afghanistan is another example of a country that has had to build the education system from the school system upwards, with the added imperative of restoring the value of education for both males and females. The above situations require extraordinary innovation, capital injections and a shared determination between the state and the people. The reality of Afghanistan is that at the end of the Taliban regime in 2002, there were 4 000 students at six institutions while it was envisaged that by 2010, this number would increase to 100 000 students (Bollag, 2005: 36). The challenges are summarised as being the need for sustained peace, adequate funding, governance stability and expansion of the higher education sector without compromise of quality. In addition, Afghanistan is dealing with the structural deficits in the schooling system, the lack of qualified academics and unprepared secondary students. The question that has to be asked is whether countries like Afghanistan need to follow the Chinese model of planned, controlled and rapid expansion and absorb the unintended consequences.

The literature on 'fragile' states suggests that education systems are viewed as the responsibility of the state and are usually severely compromised by poor governance, conflict or arrested development (Rose & Greeley, 2006:1). The point that is made is that the strategy derived for the country needs to take into account the context, the role of civil society, the role of donors and most importantly, the will of the government to address the problems through proper analysis and implementation programmes. The legacy of apartheid looms heavily over sectors such as education and health. The 'fragile' states analogy was used to determine if the situation in SA could be compared and if so, what should have been the nature of the extraordinary intervention that was required. It is argued further that the 'window of opportunity' was available in 1994 when SA was donor rich and that a long-term plan should have been conceptualised to tackle the problems of education holistically.

The example of India could be used, where concerted planning was required post-British rule in order to reconstruct a crumbling elitist system of education. Tilak (2005:35) argued that

following India's independence from British rule, a series of five year plans were developed to take into account the developmental challenges of the country. The jury is still out as to whether or not the achievements were substantive, but priorities were identified and a strategy rolled out in the country. The first five year plan addressed primary and secondary education; this was followed by prioritisation of higher education from the second five year plan onwards. While issues of quality and GER can be discussed, in the 21st century, India is a major supplier of skilled graduates that have taken their place in many countries. Nevertheless, many HE challenges persist. Rizvi and Gorur (2011:3) outline the challenges facing the mass higher education system in India with an unregulated growth of private institutions. The problems outlined are familiar and reverberate with the SA context. These are aging infrastructure, varied and uneven quality, many graduates unprepared for the world of work and the reality that Indian institutions do not feature in any of the higher education ranking systems. The 11th five-year plan which covers the period 2007-2012 for example makes provision for new universities to be established and policy reforms to deal with the identified problems of lack of funding, under-resourced institutions and provision of additional access to students. It targets a growth in the gross enrolment ratio from 11% in 2005 to 21% by the end of 2012. However, Rizvi and Gorur (2011) argue that despite progress with the plan, it is not sufficient for India to maintain its competitive edge. They identify curriculum reform and outdated pedagogical practices as well as the rigid governance structures of higher education as being major inhibiting factors in the Indian quest for expanding access, maintaining a competitive edge and playing a leading role globally. Agarwal (2006, 2009) argues that growth has occurred in the system dealing with issues of equity of access, but quality remains a focal point for the Indian government.

This approach was evident in China, which declared that higher education had to be expanded radically in the 1990s. Despite some problems, such as an increase in tuition fees, enhancement of social exclusion for the poor and uneven development of institutions, participation grew from 0,4 million to 3,4 million between 1978 and 1998 (Li, *et al.*, 2008:4). This combination of resourcing and planning achieved specific goals for China even though there may have been unintended consequences.

Somalia, which has been war-torn for many years, resorted to radical interventions in order to deal with primary and secondary education backlogs. These have involved rapid up-skilling of teachers and compressing the number of years of schooling to address the disruption of the

schooling careers of primary and secondary students (Brannelly, Ndaruhutse, & Rigaud, 2009).

In relation to higher education in SA, which has deep inequalities in terms of both the institutional landscape and individuals' access to higher education, the role of the developmental state heightens. The demand for higher education in SA is linked to three factors:

1. Contribution to the SA economy;
2. Social justice issues; and
3. Individual social mobility.

It is the contention of this thesis that long-term planning of the education sector should have occurred with a more holistic view and that a Marshall plan should have been designed to drive through policy reforms. There was a critical opportunity in 1994 to effect a radical transformation of the system. What has transpired is a tinkering with parts of the system, which has led to a perpetuation of the problems that bedevil higher education and the rest of the education sector. It has been demonstrated that conventional models of dealing with deep-seated structural and systemic deficiencies in the system should have been abandoned in favour of radical, innovative and interventionist action.

6.3. IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES

There are major difficulties in both defining and measuring equity of access to higher education. In this thesis, equity has acquired the meaning of provision of equal access for those who academically qualify for entry into higher education. It has been demonstrated that despite the ability of policy-makers to measure progress against such a goal, measurement of enrolment or participation rates can simplify a complex problem. It masks factors such as: choice of degree; success in courses; time spent completing degree; and financial and socio-cultural barriers. The latter are major issues that have to be considered when understanding inequalities. The broad purpose of achieving equitable access to higher education across race groups in SA aims at reducing educational inequalities. It has been demonstrated that translating the goal to measurable indicators is not straightforward.

The key measures of equity in higher education are enrolment, retention, success and institutional support systems. A focus on any one measure, without taking into account other

variables, can prove to be a limiting analysis. Hall and Mathews (2008) focused on how societies can measure progress, in a seminal work that traces the history of the links between measurement of progress and accountability. Education is already widely regarded as one of the most important aspects of progress in both developed and developing societies. But there is no general agreement on how education's contribution to progress should be encapsulated in just one or a few statistical indicators. Statistics to determine the extent of change and performance has been the standard measure used. Hall and Mathews (2008:18) argued that the differences in measures used lie in what is measured and how these are arranged. They pointed out that there is a limitation in using measures like the GDP of a country over time to determine progress. The complexity of measuring progress in education requires country specific measures and a selection of indicators that are contextually appropriate.

The thrust of measurement is evident in publications like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'Society at a Glance' or country reports from the United Nations (UN). These reports focus on progress of countries in terms of social development and analysis of deliberate policy action by governments or institutions (OECD, 2011:15). In SA there is strong measurement of progress through various agencies, including: government line departments, institutional reports, Annual Reports to Parliament, Development Indicators by the Presidency and other external evaluations. There is definitely no shortage of evaluation of performance, though it is not entirely clear as to what impact this has on policy development, implementation plans or holding institutions to account. The usage of indicators in higher education is an area beset with problems, as there still needs to be consensus on which dimensions of an indicator constitute progress and which direction is 'good' or 'bad'. The analysis of higher education data undertaken in Chapters 4 and 5 confirm the difficulties of measurement and the limitations of the data in evaluating progress.

It was clear, through evaluating progress in relation to the goal of widening access and participation, that there is insufficient coherent data to enable judgements to be drawn, to inform policy-making or to drive implementation more aggressively. It is a finding of this thesis that if the goal is to be evaluated consistently across the public higher education system, there needs to be an agreed framework for evaluation and data that is comparable across institutions.

Deriving from frameworks used elsewhere, what is proposed is that universities in SA should be required to evaluate their progress in relation to the goal. In Australia, for example, the

Group of Eight (Go8)[32] universities have developed a framework for the evaluation of equity initiatives. The intention was to provide a basis for benchmarking amongst the institutions and to evaluate which strategies worked, especially in relation to access and success for socially excluded groups (CSHE, 2010:3). An earlier framework focused on five broad goals, i.e.: access, participation, retention, success and completion (CSHE, 2008:14). As useful as it was at the time, further refinements were made to ensure that progress could be measured in more depth.

Similar frameworks have been used elsewhere and it is clear that each framework has to take into account the context of the country, the institutional context and the barriers to access, which vary by country. Usher (2004:2) made the point that measuring access must take into account *how* many students are in the system and importantly, *who* are the students. This is relevant in the SA context, as there are concerns on both counts; but given the history of the country and the apartheid exclusionary education programmes, the question of *who* is elevated in status to being a critical dimension that must be measured. In other words, who is being given access to higher education and at which institutions. Any measurement of progress in SA has to factor in the above questions and go beyond just the numbers to a scrutiny of institutional processes, policies and systems.

Bensimon, Hao and Bustillos (2003:5) developed an academic equity scorecard that measures access, retention, institutional receptivity and excellence in the California higher education system. The authors highlighted the difficulties of data measurement, though once there is an agreement on the collection of data by institutions, the measurement tool becomes valuable. The drawback of this model is that it does not highlight success sufficiently and focuses mainly on input measures. Bensimon *et al*. (2003:21) in arguing for the usage of performance indicators that institutions should be measured by stated:

> *… even though the values of diversity and equity are espoused in the mission statements of higher education institutions and in state level documents, progress toward their attainment is not something that is monitored because neither the institutions nor the states' higher education systems have developed equity as a performance standard to judge their effectiveness in improving the educational outcomes of under-represented students, including those from low-income backgrounds.*

[32] Go8 refers to a group of Australian universities that are research intensive.

The argument above, which links measurement of performance to the role of policy-makers, is one that resonates for the SA higher education system. It is clear that despite attempts by the CHE, CHET, the DHET and the Presidency, SA's evaluation of progress towards achieving equitable access and widening participation has not been measured consistently or with rigour. The rationale for a framework against which all institutions can be measured is essential if policy directions have to be changed or resources redirected and if inequities persist, they should be highlighted. If the higher education system is to be made more equitable then there needs to be more deliberate measurement in order to understand progress.

What is proposed here is that there should be the adoption of a framework that will measure progress, specifically in relation to the goal of access and participation, ensuring that the success and outputs of the system are also measured by taking into account designated groups and socio-economic background. There is a recognition that research from NSFAS signals that there has been a sizeable increase in demand, which has resulted in a substantial increase in the amount made available by the state for disbursement as loans or bursaries (NSFAS Annual Report, 2011–2012). What needs to be explored by the state and institutions is how class can be delineated, noting that there are no markers barring the NSFAS applicant pool. Postal codes could be used, but this has its own limitations, as place of residence as a class marker has become increasingly blurred as people rent rooms or use their employer's address or that of family members. Another option could be to use schools as a determinant of class, noting that some students from lower income groups have bursaries or scholarships at higher income schools.

An important consensus would be to agree on the measures of equity in higher education. The four main areas that require unpacking are enrolment, retention, success and institutional support systems. The development of an agreed framework, as proposed below, would enable the sector to track progress at an institutional level, facilitate across institutional learning, and provide the government with credible information to inform policy-making and processes for monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Drawing on the Go8 framework, three critical goals have been selected, with objectives identified for each goal. In constructing the framework, indicators have been identified that would enable measurement of progress on an annual basis. The methodology would require that each institution would submit this information to the DHET on an annual basis. This information would then be collated into a national performance score card. It is envisaged that

the DHET could then engage with each institution annually to assess if progress has been made. It is not suggested that the DHET use financial incentives or punitive measures when assessing institutional performance. Though the literature does speak of accountability and the usage of incentives, it must be noted that a system of reward or punitive steps can lead to perverse behaviour.

The Go8 framework of 2010 identifies four critical areas, namely access and participation; attainment and achievement; graduate outcomes and research and knowledge transfer (CSHE, 2010:3). The proposed SA Framework for Monitoring Equity identifies three areas: access and participation; success and graduate outcomes. These are in line with the goals identified in the DoE (2001) in relation to the challenge of widening participation in the higher education sector.

GOAL 1: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION	
OBJECTIVES	**INDICATORS**
1. Widen access by increasing the participation rates of African, Coloured and Indian (Black and defined as historically disadvantaged students in the apartheid era)	• Measurement of participation in: Degree programmes by year and field of study (SET, HUM, BMS, EDUCATION); Programmes leading to professional registration; Scarce Skill Programmes; Honours, Master's and PhD by field of study: • Overall participation rates for the institution with annual growth measured across 5 year intervals from 1994 with the last 3 years with actual participation rates; • Actual student numbers by designated groups using the above methodology for consistency.
2. Improvement of gender balance	• Measurement of participation in: Degree programmes by year and field of study (SET, HUM, BMS, EDUCATION); Programmes leading to professional registration; Scarce Skill Programmes; Honours, Master's and PhD by field of study.
3. Improve financial support	• Number and percentage of students on NSFAS bursaries or loans by field of study and total amount; • Number and percentage of students on donor funds by field of study and total amounts; • Number and percentage of students on government departments or other public entities by field of study and total amounts; • Number and percentage of students on University funds by field of study and total amounts; • Total outstanding student fees debt; Figures provided should be in comparison to the previous three years.
4. Diversified selection criteria	• Percentage of first time entering students admitted through: Alternate admission routes delineated by undergraduate and postgraduate by field of study.

GOAL 2: SUCCESS	
5. Improve progress and success of students	• Retention, success and graduation rates by race, gender and fields of study; • Throughput rates based on institutional cohort analysis by race, gender and fields of study; • Graduation data; • Performance of first time entering students by fields of study and race/gender; • Data should be delineated into undergraduate and postgraduate.
GOAL 3: GRADUATE OUTCOMES	
6. Preparedness for entry to the labour market	• Graduation destination surveys by race, gender and fields of study; • Corporate surveys on graduates performance; • Performance by race and gender on external Board examinations for professionals (e.g. Chartered Accountants examinations).

The second proposed step is that the CHE, through its Directorate of Institutional Audits, evaluates the progress of each institution in relation to the quantitative data, but that it includes information provided by each institution on the policies, procedures, programmes, structures and systems in place to further the goals set out in White Paper 3 (DoE, 1997) with regard to the goal of widening access and participation. As per the Higher Education Act of 1997, Section 5, 1 (e) the CHE has the responsibility of monitoring and promoting access to higher education. According to the mandate (as described on the CHE website), institutional audits were conceptualised in order to advance the transformation objectives of the country. It states:

> *The HEQC's approach to institutional audit is strongly shaped by the complex challenges facing higher education institutions in an era of radical restructuring within South African higher education. The audit system seeks to be responsive to as well as proactive in advancing the objectives of higher education transformation, as reflected in various policy and legislative documents that have been published since 1994* (CHE, 2004a).

6.4. TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK

Drawing on the Go8 Guides for Evaluating Effectiveness, it is suggested that the proposed audits be organised for the three main areas, as set out in the table above. Using the model of reviewing and evaluating existing systems and policies, plus interviews with staff, students and other stakeholders, it is surmised that there would be multiple benefits. The first of these would be a thorough understanding of the operations of institutions in relation to national

mandates, and the second would be useful practice guides that could become shared resources for institutions. It is recommended that once the CHE has concluded the audits, a comprehensive evaluative report should be compiled with a view to understanding whether or not institutional practices and policies are in line with the goals of the government.

The proposed Equity Audit should take the form of an assembled portfolio by institutions and should include a self-evaluation narrative structured around three main goals: access and participation, success and graduate outcomes. The following table provides an evidence table organised around the three main goals.

GOAL 1: ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION
1. Description of school recruitment activities with specifics of schools in terms of geography, government schools, private schools. 2. Breakdown of top 20 feeder schools for a 3 year period and profile of first-time entering students based on the above. 3. Participation in career events and exhibitions. 4. Description of community initiatives aimed at recruitment of students. 5. Faculty or school/department based initiatives aimed at recruitment into specific programmes. 6. Institutional and programme specific admission and selection policies. 7. Description of alternate tests administered – purpose and outcomes. 8. Description of specific access programmes or foundation programmes. Analysis for a 3-year period to be provided of achievements and intent of programmes. 9. Evaluation by the institution of sufficiency of funding for students from low-income backgrounds.
GOAL 2: SUCCESS
1. Description and evaluation of student orientation programmes; first year experience programmes; tutorial programmes and any bridging programmes that are programme specific. 2. Description of early warning tracking systems for students at risk. 3. Teaching and learning strategy of the institution and any specific variations that are programme specific. 4. Results of student surveys. 5. Description of student support services (Writing Centres, Homework Programmes, Mentor Systems, Counselling and Health Services, Disability Support and Financial Aid).
GOAL 3: GRADUATE OUTCOMES
1. Description of graduate recruitment fairs, career exhibitions and advisory services provided to students (frequency, participation statistics). 2. Description of graduate preparation programmes. 3. Alumni and graduate destination surveys.

The rationale for proposing this two-step methodology is that if government is to address the issues emanating from the apartheid legacy of unequal education, then there has to be deep

analysis to underpin policies and resource distribution patterns. In Chapter 4, it was concluded that, as laudable as the goals and objectives of the government are in relation to widening access, resourcing and some policies, as analysed in Chapter 3, they fall short of delivering expediently. In seeking to expand higher education and create a knowledge based economy, it is not tenable that policies are conjured up without reference to the implementing partners, which, in the case of higher education, are the universities. Chapters 1 and 2 referred to Bowe, *et al*.'s (1992) framework, which essentially argued that policy texts produced by the state are subject to interpretation, contestation and contextual influences that shape the trajectory of policy impact (Bowe, *et al*., 1992). The critical element from the framework of Bowe, *et al.* (1992) is the *context of practice,* with policy being viewed as subjective and open to varied interpretations and thus implementation differences. It is argued in this thesis that the *context* is a varied and differentiated landscape that has to contend with the inequalities of the past and that this has to occur despite differences in institutional histories. The relevance of institutional histories cannot be under-estimated, as, by their very nature, recruitment, admission, selection and registration criteria are gate-keeping forces.

Thus, post-1994, the University of Fort Hare would have had to do very little to amend its policies for admission, while the University of Stellenbosch would have excluded Blacks in terms of admission criteria. For example, in 1994, UCT adopted an admissions policy that uses race as a proxy for disadvantage and in a sliding scale model that applies different admission criteria for different groups, with Whites required to have a higher admission score than other race groups. In an article published in the Mail and Guardian entitled *Past Sins Revisited and Corrected* (Price, 2012), the Vice Chancellor, Dr Max Price, argued that the experience of UCT was that disadvantage persisted in the school system and that Black African students performed at a lower level than other race groups. He stated 'that the number of points required to get into many programmes falls between the Black and White distributions of marks at our top feeder schools. Allowing in only those above the cut-off would mean admitting mainly White students, even though almost all the Black students from those schools could easily complete their degrees and do well' (Price, 2012). The justification of using a race hierarchy to determine admissions has been widely contested, as it creates a platform for admission to be based on race and performance, as opposed to performance only. It also perpetuates racial stereotypes and creates a perversity in the system. The UCT model is similar to affirmative action admission policies used in the United States and India, but with minor variations.

Admissions policies serve the purpose of gate-keeping for higher education institutions, determining who enters and by which criteria. These have not been subjected to review by policy analysts or subjected to scrutiny by government. The internal institutional policies and practices require alignment and smooth calibration with national goals and imperatives. Noting that universities are autonomous, the recommendation emanating from this research is that these policies and practices should be subjected to peer review by an agency given the statutory function of independent evaluation (in this instance, the CHE). There may be rigour in contesting this proposal, but it appears to be no different from subjecting programmes for external accreditation or undergoing an independent audit.

An evaluative framework in two parts, as proposed, would be useful, in that there would be agreed performance indicators for all institutions coupled with a qualitative review of institutional policies and practices. The segregation of functions in terms of the DHET performing the quantitative review and the CHE undertaking the equity audit of institutions is one that fits into the current governance framework for the system. The independence of the CHE, coupled with already established rigorous processes of auditing, will enable both a critical review, as well as sufficient distance from the DHET. It is argued that if the CHE worked with HESA there would be sufficient buy-in from the sector to enable the proposed audit.

6.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE THESIS

Research conducted for this thesis set the task of determining the extent of South Africa's progress in relation to specific goals pertaining to access of previously socially excluded groups to higher education. Following a review of state policies and quantitative data, the difficulty that arose was in determining if the strides made were significant or not. This related to a lack of clear goal setting with specific targets by the DoE (2001) and a lack of close monitoring of, not just the numbers, but whether or not the sector had rallied sufficiently to gear itself towards achievement of the goals. What appears to be a major weakness is the absence of agreed targets that are measurable, as well as the absence of an evaluative framework. An evaluative framework is suggested in this thesis, as well as a proposal for implementation. As discussed in this chapter, there has been insufficient attention paid to institutional policies and practices. It is recognised that this is an area that requires attention, as it is critical that institutional practices and policies are aligned to the goals of the country. Although analysis of the quantitative data was possible, there is recognition that the

evaluation of institutional contexts would be useful in understanding how access was enabled or not. As Hall (2012:12) has asserted:

> *While national education policies may direct attention to inclusive and transformative priorities, these are notoriously difficult to achieve in the face of the collective reluctance of a university to change. Similarly, the sticks and carrots of policy levers can be overwhelmed by the complex mechanics of admission requirements, student finance arrangements and assessment systems; given the long cycle of student progression through a higher education system, it can take the life of several parliaments to know whether policies have succeeded or failed.*

A second major limitation is the analysis of the multiple policy initiatives and 'steering' by the state. It could not be conclusively determined if, for example, the mergers that changed the institutional identities thwarted or impacted on the goal of widening access. In the same spirit, the diversion of resources in support of the merger project could be viewed as a setback. Affordability, as a critical dimension of access, surfaces as a problematic area because of shrinking state allocations to a growing sector. This has resulted in increases in tuition fees. Thus, growth without proportionate increases in state allocations could have created a barrier to higher education for those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Both the areas identified above require further analysis, as, given the particular circumstances of SA, it could be argued that comparison with other countries is not entirely relevant, given the unique circumstances inherited from the apartheid state. The deep structural fractures and fissions of apartheid that permeated the entire education system ensured that SA could not be viewed as a normal society; therefore the intervention required to steer the system in a specific direction would require a massive injection of resources and a concerted plan to achieve any of the goals in the NPHE. Despite policy analysts referring to the period as 'symbolic policy making' (Jansen, 2001), it is clear that the introduction of macro planning frameworks and differentiating instruments to define universities' programme offerings amongst other policies, was essential.

It was clearly evident that insufficient dialogue took place between the school and the higher education sectors, especially at the level of government departments. Insufficient numbers of academically qualified students entering higher education, with the requisite subjects for the government's vision of growth in SET, remains an unresolved problem. The dependency of

the higher education system's growth on the schooling system is natural and yet there was no long-term plan evident from government that looked at all sectors of education in a holistic way. The rising outcry from universities about the epistemological gap between schools and universities has grown louder, with much blame being assigned regarding the burden of universities increasing because of under-preparedness of students entering for the first time. This in turn is reportedly the reason for the high dropout and low throughput rates in higher education. A limitation of this thesis it that it could point to the problem, but political will has to be demonstrated to achieve a breakthrough. It was surmised that there was no shortage of good policy rhetoric, but implementation and coherence remained problematic.

Closely linked is the discussion at the beginning of this chapter on the role of the state. This thesis does not fully develop the parameters of a developmental state or explore the extent of intervention that would be acceptable or required. However, it does seem clear that the gentle steering and silo-like government departments have not worked sufficiently robustly. Barring the highly interventionist period of the mergers, there has been no other significant policy intervention with respect to realising the goals of access and success. This is despite the linkage made between the role of higher education and the need for a productive economy with the appropriate skills sets being produced. This seems to be a conundrum and this thesis has not debated sufficiently the nature of the political state required in the SA context.

6.6. REFLECTIONS

Research for this thesis used Ball's framework to understand the contexts of policy-making, interpretation and implementation. This thesis has described the analyses conducted and the evaluation of the extent to which government's plan to widen access to higher education has been successful over a 16 year period. It proposes an evaluative framework that is thus far noticeably absent from the system, given the high prioritisation of the goal by government and institutions of higher learning. Provisionally, it has been argued that recognition of the distinction between a policy 'text' and the multiple layers of interpretation is a useful tool for policy-makers to understand that the desired impacts are conditional on institutional contexts and the actors in these contexts to interpret and implement the texts. Transformation of institutional contexts, which takes into account admissions policies, curricula and the 'habitus' of the institution, is a necessary condition for access to higher education to translate to success. While Ball's framework offers a pessimistic view of the policy making framework, it is a credible analytical tool as it takes into account the roles of all players in a

system, the relationship between a policy text and the stakeholders who implement and in the act of implementation interpret and fashion new meanings. It also most importantly enables an understanding of the contextual factors that force particular meanings on policies.

The absence of an evaluative framework that focuses holistically on access was found to be a major gap in terms of measurement of performance of the higher education system in SA. Arguably, the development of the framework in this research is to stimulate debate on institutional performances in relation to both access and success. There is a dearth of information on initiatives, practices and processes within institutions targeted at improving access and ensuring success. In the absence of information that will enable policymakers at the national level to understand institutional contexts, the debates on access and success will continue to revolve in a tired and vicious cycle. The framework suggested argues for information gathering and evaluation against the goals to be measured. Once the two step methodology proposed is completed by both the DHET and the CHE, it will be possible for a determination to be made on the following:

(i) An overview at the national level of the range of initiatives at each institution aimed at improving access, achieving equity and ensuring success;

(ii) An understanding of the policies and practices at each institution in relation to access and teaching and learning;

(iii) An evaluation of the success of the initiatives with constructive suggestions that could be recommended to institutions for implementation;

(iv) Identification of good practice and initiatives that have worked successfully;

(v) Stimulating the national debate on access-success from an informed basis;

(vi) Identifying concrete actions that can be taken by all government stakeholders and institutions.

It has been demonstrated in this research that countries like the UK and Australia have undertaken evaluations of this form with success. In a country that has structural flaws in the education system partially attributable to our legacy of apartheid and to slowness of change at the institutional level, it is critical that prioritisation of the goal of access is mediated by evaluations that take into account the complexity of factors that influence participation and

success. The framework thus enables a deeper understanding of institutional complexities and takes into account other variables that could impact on access and success. It does not negate the influence of individual factors that could play a role, like students who make decisions to drop out or not study at a higher education institution.

Drawing on Ball's description of policy as text, places the role for interpretation at different levels in the sector. The focus shifts then from government where policies are written to the discourse which emerges around policies. This approach to policy enables a view of policy being product and process. Foucault's influence is present in the work of Ball as the argument is developed around how discourse provides a frame within which truth and knowledge develop. The value of this approach is that it allows room for recognition of human agency. The research has demonstrated that there has been no dearth of policy reform in the post 1994 period. However, there is recognition that the contexts of institutions and individual actors determine to a large extent the course and direction of implementation. As the language of policy increasingly focused on efficiency, the relationship between graduate outputs and labour market demands, institutions respond differently and at different speeds to these fundamental shifts in the policy discourse. Of course, as the state is the primary funder, responses from institutions are tempered as ultimately, the state determines the course for higher education. Whilst, the introduction of enrolment planning, funding incentives for improved graduation rates and deliberate actions to alter the size and shape of higher education are actions of the government, institutional practices begin to evolve responding to the specific thrusts of policies.

This research has focused on the following three areas specifically:

a) Policy reforms post 1994 specifically as they relate to widening access;

b) Analysis of enrolment and graduation patterns between 1994 and 2010 as well funding allocated to higher education; and

c) Evaluating progress towards goals set out with regards to widening access.

Emerging from the analysis, is an understanding of the complexity of attainment of the goal of widening access. It has also highlighted the need for discussions on access to be accompanied by an interrogation of success. While an evaluative framework to monitor progress on access is arguably a subset of monitoring of higher education institutions undertaken by the DHET, the case is made in this research for a nuanced tool that takes into

account institutional contexts, variances in student recruitment strategies and admission/selection criteria. It provides a holistic approach to evaluation of progress in relation to the goal which moves from mere quantitative data on enrolments and graduations. The outcome could be that a deeper understanding of the complex set of variables at play in measuring progress in terms of access, could inform future policy making.

In conclusion, Sen's notion of 'relational deprivation' has a bearing on understandings of social justice and relative inequalities. Thus, provision of access to higher education for individuals from a lower income group could produce an outcome that is inequitable in comparison to an individual from a higher income group. The inequity may arise from choice of degree, institution and absorption into the labour market. SA, with its inherently varied institutional histories and capacities, is a challenging environment with historic dynamics that have to be considered. It is clear that if education is to be a 'primary means of intergenerational economic and social change' (Hall, 2012:16), then major seismic shifts have to take place both at the policy level and systemically within the country. As poverty and inequality continue to be the detractors and inhibitors, widening of access to higher education has become like a game of snakes and ladders, with progress alternating with reversals and hurdles.

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ANNEXURE 1:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Date	Institution	Permission for Acknowledgement of Source
17 April 2007	CPUT	No
18 April 2007	DoE: Member of Senior Management in Higher Education Branch	No
25 April 2007	VC of a merged university	No
18 May 2007	NMMU	No
21 May 2007	DoE: Member of Senior Management in Higher Education Branch	No
30 May 2007	Official from the CHE	No
10 June 2007	Acting VC of a merged institution	No
15 June 2007	Head of Institutional Planning at a merged institution	No
19 June 2007	Member of Senior Management at an institution that had to incorporate a college of education	No
25 June 2007	Member of Senior Management at an institution that was not affected by mergers	No

ANNEXURE 2:

INFORMATION CONSENT LETTER FOR INTERVIEWS

Date

Dear ***(insert participant's name):***

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Ph D degree in the School of Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand under the supervision of Professor M Jahed[33]. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part. The title of my research is:

Exclusion and Access in Higher Education Policies

The purpose of the research is to assess the extent to which the policy goal of widening access to higher education has been achieved. In focusing on access, a multi-dimensional approach has been adopted encompassing both physical access as well as epistemological access. Since 1994, the state has prioritized access as a goal amongst

The purpose of this study, therefore, is ***(insert purpose).***

This study will focus on implementation of national policies relating to access in higher education and the impact of these policies at the institutional level. The focus of the interviews will be to ascertain the following:

1. How was the goal of access interpreted and given effect to within the institution?
2. What were the barriers and enabling factors within the institution that inhibited or accelerated progress towards widening access?
3. How have government's policies shaped and impacted on the institution's performance in terms of provision of access and widening access?
4. What extraneous factors have impacted on the goal of 'access' either positively or negatively?
5. How would the institution evaluate itself in terms of performance in relation to the goal of access in the period 1994–2005.

I would like to include your institution as one of several others to be involved in my study. I believe that because you are actively involved in the management and operation of your organization, you are best suited to speak to the various issues, such as ***student enrolment planning, recruitment strategies, strategic plans of the institutions and other areas that relate to the broad topic of 'widening access to higher education'.***

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately ***1 hour*** in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be tape-recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained

[33] Supervisor changed in 2011.

for a minimum period of 5 years in a secure environment. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ***012 392 9153*** or by email at ***menon.k@che.ac.za***. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr Jahed at 011 7173102 or email jahed.m@pdm.wits.ac.za.

I would like to assure you that the research proposal submitted for this study has been reviewed and accepted by the relevant committees at the University of the Witwatersrand. However, the final decision about participation is yours. I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely

Kirti Menon

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Kirti Menon of the School of Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be tape recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this study, I may contact the relevant supervisor at the University of the Witwatersrand.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

☐YES ☐NO

I agree to have my interview tape recorded.

☐YES ☐NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

☐YES ☐NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____