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ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: A CASE STUDY OF ACADEMICS' AND MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

Globalization has had an impact on higher education in South Africa. There is a growing emphasis on public accountability. Consequently there is a rise in quality assurance interventions like the national review of the M.Ed programme. Sometimes these quality assurance interventions are perceived as infringing on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In this research report, I examine how academics at the University of X (UX), experience the relationship which is emerging by current policy in higher education between "academic freedom", "institutional autonomy" and "public accountability".

This research report followed a case study design that used a qualitative approach. I used a phenomenological research methodology with specifically semi-structured interviews to understand the phenomenon of the review and to ascertain academics' and managers' perceptions thereof. I used non-probability purposive sampling to interview seven academics and five management staff. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The findings were analysed and separated into three themes, viz. the value of the national review process; management versus teaching and learning as areas of focus with the review; and the programme review methodology. The staff found the review to be useful because of the programme focus of the review. It was most useful for management of the programme and for developing collegiality in the sector. Whilst the review criteria tended to focus on management instead of teaching and learning, some participants were comfortable with the review exploring their teaching and learning via direct classroom observations. There was a wide spectrum of views on what makes a good programme, with some participants believing that both teaching and learning and management are important for a successful programme. There are pros and cons to the national M.Ed review methodology. The commendations can be summed up as being fair, using standard programme review methodologies. The criticisms of the methodology includes criticism of the process as being archival, concern over the panel selection, dissatisfaction at the panel's report and criticism that the criteria are checklist and that institutions need to go beyond them in order to achieve excellence.

Declaration

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY: A CASE STUDY OF ACADEMICS' AND MANAGERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAMME", submitted by Kamal Bhagwandas Jogibhai as a research project by coursework and research report submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, is a bona fide record of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Professor Yael Shalem. The contents of this thesis, in full or in parts, have not been submitted to any other University for the award of any degree.

Kamal Bhagwandas Jogibhai
Date: 15 February 2012 Signature

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Table of Contents

1. **Introduction**
    - 1.1. Background
    - 1.2. The Scope of the Project
        - 1.2.1. Research Problem/Statement of Problem
        - 1.2.2. Research Aims
        - 1.2.3. Research Questions
        - 1.2.4. Research Method
        - 1.2.5. Scope, Limitations and Assumptions
    - 1.3. The Structure of the Report
2. **Literature Review**
    - 2.1. The Historical Context
    - 2.2. The Policy Process
    - 2.3. Some Policy Tensions
    - 2.4. A Historical and Conceptual Tracing of the Concepts of Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability
        - 2.4.1. Historical Pointers to the Relationship between Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability
        - 2.4.2. Conceptual Pointers of Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability
            - 2.4.2.1. Academic Freedom
            - 2.4.2.2. Institutional Autonomy
            - 2.4.2.3. Public Accountability
    - 2.5. The Academic Freedom, Institutional autonomy and Public Accountability Debate in South Africa
        - 2.5.1. Claim 1: Academic Freedom is an Academic Principle
        - 2.5.2. Claim 2: The Meaning and Scope of Academic Freedom are Historically Contingent
        - 2.5.3. Claim 3: Conditional Autonomy - the Resolution attempted by Hall
    - 2.6. The Impact of Globalization

2.7. Assessing Quality Management in Higher Education

3. Research Design

3.1. Methodology

3.2. Data Collection

3.3. Data Administration

3.4. Data Classification

3.5. Subjectivity and Researcher Bias

3.6. Data Validity

3.7. Ethical Considerations

4. Findings

4.1. Introduction

4.2. The Value of the National M.Ed Review

4.2.1. The Value of the Framing of the Review

4.2.2. The Value of the review for Management

4.2.3. Developing collegiality in the Sector

4.3. Management vs. teaching and learning – as areas of focus in the review

4.3.1. Teaching and Learning

4.3.2. The relationship between teaching and learning and management

4.4. The HEQC National Programme Review Methodology

4.4.1. The Rise of Public Accountability and Academics' Experiences of Autonomy

4.4.2. Pros of the HEQC National Programme Review Methodology

4.4.3. Cons of the HEQC National Programme Review Methodology

4.4.4. Issues of Power

4.4.5. Playing the Game

4.4.6. Interrogation

5. Discussion

6. Conclusion

7. Reference List

8. Appendices

9. Glossary

Appendices

A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

B. THE MEd NATIONAL REVIEW CRITERIA

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Globalization involves huge structural changes in production and distribution processes in the global economy. This phenomenon is affecting social, economic and political structures and practices. It has an impact on society, the state and the economy. Gnanam (n.d.) defines globalization as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas…across the borders. Globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities" (Gnanam, n.d.:1). It may be argued that globalization's impact on Higher Education in a knowledge era translates into massification, increased quality assurance interventions, managerialism, knowledge commoditization and internationalization.

South African Higher Education has not been immune to globalization. According to the Education White Paper: *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997), there is a need to transform the higher education system so as to better reflect the new South Africa. In so doing it needs to emphasize democratic principles; redress past inequalities and inefficiencies; respond to the new social order and develop well planned and managed teaching, learning and research programmes. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (1997) identifies the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), a permanent committee of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) as the entity primarily responsible for higher education.

The Council of Higher Education (2001a: 4-5) in South Africa proposes several strategic guidelines for the revitalization of Higher Education in Africa. Firstly, it argues that an improved strategic planning system is critical to the success of such a plan. In order to do this, management tools like information management systems are essential for making informed decisions. Secondly, a quality management system must be implemented for improving the state's social and economic development. Thirdly, diversification of the funding base is necessary due to diminishing government resources. Fourthly, governments need to develop a symmetrical perspective on academic freedom and

accountability. Lastly, there should be institutional diversity driven by sound educational and financial reasons.

The HEQC has as one of its functions a programme accreditation and coordination role linked to national reviews. National reviews are types of accreditation that specifically target the re-accreditation of already existing programmes of higher education institutions (HEIs). The HEQC's decision to begin a series of programme reviews in education commencing with the Master of Education (MEd) was informed by various stakeholders who were concerned with the quality of provision within the MEd programmes nationally.

In 2005 UX[1]'s MEd programme was reviewed by the HEQC as part of the National Review. There are various perspectives about this process. Some of these are related to ideas such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and are couched within the public accountability debate (CHE, 2005b). The National Review of the MEd programme has not been without controversy. Critics have argued that there are many policy tensions in this attempt to bring HEI to account. There has also been arguments forwarded that these National Reviews do not really focus on the teaching and learning but instead on managerial practices. This raises the question: are programme reviews truly programme reviews if they only superficially look at the nature of learning?

1.2. The Scope of the Project

1.2.1. Research Problem/Statement of Problem

In 2003 the HEQC evaluated the Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme in South Africa. This was the first of the national reviews to be carried out in higher education in South Africa. This 'pilot' re-accreditation exercise was a bid to stem the flow of poor MBA degree programmes in the South African market, but it also tested this new methodology for assessing the quality of a specific programme at a national level. The outcome of the accreditation process induced strong responses and intense

[1] For ethical reasons I have concealed the identity of the institution by substituting the institution's name with the University of the X or (UX) for short.

controversy. Many institutions that did not meet the minimum standards were closed and their accreditation was withdrawn. According to Singh et al., (2004), this had several implications for standard setting and quality for HEI in South Africa. Firstly, this raised questions about the type of evaluation methodologies and the related outcomes. Secondly, this focused on the role of the state and markets in addressing education quality issues. Lastly, the outcome of the process questioned the impact on learners and respective institutions.

There is a gap in the literature regarding the national review process because it is a relatively new process in higher education in South Africa. The success or failures of the process as well as the evaluation methodology need to be investigated.

Specifically, these quality assurance interventions are sometimes perceived as infringing on academic freedom and institutional autonomy of HEIs specifically in light of new academic managerialism that is appearing within institutions. Undoubtedly *academic freedom* is the cornerstone of higher education systems worldwide. The core business of higher education — quality teaching and research — will be hindered without it. Freedom of expression in the academy enables independent comment, analysis and develops civil society. Academic freedom has become such an integral part of universities that it is frequently taken for granted (Altbach: 2001). But should public higher education institutions not be liable to society, especially since a major source of their revenue is from subsidy, which in turn is generated from taxes?

1.2.2. Research Aims

The purpose of this research is to explore UX staff members' experience of the review process with specific attention to staff perception of the possible conflict between academic freedom and public accountability. In describing and understanding how UX staff members experienced the MEd review process, this study aims to understand the discursive context that informs the different perspectives and experiences. The discursive context refers to the diverse ideas that inform current policy in higher education: among them is "academic freedom" and "institutional autonomy" on the one hand and emphasis

on quality management system, in lieu of the public accountability debate and the state's requirement to bring HEIs to account, on the other. Critics among the academic staff often respond to these ideas by pointing out the contradictions in the policy, claiming that the emphasis on accountability resulted in the National Review of the MEd programme actually focusing on managerial practices at the expense of a very thin focus on the teaching and learning aspects of the programme. This research will investigate this claim.

1.2.3. Research Questions

Based on the above research aims, the following research question will be investigated:

How do academics at UX experience the relationship, which is emerging by current policy in Higher Education, between "academic freedom", "institutional autonomy" and "public accountability"?

The following three questions will be investigated in support of the main question:

1) What are the perceptions of the participants about the general value of the M.Ed. programme review at UX?
2) How do staff members understand the relationship between teaching and learning and the managerial practices that are required for running a quality programme?
3) How do staff members understand the relationship between academic freedom and the managerial and administrative practices that are required for monitoring public accountability?

These questions may be further specified in the following way:

Question One: (the general value of the M.Ed. Programme Review)

- Is the HEQC's set of criteria/ means experienced by academics as suitable and sufficiently enabling to create 'quality'/ends in the M.Ed. programme review?

Question Two: (the relationship between teaching and learning and managerial practices)

- Is the programme review seen to have led to an improvement of the quality of the programme (in terms of learning and teaching and in terms of its management practices)?

Question Three: (the relationship between academic freedom and administrative and managerial practices)

- Is the evaluation methodology of the review experienced to be conducive to academics' compliance or to creating a quality culture?

1.2.4. Research Method

The main research is qualitative fieldwork. This approach allows for the M.Ed. review process to be better understood. It gives the participants of the National Review an opportunity to speak for themselves. I particularly like this approach because it is interactive. The research approach is a case study approach looking particularly at UX's, School of Education's experience of the M.Ed. programme review.

This study will mainly use qualitative data gathering through interviews. More specifically semi-structured interviews were conducted with various staff that were party to the M.Ed. review process. The semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility and for probing and developing interviewees' responses (Blaxter et al., 1996). In addition, a document analysis of the Department of Education legislation; CHE/HEQC policies, frameworks and criteria will be undertaken. (For more detail, see Chapter 3).

1.2.5. Scope, Limitations and Assumptions

This part of the research proposal clarifies the scope of the proposed research as well as to briefly identify some of the limitations of such a study. This section also identifies some of the assumptions that underlie the proposed project.

The project is confined to UX as the case study for investigation. A limitation of case study research is that it is not generalisable. This is a small scale project specific for a research report with very little similar research been done due to the newness of the

National Programme review in South Africa. The value this project aims to bring is in evaluating the experience of a specific institution during a national programme review.

A further limitation of this study may lie in the fact that, whilst this is a single case, the purpose is both descriptive and exploratory at the same time.

I was employed by UX within the Academic Planning and Quality Assurance Unit (APQAU). I was part of the M.Ed. review writing team, I was interviewed by the HEQC review panel and supported the process administratively. I accept Peshkin's (1988) view that subjectivity is always present in research and I am aware of the impact this may have on the research project.

An underlying assumption held by the researcher is that the interviewees are able to separate the various roles they played within and outside the institution. I say this because they held different roles; for example, an interviewee could be in management, but also teach and supervise students on the programme and be a panel member at the review of another institution's programme. Thus the danger is that their responses are shaped, not only by this phenomenon, but instead by the totality of their experiences in these 'various roles'.

1.3. The Structure of the Report

The report is structured into six chapters. The current chapter introduces the report by providing a background to the rise of globalization and its impact on Higher Education in South Africa, specifically focusing on the HEQC's role in the National M.Ed. Review. I then focus on the scope of the study, by broadly looking at the research problem and questions, as well as research methodology. The second chapter reviews the literature, outlining the historical context and the policy process. I then explore the academic freedom debate in depth. The review of the various policies that influenced and shaped the HE landscape highlights the often competing yet interconnected priorities that have helped shape the HE legislation. The concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability emphasize how complex, multi-layered and nuanced

the process of policy development has been. Lastly, I look at the rise of quality assurance in light of globalization. The same chapter discusses the theoretical models (viz. academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability) that will be used to interpret the findings in the report. Chapter three describes the research design and methodological approach that was used in the report. The fourth chapter presents the findings in three broad sections (viz. The Value of the National M.Ed Review, Management vs. teaching and learning – as areas of focus in the review and the HEQC National Programme Review Methodology), whilst a discussion of the findings is carried out in the fifth chapter. The sixth chapter concludes the report, summing up the main points and suggesting further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter on the literature review is divided into three sections. In the first part, I discuss recent policy developments in South African higher education since *apartheid*. In the second part, I discuss the relationship between "academic freedom", "institutional autonomy" and "public accountability", particularly in relation to policy tensions identified in the policy development process in South Africa. In the third and final part of this chapter, I examine the impact of globalization on higher education and the related consequences for academic freedom.

The first section of the literature review discusses recent policy development in South African higher education by first describing the state of higher education under *apartheid.* This is important as it is within this context that the post-*apartheid* government develops its policies. This section also identifies some of the key policy events in the post-*apartheid* context, describes their aims, and discusses the challenges facing them at the time, whilst tracing how they fed into the Higher Education Act. Lastly, I conclude by examining some of the tensions that have arisen in the policy development process.

The second section of the literature review focuses specifically on the tension between academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. I start by examining these three concepts according to the international literature. I do so by tracing the three concepts historically. I then explain briefly what each concept entails and examine the way it is presented in the White Paper. I conclude this section by unpacking the academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability debate, examining specific arguments made by the various proponents in South Africa regarding this debate.

The last section of the literature review discusses the impact of globalization on Higher Education in South Africa. This section describes the effects of globalization on higher education by examining the rise of corporatized higher education institutions, managerialism and quality assurance interventions in higher education. It further hones

the discussion by looking at the increase in quality assurance interventions in higher education in South Africa, and the consequences of this for academic freedom.

2.1. The Historical Context

Badat (2004, p. 4) states "the inherited education system was designed, in the main to reproduce through teaching and research, white and male privilege and black and female subordination in all spheres of society. All higher education institutions were in differing ways and differing extents, deeply implicated in this." Badat aptly captures the state of higher education during *apartheid,* wherein higher education institutions (HEIs) were divided by race, institution type, language and even culture. These divisions were institutionalized and created the separation between 'own' and 'general affairs'. Education was the 'own affair' for three of the racially based group of voters, but a 'general affair' for the fourth, with Africans falling under the Department of Education and Training (DET). Thus education became linked to race or designated groups (Bunting 2002).

This institutional framework of Higher Education (HE) under *apartheid* saw a further separation between types of institutions, viz. colleges, technikons and universities. Technikons trained technicians, colleges provided training for non-technology fields and universities developed knowledge. Thus the legal and policy framework created a very fragmented and poorly coordinated system, which was inequitable and very inefficient (Council for Higher Education 2004b).

There were 21 public universities and 15 public technikons. There were four white English medium universities, six historically white Afrikaans medium universities, four historically black universities and four universities, one in each of the TBVC states, one university for Indians and one for Coloureds and, lastly, one distance education university. Likewise there were seven white only technikons, two historically black technikons, one technikon for Indians and one for Coloureds, three technikons in the TBVC states and one distance education technikon. There were also 120 colleges of

education, 24 nursing colleges, 11 agricultural colleges (Badat 2004, p. 5) and even military and police colleges.

These distinctions highlight several challenges to the question of access to higher education in relation to equity, specifically in terms of teaching and learning, governance, and finance. These are just some of the local imperatives that were driving the systemic restructuring of higher education in the early 1990s and can be traced in the various policy documents. It is in view of these imperatives that I examine some of the key policy events that took place in the policy development process during the 1990s, viz. the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), the White Paper, the National Plan and the Higher Education Act. In discussing these, I describe their aims and the challenges facing them at the time, whilst tracing how they fed into the Higher Education Act and consequently shaped more recent developments in the quality assurance process in HE.

2.2. The Policy Process

Prior to a state-led policy formulation process, there were three initiatives that informally shaped the framework of HE. These initiatives were led by National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA) policy forum and the Centre of Education Policy Development (CEPD) associated with the African National Congress (ANC). These initiatives were of significance because they emphasized five principles: "non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, redress and a unitary system" (Council for Higher Education 2004b, p. 24). These principles represent several challenges facing the post apartheid government. The system had to be transformed to redress inequalities of access, past inequalities in resources, staff and student demographics, as well as an increase in participation and higher throughput in HE. The real challenge was trying to do this efficiently and effectively with diminishing resources (Council for Higher Education 2004b, p. 24).

The more formal process started with the National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) at the end of 1994. The NCHE submitted a report called *A Framework for*

Transformation in 1996, which was based on three pillars. The first pillar was a policy for increased participation by massification of HE, together with a single coordinated HE system (National Commission for Higher Education 1996, p. 3). This was an important and necessary response to the inequities of the past and suggested a move away from an elite higher education system to a mass HE system. However, the increase in participation without a quality assurance system would be contradictory, and hence this pillar also emphasized the need for an HE Quality Assurance (QA) system. The second pillar was greater responsiveness to the market and civil society. By this, the NCHE intended more engagement with civil society and possible changes to the focus, content and even modes of programmes and research (National Commission for Higher Education 1996, p. 4). The third pillar recommended cooperative governance with a state supervisory role (Council for Higher Education 2004b and National Commission for Higher Education 1996, p. 5).

This was followed by a Green Paper in 1996 and then the Education White Paper 3: *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* in 1997. The White Paper included several principles, viz., equity and redress, democratization, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability (Department of Education, 1997). Some of these principles are a direct response to the legacy of *apartheid*. The informal policy initiatives, as well as the NCHE, further contributed to the emphasis on some principles within the White Paper. There were also differences between the NCHE and the White Paper. The NCHE highlights the need to redress past inequalities and the transformation of the HE system through the development of a single seamless coordinating system which includes planning, governing and funding (Department of Education 1997, p. 12). It included all institutional types and both private and public higher education providers. It advocated a state steering and coordinating role, importantly emphasizing the autonomy of the institutions over their resources with accountability for their use (Department of Education 1997, p. 10). The White Paper accepted the three pillars of the NCHE, but it differed on the point of massification. The White Paper suggested a planned expansion in a sustained manner. This meant increasing student numbers in a planned way, taking

cognizance of the financial context, as well as the policy instruments of the time. This is a significant change, as massification unqualified would be against the thrust of a planned and coordinated system that is meant to respond to the Human Resource Development (HRD) needs of South Africa in an increasingly competitive global economy. The White Paper further deviated from the NCHE which wanted democratization of governance at both the system and institutional level. The White Paper differed at the system level; it recommended a single body, the Council on Higher Education (CHE), instead of the NCHE's suggestion of a forum of higher education stakeholders (Department of Education 1997 and Council for Higher Education 2004b).

There was a four year gap between the White Paper and the next major policy document, being the National Plan for Higher Education. The gap or implementation vacuum can be attributed to the incremental execution of policy tools. Consequently, the implementation vacuum had unintended implications which threatened the development of a single seamless coordinating system. Prior to this, the Minister asked the CHE to advise on the size and shape of the HE system (Council on Higher Education 2000). The CHE responded, by recommending that the size and shape of the HE system should be differentiated by institutional types. This was rejected because it proposed that historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs) become bedrock institutions for undergraduate programmes, whilst the historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) become more postgraduate focused with a greater subsidy earning potential. The National Plan was a response to the CHE recommendations on the size and shape of the HE system, through differentiation by institutional types. The National Plan proposed that institutions differentiate on the basis of their missions and their programmes (Department of Education 2001 and Council for Higher Education 2004b).

The National Plan defined targets for the size and shape of the HE system by specifying an increase in participation rates, improved access and success, changing the enrolments in humanities, business, engineering and science, engineering and technology, as well as staff and student equity ratios (Department of Education 2001, pp. 14-24). The National Plan wanted to increase participation rates from 15% towards the international standard

by at least 5%. The National Plan argued that there was a lot of wastage in the HE system, with very few students successfully graduating. It proposed a change in the way funding was apportioned in order to incentivize institutions to critically look at the access and throughput, and become more efficient and effective. The national Human Resources Development (HRD) strategy suggested a focus on science engineering and technology (SET) and hence the National Plan suggested a change in registration, emphasizing the SET qualifications over others. It further detailed how it wanted institutions to differentiate, based on missions and programmes. It indicated that the divide between universities and technikons would be allowed to continue for the next five years and thereafter be redefined during the institutional landscape restructuring process. Part of this restructuring included reducing the number of HEIs, but not the number of sites of delivery and this was to be done through the process of mergers and regional collaborations, including the establishment of National Institutes for regions where there were no HEIs. Lastly it proposed new ways of funding research in order to develop research capacity and postgraduate programmes.

The various principles, values and core concepts outlined in the policies above shaped the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Some of the more significant provisions are identified here. First, there is the establishment of a system level of governance through the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The CHE is an independent body of experts that is to advise the Minister of Education on HE matters, policy issues and the transformation of the HE system. The CHE also has a quality assurance (QA) role through the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). This deems the HEQC as the Education and Training Quality Assurer (ETQA) for the HE sector. Secondly, the Act also defines the composition, roles and responsibilities of institutional governance bodies like councils, senates and institutional forums. Thirdly, the Act allows the Minister, with advice from the CHE, to appoint an assessor to look into governance or poor financial management or maladministration in institutions where such instances are reported. The Act further allows the Minister to appoint an administrator in public HEIs if there is poor financial management or maladministration taking place. Fourthly, the Act provides for the mergers and incorporations, and the

establishment of the boards of National Institutes (The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997).

There are several principles identified in the Act. One of the principles within the Act identifies the need for restructuring and transforming of educational programmes to better respond to the human resources needs of the state. Another refers to redress and equity of access. Importantly for this discussion, the Act states that "it is desirable for higher education institutions to enjoy the freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the State within the context of public accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge" (Higher Education Act 1997, p. 3). For the first time, the state legally identifies a relationship between government regulation and academic freedom (The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997).

The policies and principles (specifically about academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability) developed in the post-*apartheid* context were soon attacked because of differences in understanding of autonomy. These nuanced understandings are illustrated in the following examples. First, in the 1990s, some institutions showed signs of poor management and were in a governance crisis. The Minister made provision for the appointment of an assessor in accordance with the Act. In 1999, he amended the Act allowing him to appoint an administrator to govern for six months. In 2000, he further amended the Act allowing him to appoint an administrator who would take over the authority for a period not exceeding two years. This raised alarm bells. The education sector was concerned because this was setting "general limits upon the autonomy of all institutions, rather than to set particular limits according to the circumstances of particular institutions" (Council on Higher Education 2005b: 8). Second, the NPHE (National Plan for Higher Education) was to reshape the HE landscape through mergers setting targets for the size and shape of institutions. Critics of the Department argue that democracy and redress was sacrificed in the name of efficiency. Moreover, this highlights the slippage from a state steering role towards a more interfering role, hence encroaching on autonomy (Moja et al., 2002, p. 40). Third, some institutions argue that the Higher Education Quality Committee's (HEQC) perspective on quality is

problematic. The HEQC sees quality in relation to fitness of purpose and fitness for purpose. Fitness of purpose is linked to the broader national context, and proponents of this argument forward that this intrudes on institutional autonomy. The HE landscape has become highly bureaucratic, with the DoE approving qualifications in relation to institutions' Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), the HEQC accrediting programmes and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) registering qualifications. All of these, it is argued, limit institutions' academic freedom to offer programmes and qualifications. The PQM and the National Higher Education Information and Applications Service (NHEIAS), the new funding framework and enrolment planning, have also been cited as slipping the state into a more state interfering role impeding academic freedom and institutional autonomy (Council on Higher Education: 2005b).

Thus, there is some uneasiness from the HE sector about the Act and its implications for institutional autonomy, specifically where the Act refers to the appointment of an administrator, the determination of the seat or physical location of an institution, as well as general limits instead of specific limits on financial matters of overdrafts and capital expenditure (Council for Higher Education 2004b, p. 31). There are clearly many issues of contestation; I will explore some of these in the next section.

2.3. Some Policy Tensions

The historical context of HE in South Africa stresses the national imperatives for change of policy and legislation. Having discussed some of these policies, highlighting some of their principles, it is important to emphasize the HEIs' ambivalence towards these policies. HEIs accepted the policy recommendation but were weary and critical of them. In order to understand this ambivalence, I now examine some of the relationships between multiple principles that the different policies have foregrounded.

The various policies discussed above have principles that are very important. However, Badat (2004, p. 15) argues that "a number of the principles and goals of higher education, and or strategies related to goals, stand in a relationship of intractable tension in so far as government or other progressive higher education actors seek to pursue them

simultaneously." There are many such competing claims but only two are briefly examined here — equity of access and redress vs. efficiency and quality, and academic freedom vs. public accountability, all of which are principles within the White Paper. I have selected to examine only these two sets of competing claims as they are in line with the overall aim of this investigation. First, there are the competing claims made by the principles of equity of access and redress and notions of expanding participation rates vs. the principle of educational efficiency with emphasis on throughput. The principles of equity of access and redress are about opportunities of access and success in HE. They stem from the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and stand for equity in the allocation of resources and redress of historical inequalities (Fataar, 2003). These principles address a transformational goal. The principles of efficiency and effectiveness are about achieving the desired goals without wastage. These principles stem from the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), which is aligned to macroeconomic principles that favour global economic competitiveness. This means the restructuring of public management, including HE. The overwhelming concern here is that an "integrated policy that focuses on the three 'Es[2]' was slipping in favour of an efficiency focus" (Council for Higher Education 2004b, p. 29). Because these policies have very different foci it is very problematic if one principle is emphasized at the expense of the other. Both the NCHE and the White Paper mention equity as the first transformation principle. But Cloete (2005, p. 6) notes "in contrast, the Council on Higher Education report (2000) listed effectiveness and efficiency challenges before mentioning equity." Equity became 'public talk' whilst efficiency and effectiveness was being implemented with the mergers and restructuring of the HE landscape, as well as the introduction of new funding and planning frameworks.

Linked to the equity and redress issue is a further tension with quality. The principles of equity and redress and quality are at an intractable tension if one seeks to pursue them at the same time and within a context of diminishing resources. When one seeks to pursue both equity and redress and quality in higher education simultaneously, then Badat (2004, p. 15) warns that "this establishes difficult political and social dilemmas and choices and

[2] The three 'Es' refer to equity, efficiency and effectiveness

decisions and raises the question of tradeoffs between principles, goals and strategies." According to the Education White Paper, quality stands for the ability to maintain and apply academic rigor and standards in order to improve and achieve excellence (Department of Education, 1997). If one emphasizes equity and redress, then there is a risk of losing the quality of producing graduates with the required knowledge, competencies and skills. The argument states that increasing numbers in the context of diminishing funding may compromise on the quality of the product. Likewise, if one emphasizes the quality of standards, there is a likelihood of compromising, and even retarding, equity in HE (Badat 2004). This emphasizes the centrality of quality in HE and the need for further analysis of the way it is regulated and its impact on the system. There has been recent progress in the equity of student enrolments but there has not been the same correlation with throughput or graduation rates. This is demonstrated by an increase in female students by 10% as a proportion of the entire student body, bringing them to 53% over a period from 1993 to 2000. Over the same period, black students increased from 40% to 60% of all students at HEIs (Badat 2004, p. 21). According to Badat, South Africa produced 75 000 graduates and diplomates in 1998. For there to have been reasonable throughput rates, HEIs would have had to produce a further 25 000 graduates and diplomats for the same period. Thus there needs to be academic support and other initiatives that will improve the graduation and throughput rates without compromising the knowledge or competencies in the process. There must be equity with quality or it will just be rhetoric. But how do you do both in the context of diminishing resources?

This is examined in a study entitled *Wits give you the edge: How students negotiate the pressures of undergraduate study* (Cross et al. 2010, p. 54). The study identifies that there are student-related, staff-related and systemic factors that contribute towards poor performance with respect to low graduation and throughput rates. King in Muller (2000, p. 35) introduces the concepts of 'high participation' and 'high performance'. These concepts are used in Cross et al's study to analyze three possible alternative strategies for HEIs. First, continue with high performance and amend selection and admission criteria and practices. Secondly, highlight competence requiring staff to change their pedagogy. Thirdly, go for a mixed model that intersects the performance focus with greater support to the students. The findings of Cross et al. indicate that, in order to have confident

participation for high performance, HEIs need to invest financially by improving their staff to student ratio; by providing academic support; and by affording mentoring opportunities for postgraduate students (Cross et al. 2010). This affirms the tension between equity and quality and the difficulty in attempting to do both within the context of diminishing funding resources.

The second such tension is created by the principles of autonomy and accountability. Institutional autonomy is about the self-regulation of a HE institution in matters of teaching and research, administration, management and governance. The Act specifies that the principle of autonomy cannot be used to resist change or transformation or to justify poor financial management or maladministration (Department of Education, 1997). With the view of regulating HEI's processes and activities, the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 empowers the Minister to appoint an assessor and an administrator in specific instances. The assessor's role is to investigate, report and recommend, whilst the administrator's role is to "take over the authority of the council or management of the institution and perform the functions relating to governance and management on behalf of the institution" (Higher Education Act 1997: 41A). "Public accountability" is the requirement of HEIs to be accountable for their actions and decisions to the institutional community and the broader society. Public HEIs must demonstrate how they spend their funds, show their results and reveal their alignment with national goals. This tension between institutional autonomy and public accountability, together with the concept of academic freedom, is a significant debate that is further explored in the next section. This is linked to the state steering or perceived state interference role. The identified state steering role of the HE system is questioned by the higher education sector, and it is even argued that the state was slipping into a more intensified or state interference role because of the ministerial regulatory powers that were amended within the HE Act.

The key point being made here is that policy formulation and implementation are not neutral. This process is linked to social values and political goals, and invariably will result in contestation and even resistance and the literature review has analyzed this in some depth. But this is a significant part of reconstruction, development and the

transformation agenda which is part of the democratic change and restructuring of the HE landscape policy initiatives.

In summary the period 1994-1999 can be described as being about putting a new policy and legislative framework in place. Moja and Hayward (2000, p. 336) examine contemporary South African higher education policy development. They indicate that there was national consensus for a policy that included greater accountability, increased government supervision and protection of institutional autonomy in the early post-*apartheid* era. Likewise, there was agreement on principles of access, redress, equality and improved quality. However, the path of policy development was not easy; it was full of debates, conflicts, struggles and challenges.

This review of the various policies that influenced and shaped the HE landscape highlights the often competing yet interconnected priorities that have helped shape the HE legislation. The concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability emphasize how complex, multi-layered and nuanced the process of policy development has been. I now examine these concepts and the debate in more detail.

2.4. A Historical and Conceptual Tracing of the Concepts of Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability

In this section I examine the principles of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability as framing concepts in more detail because of their relevance to the policy development process and the research aim. I start by looking at the historical relationship between academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability. Following this, I explore the conceptual meaning of these concepts with the view to understand the terms of their relationship. I do this firstly by briefly explaining what each concept entails conceptually, and the way it is presented in the White Paper. Secondly, by presenting the debate about academic freedom in view of the rise in public accountability, and the perception associated with it of constraining institutional autonomy and academic freedom. I do so by interrogating the following three claims:

Claim 1. Academic Freedom is an academic Principle (Davie & Higgins (2000)).
Claim 2. The meaning and scope of academic freedom are historically contingent (Du Toit, (n.d. and 2000) and Friedman and Edigheji (2006)).
Claim 3. Conditional autonomy — the resolution attempted by Hall (2006)

2.4.1. Historical Pointers to the Relationship between Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability

Friedman and Edigheji (2006) and Marginson (1997) fittingly capture a set of questions that need to be asked as we proceed through this section of the literature review:

> First, are South African higher education institutions accountable to the public in whose midst they operate? If so, of what does the accountability consist? And how can it be ensured in ways which do not compromise the intellectual freedom of those who work in higher education institutions? Second, what is the place of higher education institutions' public accountability in the context of democratic governance? Third, how can we balance the need for institutional autonomy with public accountability? Fourth, what is the public purpose of higher education institutions and what, therefore, is the purpose of their public accountability? By addressing these issues, we can begin to define and conceptualize higher education institutions' public accountability in South Africa's democratic order. (Friedman & Edigheji, p. 1)

> Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are not timeless absolutes but are relative and historically specific, taking different forms and meanings under varying historical conditions. (Marginson, p. 361)

I do not focus on all the questions identified by Friedman and Edigheji above, but instead, using my research question to focus myself, I look at issues of accountability, and specifically public accountability and its relationship with academic freedom and institutional autonomy in a democratic governance context.

In trying to unpack the three concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability, I thought a useful starting point would be to trace them from a historical perspective as well as a conceptual perspective. Mora (2001, p. 96) traces the

history of universities by dividing it into three periods viz. the original university which began in the Middle Ages, the modern university which came into being during the Enlightenment and the more recent universal university model. Mora alludes to different understandings and degrees of academic freedom, and institutional autonomy present in the different contexts.

First, Mora (2001, p. 97) identifies and describes medieval universities as being 'autonomous corporations' of masters and students, governed by internal rules set by the academic community. In fact, Standler (2000, p. 2) goes as far as to describe medieval European universities as "self-governing enclaves that were outside the civil law." These universities were small, self-funding independent entities catering for the elite. Noticeably, these institutions had a high degree of autonomy.

Secondly, Mora (2001, p. 97) identifies and describes the modern university of the Liberal Nation State, which emerged in the early nineteenth century with the birth of the Nation-State, when the state began to take control of the universities with the aim of modernizing them. There are different models of state/ sector relations with implications specifically for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. In Germany, we see the rise of the Humboldtian model, highlighting the importance of science and identifying research as a role of the university. The German institutions were state financed and there was no autonomy but academic freedom was respected (Mora 2001, p. 97). Standler (2000) argues that the legal conception of academic freedom in fact originated in Germany around 1850 with the Prussian Constitution which declared that "science and teaching shall be free." Hence the financial and organization elements of the German institutions were controlled by the state. But there was a freedom to teach and research. In France, there was the simultaneous rise of the Napoleonic model wherein the role of the university was to train the elite to become officers of the state and promote economic growth. Universities were not autonomous; their objectives and programmes were decided by the state, based on the perceived needs of the state at the time. However, the professors did have power to influence programme curricula and institutional policy. The third model was the Anglo-Saxon model found in the United Kingdom (UK) and the

United States (US). In the early nineteenth century, in the UK, the state did not interfere with universities and so the universities retained their traditional status. According to Mora (2001, p. 98): "This is why 'public' universities in Britain, Ireland and Canada are still, legally speaking, 'private' institutions". But, with the industrial revolution, it was necessary to massify higher education and so we see the establishment of civic universities. These institutions were established by notable citizens and local authorities and hence they had governing bodies with non-academic members who respected academic freedom. Likewise, in the US, institutions were founded with the help of communities; hence they also had boards that consisted of non-academic members. In both these situations, power rested largely with the university; the role of government was limited and linked to funding and broad policy formulation. The institutions had the autonomy to decide on their own academic and financial policies (Mora 2001, pp. 97-99). The three models highlight different state/sector relations based on different factors, e.g. the imperative of modernization, human resource requirements of the state, and state funding. Based on the factors affecting the state/ sector relationship, there is a difference in the way each model constructs the relation between state regulation, academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Thirdly, Mora (2001, p. 99) identifies and argues that, we are now seeing the emergence of the universal university which is characterized by greater institutional autonomy, with governments adopting a greater supporting role encouraging efficiency and effectiveness. Mora emphasizes that governments do not give up control over HEIs in this model, but are adopting a more supervisory role and relationship. It is important to understand that Mora's conception of autonomy is the condition which allows institutions of higher education to govern itself without external interference. The universal university is typified by its reach to a larger part of the population and a new global emphasis. There is an unmistakable shift globally to greater autonomy in this model.

In summary, the medieval universities had a high degree of autonomy. The rise of the Liberal Nation State sees German and French institutions having no autonomy, whilst the UK and US institutions had the autonomy to decide on academic and financial policies.

According to Mora (2001, p. 100) we are seeing a convergence with the rise of the universal university which is a trend towards greater institutional autonomy, whilst trying to "encourage universities to aim at efficacy and efficiency and to adapt themselves to society's needs."

Mora is evidently silent about public accountability; hence I examine Berdahl (1990, p.171), who argues that three things changed in the nineteenth century giving rise to increased tension between institutional autonomy and public accountability. Firstly, German institutions spread the greater significance of science and research in HE. This resulted in governments seeing the value of universities to economic growth and military might. With this came greater state control of higher education, removing autonomy from HEIs. Secondly, there was a broadening of curricula to include agriculture and mechanical arts, with the consequence of greater diversification of institutions, larger and more heterogeneous student populations and increased state costs. This led to a greater involvement of the state in the HE sector. Lastly, Berdahl (1990, p. 171) states that "increasing sophistication in the art of statecraft led to the widespread tightening of public accountability practices, particularly those related to the expenditure of tax dollars." Thus we see the emergence of public accountability. These changes have created a tension between the institutions' need for autonomy and the state requirement for greater accountability.

The central claim, in this historical review is that the issue of the relationship between academic freedom and institutional autonomy has been there from the very first time that the idea of the 'university' was conceived. Marginson (1997, p. 361) has correctly pointed out that "institutional autonomy and academic freedom are not timeless absolutes but are relative and historically specific, taking different forms and meanings under varying historical conditions." Thus these terms have different meanings based on their historical context. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy have been loosely used up to this point, but they are very distinct and different concepts. In addition, Berdahl points to the emergence of public accountability and this has resulted in a tension between HEI's autonomy and governments' requirement for increased accountability. I

now turn to a conceptual analysis of the ideas of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.

2.4.2. Conceptual Pointers of Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability

The concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability are examined next, each within its own subsection.

2.4.2.1. Academic Freedom

Academic freedom, taken at its most basic, is the freedom of the academic/scholar to teach and research in the pursuit of truth "wherever it seems to lead without fear of punishment or termination of employment for having offended some political, religious or social orthodoxy" (Berdahl, 1990, p.172). But academic freedom is more nuanced than this, and I believe Akerlind and Kayrooz (2003, p. 1) best capture this in their study on the understanding of academic freedom, wherein they state that "the current debate about academic freedom has been marked by a lack of clarity and consistency as to what academic freedom actually means." It is important to note that academic freedom in all these instances applies to an individual. First, academic freedom can be a negative right of academics. This is a right of non-interference in their activities of research and teaching as described in the definition from Berdahl above, or as captured in the following quote from Altbach (2001, p.1) in which he describes academic freedom as being: "The freedom of the professor to teach, do research and publish without fetter in his field of expertise." This may be described as a freedom from interference. Second, there is the 'freedom to do' or a positive freedom that allows for the engagement in academic activities. Thirdly, academic freedom is described as a right. Ashby cited in Berdahl (1990, p. 172) describes academic freedom as: "An internationally recognized and unambiguous privilege of university teachers…" which must be protected whenever and however challenged. Likewise, Bentley, Habib and Morrow (2006, p.14) refer to academic freedom as a right but they go further by stating that it comprises the following rights:

- The right to be part of an academic community without prejudice.

- The right of the community to decide on subject and methods of research.
- The right of the community to decide on content and methods for teaching.

The White Paper describes academic freedom and scientific inquiry as a constitutional right. This is, in fact, captured in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) under Chapter 2, the Bill of Rights under the section called *Freedom of Expression,* which includes academic freedom and the freedom of scientific research. According to the White Paper: "Academic freedom implies the absence of outside interference, censure or obstacles in the pursuit and practice of academic work. In this, academic freedom is seen as a precondition for critical, experimental and creative thought and therefore for the advancement of intellectual inquiry and knowledge" (Department of Education 1997, p.9). The fact that academic freedom is in the Bill of Rights makes it a declared right that needs to be respected and protected. It is also described as a negative freedom in the White Paper. This highlights that the concept of academic freedom is intricate and nuanced, and that the White Paper conceptualization of academic freedom comprises many of the understandings elaborated above.

2.4.2.2. Institutional Autonomy

Institutional autonomy can be separated into substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy (Berdahl 1990, p. 172). Substantive autonomy is the power of the university to determine its own goals and programme. In Mora's Napoleonic model, the substantive autonomy of the HEIs was completely ignored by the state because both the objectives and academic programmes were decided by the state. Procedural autonomy is the power of the university to determine the means by which it will pursue those goals and programmes (Berdahl 1990, p. 172). Procedural autonomy was present in Mora's Anglo-Saxon HEIs in the UK and the US with the freedom to decide on their own financial policies. Berdahl (1990, p. 169) states that procedural autonomy "(e.g. pre-audits, controls over purchasing, personnel, capital construction) can be an enormous bother to academic and sometimes even counter-productive to efficiency but still do not usually prevent universities from ultimately achieving their goals. In contrast governmental actions that affect the substantive goals affect the heart of the academe." This distinction

between substantive and procedural autonomy is extremely useful when examining the academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability debates.
Academic freedom, substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy are interrelated. For example, there is more likely to be greater academic freedom under conditions of greater substantive autonomy. Or, if there are too heavy procedural controls required by governments, then this could impact on substantive goals, and by implication on academic freedom in the second sense of positive freedom.

The White Paper describes institutional autonomy as the principle which "refers to a high degree of self-regulation and administrative independence with respect to student admissions, curriculum, methods of teaching and assessment, research, establishment of academic regulations and the internal management of resources generated from private and public sources" (Department of Education 1997, p. 9). The White Paper says that academic autonomy cannot be used to resist democratic change or to hide behind in instances of mismanagement. Thus embedded in the White Paper description is a notion of substantive and procedural autonomy. The terms 'self-regulation', 'curriculum' and 'research' refer to the goals and programmes that comprise the substantive autonomy of the university as an institution. Procedural autonomy is inferred by the terms 'student admission', 'methods of teaching' and 'establishment of academic regulations and the internal management of resources' within the White Paper understanding of institutional autonomy. The White Paper goes a bit further to qualify when autonomy cannot be used.

2.4.2.3. Public Accountability

Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p. 9) introduce the concept of accountability, not by defining it, but rather by problematising the various conceptions of accountability. They explore a narrow and broad form of accountability. The narrow definition requires HEIs to show that they have used resources for the intended purposes. The broad definition of accountability does not limit accountability; it goes beyond this by requiring HEIs to be answerable for their actions and behaviours. Thus it goes beyond just a 'money' issue to a greater responsibility to society. They also explore a soft and hard definition of accountability. The soft definition is about an explanation or justification of what was

done. The hard definition goes further as it is linked to punishment and reward. Friedman and Edigheji (2006, pp. 9-16) point out that these are not mutually exclusive definitions.

Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p. 9) also refer to 'peer', 'professional' or 'scholarly accountability'. This form of accountability states "peers alone are held to command both the expertise and the commitment to intellectual activity to qualify them to hold the academy accountable in appropriate ways" (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p. 9).

Friedman and Edigheji (2006, pp. 17-21) also examine three routes of accountability. First, there is accountability to government, which is problematic because it excludes society. Second, there is citizens' voice, but this is problematic because the citizenry is not homogenous and so it would be only represent a section of society. Third, is citizens' choice and this is the market. The problem here is that if we leave it to the market, HE will become the preserve of the wealthy, hence it may be argued that it reduces academic freedom and public accountability (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p.16-19). They conclude that attempting to develop a framework for intellectual freedom and public accountability is futile. They argue that the tension cannot be resolved because the boundary between accountability and freedom is in an unending shift. Hence there needs to be constant negotiation, and the boundary "needs to be determined by an open, democratic, and open-ended process, involving the widest possible range of participants" (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p.26). In light of their views, I now examine how public accountability is defined in the White Paper.

The White Paper defines public accountability as:

> Institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community but also to the broader society. Firstly, it requires that institutions receiving public funds should be able to report how, and how well, money has been spent. Secondly, it requires that institutions should demonstrate the results they achieve with the resources at their disposal. Thirdly, it requires that institutions should demonstrate how they have met national policy goals and priorities. (Department of Education 1997, p. 9)

The White Paper has both elements of the narrow and broad understandings of the term "accountability". The narrow form of accountability is captured in the requirement 'to report on how, and how well, money has been spent'. The broader understanding of accountability is captured in the requirement for institutions to be 'answerable for their actions and decisions not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community but also to the broader community'. Interestingly, the White Paper refers to both professional and public types of accountability: first, to the profession in the form of the governing bodies and institutional communities and second, to the public referred to as the 'broader society' in the White Paper. Friedman and Edigheji (2006) argue that there are many problems with accountability and point out that there is tension between public accountability and scholarly or professional accountability. This tension arises because some within the HE sector see public accountability as a threat to academic freedom positing the complex nature of the academic enterprise and hence arguing for peer or professional accountability instead. Professional accountability is accountability to peers; hence there should be a component of peer assessment.

Having discussed the conceptual routes of the term and the ways in which it is referred in the White paper, my next move is to explain its association with the rise of corporatism in HEIs, which is a development that must be seen against globalization. Maassen and Cloete (2002) state that at the end of the 1980s, there was an emergence of a more distinctive new world order. Globally, this is a period marked by the end of communism, with the end of the Cold War. There was the rise of a neo-liberal market paradigm that analysts refer to as globalization; neo-liberalism being a loose body of ideas that are premised upon classical liberalism. This almost tidal wave of transformation was driven by global trends and pressures to reform the public sector. This included higher education. In the NCHE, there are two undertakings. The first is to rid the sector of *apartheid's* polices and consequences, and the second to modernize it. South Africa looked to international benchmarks and good practices, and these wove a strong noose around the reconstruction and development reform agenda for HE.

Conceptually, according to Knight and de Wit cited in Gnanam (2002, p.1), globalization is

> the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas…across borders. Globalization affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities.

In this conceptualization, Knight and de Wit are not only referring to economic, social and knowledge exchange but also to the context of the country. This is important for South Africa because of the history of *apartheid*, the past fragmented HE system and the state interference model under *apartheid* and its consequent impact on academic freedom. Marginson (2008, p. 9) similarly refers to globalization as the "process of partial convergence and integration across borders" combining "the economic and cultural and both are implicated in higher education." The change in focus of the early post-*apartheid* government from RDP to GEAR economic policies emphasizes this in that this new emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness policies has serious implications for public management in general and management of HE specifically. Mok (2000, p. 148) refers to the disappearance of physical boundaries and increased uniformity when examining the definition of globalization. Increased uniformity can be seen in South African HE with the introduction of SAQA, the National Qualifications Framework, and the new quality assurance measures which are mirrored on similar developments in Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Having traced the concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability from a historical and conceptual perspective, the following concepts are of particular interest to me. First, Marginson's (1997, p. 361) claim that "institutional autonomy and academic freedom are not timeless absolutes but are relative and historically specific, taking different forms and meanings under varying historical conditions." Secondly, Akerlind and Kayrooz (2003, p. 1) claim wherein they state that "the current debate about academic freedom has been marked by a lack of clarity and consistency as to what academic freedom actually means." Thirdly, is Berdahl's (1990, p. 172) separation of institutional autonomy into substantive autonomy and procedural

autonomy. Substantive autonomy is the power of the university to determine its own goals and programme whilst procedural autonomy is the power of the university to determine the means by which it will pursue those goals and programmes (Berdahl 1990, p. 172). Lastly there is the claim by Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.26) who argue that attempting to develop a framework for intellectual freedom and public accountability is futile because the boundary between accountability and freedom is in an unending shift. Hence there needs to be constant negotiation, and the boundary "needs to be determined by an open, democratic, and open-ended process, involving the widest possible range of participants" (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p.26).

2.5. The Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability Debate in South Africa

Having explained what the concepts or academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability entail, and having examined how the concepts are presented in the White Paper as well as briefly introducing the concept of globalization in the context of corporatized HE, I now turn to the academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability debate. I present the debate in South Africa about academic freedom in view of the rise of public accountability that in turn has constrained institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The next section will present the debate through three claims each discussed as a subsection.

2.5.1. Claim 1: Academic Freedom is an Academic Principle

The academic freedom debate in South Africa can be traced to 1959, when parliament passed the Extension of University Education Act 45, which racially segregated university education (Higgins, 2000). At this point, the four white English medium universities opposed this and declared their view of academic freedom. This is captured in Davie's formulation of the four freedoms. Thomas Benjamin Davie was the Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Cape Town at the time. For Davie, academic freedom meant "our freedom from external interference in (a) who shall teach, (b) what we teach, (c) how we teach, and (d) whom we teach" (from Higgins, 2000, p. 106). This definition within its context was a 'protest against tyranny' and it was not an

attempt to avoid public responsibility (Friedman & Edigheji, 2006, p. 2). During this time, the state forbad especially white English medium institutions from enrolling black students without ministerial consent. These institutions argued that the restrictions on the admissions policies were incursions of a space wherein political authority was not meant to step. And it was within this context that these institutions argued that they were protesting against tyranny, and not just selfishly avoiding public responsibility.

This definition is limiting because it does not protect against incursions of academic freedom from within the institution. This is supported by research done by Bentley, Habib and Morrow (2006, p.1) who list several cases where academic freedom was being violated by institutional managers.

It is for this reason that Friedman and Edigheji (2006) argue that the Davie formulation is not a definition but rather an assertion about institutional autonomy. To clarify this, it is important to recall the differentiation of academic freedom into positive, negative freedom and as a right. The Davie definition does not neatly fit with this conceptualization. Instead, it fits more appropriately with substantive autonomy with respect to 'what' we teach, and with procedural autonomy with respect to the 'who', 'how' and 'whom' we teach. Thus it is for this reason that Friedman and Edigheji argue, that the Davie formulation of academic freedom is not about academic freedom opposing public accountability, but institutional autonomy that is at odds with accountability.

This is revisited in the debate between Higgins and Du Toit. Higgins (2000, p.106) sees academic freedom and institutional autonomy as being interrelated (See next section). Higgins (in Hall, 2006, p.9) argues that "academic freedom is vested in an 'autonomous community of teachers and students dedicated to the search for, or service of, truth. This tradition is based on the constitutive interdependency of academic freedom and institutional autonomy' and the principles of academic freedom articulated by T B Davie in the 1950s." This perspective is often criticized because of this conflation of academic freedom and institutional autonomy and because it ignores the context. This is illustrated in Higgins's use of Davie's definition, wherein Higgins ignores the context in which

Davie was defining the term academic freedom, a context characterized by the interference of *apartheid* in higher education.

2.5.2. Claim 2: The Meaning and Scope of Academic Freedom are Historically Contingent

There are other scholars, like Du Toit (2000), who argue that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are related but distinct concepts. Du Toit emphasizes the significance of context when using these terms. Whilst Du Toit also uses the Davie definition of academic freedom, he finds it a bit narrow because it was specific to the context of South African higher education in the 1950s during *apartheid.* Higgins, the opposition in this debate, argues that it is not a matter of good or bad government but rather a case of the violation of academic freedom as a principle (Council on Higher Education 2005b, p.13). In response, Du Toit argues that the current debates in South African higher education tend to use these terms without rigorous conceptual clarification. He wants us to consider the varying social and political contexts and poses the question "what, if any, difference does it make to the assessment of similar attempts at government interference/ steering of HE if this is undertaken by a legitimate or democratic state, rather than an illegitimate and authoritarian state?" (Du Toit, n.d.).

Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p. 10) offer an indirect response, wherein they argue that the context of democracy, with a legitimate government, brings an expectation for the abolishment of racial privilege in all sectors of society, including higher education. So it is the duty of the post-*apartheid* state to create an equitable society undoing the past, so to speak. So "leaving higher education to its own devices could, in this context, be seen not as a movement away from oppression but as abrogation of responsibility, for it seemed certain to allow white-run institutions to remain islands of privilege, immune from the pressures for racial equity which the new order was meant to pursue" (Friedman & Edigheji, 2006, p. 2).

The debate between Higgins and du Toit (in claims 1 and 2 above) highlight how contested the conception of quality really is. It can be inferred that Higgins is more akin

to a universalistic approach to the notion of quality and du Toit towards a contextually specific notion of quality.

2.5.3. Claim 3: Conditional Autonomy— the Resolution attempted by Hall

Hall (2006, p. 8) refers to the interpretations of Higgins and Du Toit as the 'classic' and the 'contextual' interpretations. For Hall, there is value in separating academic freedom from institutional autonomy because this enables a discussion on the right to academic freedom and its associated responsibilities. This also allows the state to have a valid interest in the workings of institutions because this is in the interest of the public good. The contextual interpretation argues that the "nature of the institutions of state and university change with political circumstance" (Hall, 2006, p. 9). This means there is a difference to the legitimacy of state steering of HE depended on if it were an authoritarian, totalitarian, liberal, democratic or developmental state (Du Toit, n.d, p. 3). This allows for a discussion of academic freedom with its accompanying responsibilities because the contextual view accepts the growing pressure of public accountability in both governance and quality assurance.

Hall (2006) builds on the contextual definition and introduces the concept of conditional autonomy. Conditional autonomy is related to cooperative governance. I briefly examine these concepts before proceedings with Hall's claims. The concept of cooperative governance stems from the early policy of the NCHE and is clearly stated in the Education White Paper (1997, p. 36) proposing that autonomous HEIs in South Africa work cooperatively with the proactive government and in a range of partnerships. The CHE (Council on Higher Education 2005b) examines the relationship between state control, state intervention and state supervision options. In the state control model the system is created and fully funded by the state, and there is political or bureaucratic control, e.g. France. The state interference model has neither systemic control nor policy interventions. There is mainly state interference when there is opposition between institutions and the state, e.g. *apartheid* South Africa. Lastly, the state supervision model is characterized by accountability, state policy frameworks that guide using incentives and directives. This analysis suggests that the post-*apartheid* state seems to have selected

a state supervision model of governance of HE in SA. This comes through in the following claim that a "high degree of institutional autonomy within a system of indirect steering is a necessary condition for academic freedom and a viable system of higher education" (Council on Higher Education 2005b, p.16). The state supervision system was to be one of cooperative governance wherein government was not the only role player (Council on Higher Education 2005b).

In its investigation, the CHE found that there was a strong case to be made for institutional autonomy in South Africa but that it was very important to specify the nature of the state/ sector relationship. It is for this reason that the CHE introduced the concept of conditional autonomy that acknowledges that "institutional autonomy may need to be exercised on condition that the institution fulfils national norms 'continually negotiated in the light of public policy'" (Council on Higher Education 2005b, p.16). "Conditional autonomy" was portrayed as an aspect of governance that will protect academic freedom and the delivery on public good at the same time. The CHE argued that there is no absolute autonomy; in reality it is always conditional based on various interests based on the distinction of procedural and substantive autonomy. The thinking behind conditional autonomy is not to meddle with the substantive autonomy but rather with the procedural autonomy around funding and accreditation.

Conditional autonomy is contested in the South African context. Some HEIs who are against conditional autonomy argue that it was interpreted as "a one-size-fits-all governance approach for all institutions" (stated in Council on Higher Education 2005b, p.17). Yet the HE landscape is very heterogeneous with respect to HE institutional governance. Moreover, the CHE does not identify under what circumstances or conditions are there likely to be incursion nor does it specify the methods of these incursions. A further concern raised by HEIs, at a workshop organized by the CHE, is that the term conditional autonomy may mean that substantive autonomy could be removed under certain procedural conditions (stated in Council on Higher Education 2005b).

Hall (2006, p. 12) builds on the contextual definition of the nature of academic freedom and its relationship with institutional autonomy and the distinction (discussed above) between substantive autonomy (i.e. the 'what', or the objectives and programmes) and procedural autonomy (i.e. the 'how', or the policies). He argues that the idea of conditional autonomy is useful in that it acknowledges the steering role that the current South African government has chosen, whilst respecting the institution's role to govern its central business of research, teaching and learning. He argues that conditional autonomy is not a surrender of academic freedom, but an effective defence of it (Hall 2006, pp. 12-13). In so doing, he accepts the state's role in monitoring the effective use of money whilst recognizing the HEI's rights to academic freedom.

Jansen, during the 41st TB Davie Memorial Lecture in August 2004, refers to an informal poll conducted with vice chancellors and concluded that HE institutions enjoy less autonomy now than under *apartheid*. He cited the Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM), new programme and qualification approval barriers, enrolment planning and capping, the new funding framework, and other acts as an infringement on both academic freedom and institutional autonomy (cited in Council on Higher Education, 2005b). This, he argues, moves the state from a steering role into an interfering role. Jansen argues that there is no evidence that the state could better steer this transformation agenda than HE institutions themselves and, in fact, it is a short-term political act that risked the long-term system gains. He cautioned that this was dangerous because there was no guarantee that the state would remain a benevolent state, and cited the rest of Africa, where most countries moved to a more authoritarian role over time (Jansen, 2005).

The previous Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, contests Jansen's claims that steering is becoming indistinguishable from interfering, suggesting that Jansen is blurring freedom with autonomy, and a "consequent failure to acknowledge government's entitlement to regulate higher education to ensure greater accountability for the use of public resources towards the attainment of broad policy goals" (Council on Higher Education, 2005b, p.19). Hall adds to this when he argues that there has never been absolute autonomy in the state/ university relationship and that state regulation of

qualification is a universal phenomenon. Pandor concludes that the real debate should centre on the degree and nature of state steering and the equilibrium of state regulation with institutional self- regulation and the efficacy of these interventions. Argued even more strongly, Seepe (2006) claims that ascertaining the quality of the students' experience of a particular offering, does not undermine institutional autonomy. He argues that the "accreditation exercise is meant to deliver outcomes that justify public confidence and demonstrate accountability for the effective use of public and private funds" (Seepe 2006, p. 6).

In summary, the relation between academic freedom and institutional autonomy can be traced from the medieval universities to the modern HE institutions. These terms mean different things, depending on their historical context and they take on different forms and degrees based on the historical conditions. The historical and conceptual examination of academic freedom and institutional autonomy exposes their depth and multifaceted nature. Globalization has brought on a greater emphasis on public accountability and, with it, a rise in quality assurance practices. I examine the role of globalization and the rise of public accountability, specifically in the form of greater quality assurance interventions in South African HE in the next section of this literature review.

2.6. The Impact of Globalization

Globalization is having an impact on higher education and informs its agenda for reform. It also has an impact on the institutional governance in South Africa. Advocates of globalization (such as the CHE in South Africa) are referred to as the 'high skills thesis' and they argue that "higher education institutions sell goods and services, and they train an important part of the workplace and they foster economic development" (Gumport in Maassen & Cloete, 2002, p.17). This introduces the concept of corporatized high education institutions. This view is gaining dominance in the US and is supported by institutional managers and administrators. A similar trend can be seen in South African HE with the emphasis on a student-centric approaches, the re-prioritization of courses based on use value and the rise of market discourse and managerial approaches to restructure HEIs (Adams, 2006).

Adams (2006) examines corporate forms of governance and management in higher education institutions and their impact on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Adams (2006), who is aligned with Kraak's 'Australian left-critical discourse of globalization' camp, argues that globalization is rooted in a capitalist form of social relation and forms its current phase. Kraak (2001, p.6) dismisses much of the impact of globalization as "the new-liberal or new-right subjugation of the education process to the dictates of the market and the accentuation of existing social inequalities in education". Gumport argues that "higher education must attain goals related to its core activities, retain institutional legacies and carry out important functions for the wider society" (cited in Maassen & Cloete, 2002).

The impact of globalization on HE institutional governance can be seen in the rise of the emphasis on ideas such as corporatization and managerialism. By this, Adams (2006) means HEIs are functioning on market principles or economic rationalism with the aim of making a profit. Managerialism is about giving a quality education at the lowest cost by becoming more efficient, and in a way it is reducing education to any other type of business or what Adams refers to as corporatized higher education. He also refers to this as neoliberal interpretations of globalization which are being pushed by multinational organization onto states to develop likeminded higher education policies. Fataar (2003) cites the post-*apartheid* government's move away from RDP (based on redistributive development aims) to GEAR (emphasis on fiscal control and structural adjustment) as an example of this policy shift. This new policy emphasized efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, quality assurance and performance management. As a consequence, this requires a change in governance and management in HE, which he calls managerialism.

Likewise, Bundy (2006) argues that the 'new public management' that was seen in the British universities encouraged decentralization, performance targets and a rhetoric on quality and customer service. At a national level, he raises concerns about such steering systems as it causes institutions to behave in a way that meets the desired outcomes or external expectations. He adds that this results in the intensification of managerial forms

of governance at the institutional level. As a consequence, he argues that the profession has become proletarianized and are seen defending their core principles of "collegiality, collective professionalism and academic autonomy" (Bundy, 2006, p. 6). Similarly Adams (2006, p. 1) argues that the rise of managerialism in the corporatized institutions is limiting autonomy and eroding academic freedom.

The Council on Higher Education (2001a) acknowledges that managerialism is having an impact on collegiate cooperation within organizations and on the tasks of teaching and research. Both these functions appear to be dictated to by government and industry — collegiality has been surpassed by managerialism. The CHE argues that this is not going to go away and institutions need to strike a balance between the two. Johnson (2006) argues that the managerialism is undermining professional integrity amongst academics. Stephenson (cited in Boyd & Fresen, 2004, p. 5) states that "many academics have grown increasingly skeptical of, and resistant to, the quality industry and the quality burden." Some critics claim that external quality assurance has "invaded the life of academics, created significant extra workloads, and impacted negatively on the quality of student experience in that academics had less time available for their core business of teaching and research" (cited in Boyd & Fresen, 2004, p. 5).

Evidently, globalization is problematic because of the rise of corporatized HEIs and the emergence of managerialism. But globalization is also problematic in the HE context because of innate tensions within itself. Maassen and Cloete (2002) identify a tension in globalization, particularly for HE in developing countries. These states are supposed to enable economic and social development by producing more and better graduates. However, the tension arises as they are supposed to be doing this with less government contributions or support in a quest for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency and effectiveness includes an emphasis on quality assurance. Linked to this are terms like institutional audits, programme accreditation and national reviews, all attempting to improve efficiency, effectiveness and allowing for greater accountability.

2.7. Assessing Quality Management in Higher Education

As indicated in the introduction, globalization has resulted in countries like South Africa utilizing Higher Education Quality Assurance models developed elsewhere in the world. The rise in quality interventions in higher education is due to massification of HE; globalization and neo-liberal fiscal control emphasizing a decrease in government funding with an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness, and, lastly, internationalization (Strydom, 2001, p. 2 & 11 and Strydom et al. 2004, p. 208). Barrow (1999, p. 27) explains that higher education systems were designed for the elite. With governments introducing policies for greater access and diversity, the need has arisen to introduce quality assurance in programmes and practices. He adds that there is a growing trend in the developed world to reduce spending on higher education in an attempt to reduce taxes, whilst higher education in the developing world is competing for the same pot of money as primary and secondary education. Lastly, he argues that internationalization highlights the need to benchmark programmes and qualifications. Whilst Barrow's focus is New Zealand, his comments are also relevant to the South African HE context. In addition, the Council on Higher Education (2004b) argues that QA in SA was unevenly developed at the system, sectoral and institutional levels due to the legacies of *apartheid*, necessitating a quality intervention.

A major focus of this research is on quality assurance in higher education in South Africa. According to the Council on Higher Education (2005a, p. 4), its objective is "to ensure that institutions effectively and efficiently deliver education, training, research and community service which are of high quality and which produce socially useful and enriching knowledge as well as a relevant range of graduate skills and competencies necessary for social and economic progress."

The quality framework the HEQC espouses is based on a multi-definitional view of quality. First, there is fitness of purpose: this is quality in relation to national aims and precedence. This is the ability of the institution to offer programmes which are informed by the needs of the learner, and the human resources needs of the country. It measures whether the quality intentions of the institution are adequate. Secondly, there is fitness for

purpose: this is quality in relation to the institution's vision and mission. This is an assessment of quality in respect to specific outcomes. These different definitions of quality in relation to fitness for purpose or fitness for purpose are related to different criteria in the MEd review. Thirdly, there is value for money: this is quality in relation to the Education White paper and covers efficiency and effectiveness issues. Lastly, there is transformation: this is quality in relation to individual growth and social obligation (Council on Higher Education 2005a, p. 4 and Strydom, 2001, p. 3). Morley (2003) explores quality and power demonstrating how contested the notion of quality in higher education really is. This is well illustrated in the Higgins du Toit debate wherein it can be inferred that Higgins is more akin to a universalistic approach to the notion of quality and du Toit towards a contextually specific notion of quality.

The programme accreditation and review framework practiced in South Africa for the purpose of accountability and improvement has already been in use in other countries (Council on Higher Education 2004a and Scott & Hawke, 2003). Thus it is appropriate to examine some of the criticism lodged against these models. I examine each of Harvey's questions below together with criticism where relevant.

Harvey (2002, p. 245) asks the following questions:

- Who are the quality monitors?
- What do they evaluate?
- Why evaluate?
- What is the focus of the evaluation?
- How do they evaluate?

These are all very important questions. They are also very relevant in the South African context. The quality monitors are both internal and external to the institution. Internal monitors include external examiners, faculty boards and/or their subcommittees, ad hoc committees with the specific focus on review, senate and/or its subcommittees programme review committees, council and/or its subcommittees and many other committees that play an important role in evaluating, monitoring and improving our

offerings. External monitors are normally peers from other higher education providers, representatives from state departments and professional bodies.

According to Harvey (2002), internal reviews are more accurate and useful than those done by external monitors. The value lies in its collegiality. But this is changing to 'cloisterism' or what Johnson (2006, p. 69) calls contrived collegial managerialism. By this, she means a situation where academic staff are involved in more administration and are unable to collaborate because of increased managerialism. Managerialism, according to Adams, (2006, p. 13) is due to the mistrust between government and the academe and the belief that academics cannot deliver the products that capital market requires. Managerialism is further played out within the institution with mistrust between managers and academics. Like the other critics discussed above, Bundy (2006), too, sees HE as a victim of the audit culture and the vulgar forms of managerialism, whilst Seepe (2006) argues that the data collection is important for policymakers to monitor progress.

External evaluation, be it institutional audits, programme approvals and reviews, national programme reviews or qualification reviews by professional bodies are viewed with equal scepticism by academics, who see it as managerialist and undermining trust of their endeavours. In South Africa, the Higher Education Act (1997) has delegated quality assurance to the HEQC. The HEQC is responsible for institutional audits and programme accreditation and national reviews. There are also many professional body reviews of qualifications by monitoring agencies outside of the HE sector. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is a statutory body responsible for South Africa's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the quality of those qualifications. It delegates responsibility to the various Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQA). The HEQC is the HE ETQA. The South African Vice Chancellor's Association (SAUCA) and now Higher Education South Africa (HESA) are non statutory bodies responsible for quality promotion (CHE 2004b and Smout & Stephenson, 2001, p. 6-7).

Harvey (2002) further explores this distinction of external and internal quality monitoring. He argues that internal quality monitoring focuses on "learning theory, the

nature and styles of learning, and classroom innovations," whilst the external dimensions focus on method (Harvey, 2002, p. 245). Barrow (1999, p. 27) refers to the latter as superficial compliance or 'dramaturgical' compliance. He argues that the quality interventions are often seen as an instrument of governance with the specific purpose of surveillance. It is this surveillance that has led to dramaturgical compliance to the system and not the improvement in quality.

These external quality monitoring agencies evaluate curricula, lecturers, students and their assessments, programme design and coordination, student admission and selection, staffing, teaching and learning, research, supervision, student assessment, infrastructure and resources; student retention and throughput and a whole gambit of other criteria Barrow (1999) and Council on Higher Education (2004a/5a).

Critics of the South African HE argue that QA has moved from self-regulation to state regulation of qualification credibility. In doing so, there has been a shift from quality improvement to accountability. Harvey (2002) states that this shift to accountability ignores the nature of learning and classroom innovation in favour of compliance of the method and conformity, and "this is because the evaluators appear to be preoccupied with the method of evaluation , rather than the substance" (Harvey 2002, p. 245).

Evaluations have a specific purpose: to accredit; to assess the quality of courses/ lecturers/ teaching; research projects or proposals, to define and assess academic standards; to assess effectiveness and evaluate the quality management systems and other related purposes. Harvey (2002) argues that these purposes are often eclipsed by political requirements. These may be associated with globalization and neo-liberal policies. He claims that there is often confusion about the focus of the monitoring: is it focused on the quality of the process or examining the standard of the outcome? And this is important because it is linked to my research question that seeks to explore the relationship between teaching and learning and managerial practices in running a quality programme.

Vidovich and Slee (2001) posit that the increased accountability seen in educational reforms globally are changing the nature of accountability. We are seeing professional and democratic accountability to peers and the broader society being transformed into managerial and market types of accountability to governments and customer. They do not question the importance of accountability but instead they claim that the existing forms are inefficient and ineffective. They allude to the need for greater equilibrium between "proven" (externally focused) and "improved" (internally focused) elements of accountability.

Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) question why the huge growth in quality assurance has not led to lasting quality improvement. They suggest quality development as a new model and an alternative way forward for higher education. This model involves academic development, learning development and quality development. They suggest combining quality assurance with educational development in order to create a more holistic approach. This integrated approach creates a collegial and professional environment, with a positive and non-punitive approach to curriculum design. The benefits are enjoyed by the institution, its staff and ultimately the students. This is related to my research question on the value of the MEd programme review: is it about improvement or accountability?

The quality monitors use a range of tools to evaluate, but it usually is dependent on a self-evaluation portfolio or report, peer evaluation, including a site visit, a panel report, and sometimes statistical data or performance indicators (Strydom, 2001, p. 15). The HEQC allows HEIs to write up a self-evaluation portfolio responding to specific criteria. This qualitative report is supported by statistical data. All of this is then evaluated by the HEQC panel of peers who scrutinize the information, complete a site visit and conduct interviews whilst examining additional evidence on site. This process does not examine direct observation of actual teaching and learning in the classroom but does indirectly examine it in the criteria on teaching and learning, research, assessment, etc.

Harvey (1998, p. 237) further argues that "higher education quality monitoring in Australia has become over-bureaucratic and the focus has shifted from improvement to

accountability." As a consequence of this, quality improvement has been marginalized. He goes as far as to say that the quality is used to legitimate government's education policies. He traces the methodology examining self-assessment, peer evaluation and performance indicators. Harvey (1998) argues that self-evaluations are problematic in situations where the staff sees the evaluation as being related to rakings, or funding, as they overstate their strengths, they are on the defensive and this does not allow for a frank conversation. He adds that peer reviews are problematic because they look for discrepancies, only have a partial picture, are not trained investigators and they generally confirm what institutions already know. Lastly, he argues that performance indicators are problematic because it is often not clear about who or what the indicators are measuring. He posits that, despite the claims that external monitoring erodes academic freedom and intrudes on institutional autonomy, it is still considered safe, that is, safe, because the self- assessment and peer review mechanism allows for 'playing the game', so to speak. The methodology has its strengths if conducted under the correct climate. There is huge value in the self-evaluation followed by the dialogue during the peer review section and this can be positively used towards further improvement. However, when institutions feel they are being judged for the purposes of rankings or funding, then there is a disincentive towards being genuinely frank, and they respond defensively. This in turn results in compliance instead of a quality culture.

Haakstad (2001) warns of the dangers of a ritualized, heavy-handed approach to accreditation with the possible likelihood of evaluation fatigue. This is a definite syndrome that characterizes the experience of many schools of education in South Africa and this is backed up by the findings in my report. HEIs in South Africa had the MEds reviewed in 2005, followed by the ACE and PGCE qualifications in 2006 and the BEd programme review of 2007. Haakstad warns that the heavy-handed approach is likely to result in a focus away from developmental growth, does not stimulate self-improvement and does not encourage institutional learning.

I have three-research questions and they focus on the value of the review, the relationship between teaching and learning and managerial practices and, lastly, the relationship

between academic freedom and public accountability. In what follows, I classify the literature review according to my three research questions.

The first research question focuses on the general value of the programme review. Three areas of the literature review are important to this question. In reviewing the historical context, Badat (2004) argues that higher education under *apartheid* is divided by race, institution type, language and even culture. Thus the legal and policy framework created a very fragmented and poorly coordinated system, which was inequitable and very inefficient. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 sets out the establishment of the CHE which is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. Can the MEd review at a national level be seen in terms of transforming the sector, providing a framework for improvement, as well as in planning and defining the HE landscape?

Second the concept of *institutional autonomy*. Berdahl (1990) separates it into substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy. Substantive autonomy is the power of an institution to pursue its goals and programmes, whilst procedural autonomy is the power of the institution to determine the means by which it pursues its goals and programmes. Government actions that affect the substantive autonomy are of greater concern than actions affecting the procedural autonomy. Has the MEd review, at the institutional level, improved the programme, allayed public perception of the quality of the offering and convinced stakeholders that certain standards are met?

Third the notion of quality assurance in higher education. Harvey (2002) introduces the notion of internal and external quality monitors. The internal reviews are collegial and the external reviews are more managerialist. He adds that internal monitoring learning theory focuses on classroom innovations whilst external review focuses on compliance, surveillance and accountability. Has the MEd review focused on improvement or accountability or, as Vidovich and Slee (2001) put it, about “improve” or “prove”?

The second research question focuses on the relation between teaching and learning and managerial practices in relation to running a quality programme. Three areas of the

literature review are important to this question. First, are the concepts of *academic freedom* and *public accountability.* And it is specifically the negative right of academics to teach and research without any interference in their activities or, as Altbach (2001, p.1) describes it, "the freedom of the professor to teach, do research and publish without fetter in his field of expertise." Was the MEd review perceived to be eroding academic freedom?

The second concept important to this research question is *public accountability*. Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.1) refer to 'peer', 'professional' or 'scholarly accountability'. Within these forms of accountability it is the peer alone that has the command for "both the expertise and the commitment to intellectual activity to qualify them to hold the academy accountable in appropriate ways" (Friedman & Edigheji, 2006, p.9). What kind of accountability are national reviews, like the MEd review?

The third important emphasis coming from the literature review is Harvey's (2002) distinction between internal quality monitoring, which highlights learning theory and a focus on classroom innovations — external dimensions that focus on the method, or what he calls superficial or 'dramaturgical' compliance. So, is the review perceived to have focused on management practices at the expense of teaching and learning?

The third research question focuses on the relation between the three core constructs of academic planning, institutional autonomy and public accountability. The literature that is important here is Kayrooz's statement on academic freedom as a negative right of non-interference in teaching and research. Secondly is Berdahl's (1990) separation of institutional autonomy into substantive and procedural autonomy, as well as his, Berdahls' (1990), claim that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are not timeless absolutes but instead are relative and historically specific, dependent on the historical conditions. And related to this is the acknowledgment that too heavy procedural controls by governments could potentially impact on substantive goals and consequently academic freedom. Thirdly, Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.26) state that the tension between freedom and accountability cannot be resolved because they are in an unending

shift. Fourthly, all three claims in the academic freedom debate are also important. Fifthly, Vidovich and Slee (2001) argue that democratic or professional accountability is being transformed into managerial or market accountability. Consequently Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) argue that we are not seeing lasting quality improvement. This raises the question: was academic freedom compromised by the MEd review, and has institutional autonomy been eroded in the process of the MEd review?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this part of the research project, I examine the overall research design and outline the reasons for these choices. More specifically, I examine the research design by identifying and discussing the methodologies, the methods of data collection, data analysis, data validity, researcher bias and the ethical considerations linked to such an approach.

3.1. Methodology

This research report followed a case study design that used a qualitative approach. Scott and Marshall (2005, p. 54) describe a case study method as a "research design that takes as its subject a single case or a few selected examples of a social entity….and employs a variety of methods to study them. The criteria which inform the selection of the case or cases for a study are a crucial part of the research design". The single case study in this research was the UX School of Education, which was selected because it had undergone the National MEd review process conducted by the HEQC. I wanted to examine the UX School of Education's perception of the national MEd review process. The purpose of the case study design was to portray, analyze and interpret the uniqueness of the experiences of the School's staff to the national MEd review process through accessible accounts. This approach allowed me to capture the complexity of the situatedness of their perceptions. The focus of this case study was the School's academic staff that were involved in the MEd programme and management staff from the broader University context.

Case studies are normally qualitative in nature and their aim is to provide an in-depth description. This case study was no exception. The qualitative methodology which is generally associated with interpretive epistemology (Henning, 2004) tends to be used to refer to forms of data collection and analysis which rely on understanding with an emphasis on meanings, and was thus an appropriate methodology for understanding the specific situation in this case study. Interpretivist methodologies include: observation, interviewing, idiographic descriptions and qualitative data analysis. They allow for the capture of the 'insider's knowledge', experience, meaning, making and self

understanding (Henning, 2004, p. 20). Quantitative methodologies, on the other hand, are better suited for positivist epistemologies that have to do with numerical data, and hence did not serve the research questions. Interpretivist methodologies are aligned with the phenomenological approach to knowledge. The phenomenologist

> emphasizes that all human beings are engaged in a process of making sense of their (life) worlds. We continuously interpret, create, and give meaning to define, justify and rationalize our actions. According to the phenomenologist position the fact that people are continuously constructing, developing, and changing the everyday (common sense) interpretations of their world(s), should be taken into account in any conception of social science research. (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28)

One of the most important tenets of phenomenology is that consciousness is intentional, that 'aboutness' of thought is the fundamental construction of consciousness. Every mental phenomenon or psychological act is aimed at an object or intended object. This view leads to the claim that human awareness has a key role in the production of social action. An example of this would be the actual review process of the MEd qualification as an experience. The action may be the manner in which the staff experienced the review and the way in which they understood its aims, rationale and the processes. This will affect how they take the review forward with respect to their own practices.

This research project falls broadly under the qualitative research methodology and more narrowly under the phenomenological research methodology (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 29). Phenomenology is an area of philosophy that advocates an understanding of the relationship between social life and individual consciousness (Orleans, 2001). Phenomenology has three separate stems which can be derived from and influenced by Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger (Scott & Marshall, 2005, p. 488). It reveals its premises via descriptive investigation of the procedures at the individual, context and social levels. It is from this demonstration that human consciousness is understood as phenomena that are experienced in the world (Scott & Marshall 2005, p. 488 and Henning 2004, p. 19). A key characteristic of this approach is its emphasis on textual descriptions of what happened, and how this phenomenon was experienced. It studies conscious experiences

as experienced from the first person point of view. It involves the exploration of consciousness from the first person's perspective. Phenomenology suggests the study of direct or lived experience taken at face value and sees behaviors being derived from the phenomena of experience. In this sense, a research that draws on the phenomenological view investigates the contextual conditions underlying everyday life experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 32; Henning, 2004, p. 20 and Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 28).

There are many techniques used by phenomenologists. The most commonly used approach is qualitative methods that include small group observation, social situation analysis, face to face techniques such as interviewing subjects, to understand the microdynamics of a specific sphere of human life or to reveal the constitutive parts of human consciousness (Langsdorf, 1995 and Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 33). In this research, I used interviews to investigate what was experienced during the intervention in the form of the national review of the MEd programme at UX.

The interview used by the phenomenological approach is a particularly in-depth interview utilized to examine the meanings of, and the lived experiences of, a sample of participants. This approach attempts to study what was experienced, how it was experienced and the interviewees' meanings of these experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 352).

This research project came about because of my involvement as a representative from the Academic Planning Office, in assisting the UX School of Education with the national MEd Review process. At the time of the reviews in 2005, I had an impression that academics were reluctant to do the programme review and I noticed them anecdotally citing the review as an incursion on academic freedom. This was a great opportunity for me to record and understand academics' perception of the MEd review. Phenomenology offers this unique opportunity to understand the phenomenon of the review and to ascertain academics' perception of it.

This is a small-scale project specific for a research report with very little similar research having been done at the time due to the newness of the National Programme review in South Africa. The value of this project is in studying the perceptions about the MEd review process experience. The weakness of such an approach lies in its lack of generalisability, time-consuming data collection methods and non-standardized measurement requirements (Mouton, 2001, p. 150). Mouton warns against researcher bias and the lack of rigor during the analysis as further possible sources of error. Critics of this approach argue "that advocates of the anti-positivist stance have gone too far in abandoning scientific procedures of verification" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 34). By this, they mean that advocates have moved away from being critical in their research.

3.2. Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was qualitative fieldwork. The research was dependent on various data, data sources and data collection methods. The major data sources were people and their experiences, as well as texts, publications, documents, laws and policies. For most of the textual data, the data sources were already in existence and were easily accessed. However, in the case of the primary data in the form of interviews, the people and their experiences, it posed various ethical considerations that are dealt with in the last section of this chapter in more detail.

The sampling strategy for the interviews in this research project was "non-probability purposive sampling" (Blaxter et al., 1996). This allowed me to hand-pick typical and interesting individuals to interview. A total of 12 interviews were conducted. They included individuals from the following portfolios were selected: Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Dean, Head of School, Programme Coordinator, MEd Review Coordinator, Programme Review Portfolio writing team, Head Academic Planning Office. Six academic staff members were also interviewed, one of which is the Programme Coordinator and one was on the Programme Review writing team. Lastly, a CHE commissioned researcher who was responsible for writing up the sector report was also interviewed. These individuals were selected because they could present and represent an executive or institutional view, a perspective of senior management, the side of the

writing team, a view of the official office that best represents a quality office in the university, an academic staff standpoint and a perspective from another public HEI. In the findings section they are identified as ACAD 1-7 and MGMT 1-5.

Before proceeding with the interviews, I considered structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews were considered. Structured interviews have a high degree of control and have a systematic approach and relative objectivity (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). However, this method was discounted because it did not fit well with the phenomenological approach of wanting to get to the first person point of view. Unstructured interviews were also considered. Unstructured interviews have a greater flexibility and there is a more equal relation between the interviewer and the interviewees. But I chose not to use unstructured interviews because of the possible loss of control of the interview process when using this method. Having considered the various interview types, this research used semi-structured interviews (see below).

Qualitative interviewing was utilized because it allowed for a fairly informal, almost conversation-like process. The interview was thematic with specific questions (see Appendix A for a list of the actual questions) helping to guide the conversation. This was in keeping with the conceptual position which was aligned with the phenomenological theoretical framework that values peoples' views, understandings and experiences (Mason, 1996, pp. 38-58).

The interview schedule consisted of 13 questions in total and they were grouped into three parts with three broad themes that have a correlation to the various sections in the literature review. The very first question was a more general ice breaker question which set the tone for the interview. The first set of questions (Q2 -6) thereafter relate to a bigger question about whether programme reviews can get to the teaching and learning matters or do they tend to focus on management issues alone. This is related to the Literature review Section 2.7. Assessing quality management in higher education. The second set of questions (Q7 -10) focuses more on the review methodology. This also relates to the Literature review Section 2.7. Assessing quality management in higher

education. The last set of questions (Q11 -13) focuses on 'academic freedom', 'institutional autonomy' and 'public accountability' the three central constructs of this study. This is related to the Literature Review Section 2.4. & 2.5. The academic freedom debates in South Africa and internationally.

I tried to ensure that the questions were not of an interrogative but rather had a conversational tone. The semi-structured nature of the interview meant that the interviewees were asked the same open-ended questions, and that as the researcher, I had very little control over the responses. In some instances, I may have probed further to follow a specific line of thinking. The questions were mainly attempting to get at the participants' experience, their opinions and some background information.

This research acknowledges the definite value in this type of interview when compared to surveys and questionnaires but there are also some problems associated with it (Mason: 1996). First, there was no standardization of answers because of the very conversation-like nature of this type of interview. Second, the researcher developed a greater awareness of the process, and hence acknowledges that he was not a neutral data collector.

3.3. Data Administration

The interviews were recorded and notes were kept. Thereafter I transcribed the tape recorded interviews as a series of verbatim conversations immediately after the interview process.

3.4. Data Classification

Analysis and classification of the transcripts required the reading and rereading of the transcripts in order to develop familiarity with the material. Because the transcribed texts were very bulky by their very nature, it required me to summarize the content of each interview by paraphrasing, bulleting and quoting relevant content from the transcribed interviews. I used the following thematic areas from the questions to try and classify the data within each interview into: 'Context', 'General Value', 'Teaching and Learning and

Management', 'Teaching Matters', 'Learning Matters', 'Methodology', 'Criteria', 'Self Evaluation', 'Compliance vs Quality', 'Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability', and lastly 'Causal de-accreditation'. 'Context' had any information that gave a context to the participant with respect to his or her role as academic or manager, portfolio writer, panel member at another institution, etc. 'General Value' was used to group together mostly positive perceptions, by the participants about the MEd review. There were also some negative comments and these were also noted under this theme. This theme later became 'The value of the national MEd review' and it has three sub themes viz. 'The value of the framing of the review', 'The value of the review for Management' and 'Developing Collegiality in the sector.'

Next, I classified the content of the interviews into three themes that focussed on 'Teaching and Learning and Management', 'Teaching Matters' and 'Learning Matters'. 'Teaching and Learning and Management' included participants' perceptions about the relationship between teaching and learning, on the one hand, and management on the other. 'Teaching matters' included comments on whether the MEd review process could monitor teaching, as well as, participants' comments on what aspects of teaching could be monitored, and lastly what they learnt about their teaching practices. 'Learning matters' included participants' perceptions on learning matters and improvement. This was later collapsed into the broad theme of 'Management vs. teaching and learning' as areas of focus in the review' with two sub themes that focus on 'Teaching and learning' and 'The relationship between teaching and learning and management.'

I further classified the content of the interviews into initial themes that focussed on the 'Methodology', 'Criteria', 'Self Evaluation', 'Compliance vs Quality' and 'Causal de-accreditation'. 'Methodology' included any comments related on the success or failure of the MEd review process, including commendations and recommendation. 'Criteria' focussed on any comments on the criteria itself, their suitability and how enabling they were. 'Compliance vs Quality' focussed on perception that related to the methodology and the culture it created. 'Causal de-accreditation' was included to cover one of the questions and included responses that covered de-accreditation, its value and whether it

lead to improvement. These were later reorganised into one big theme on the 'The HEQC National Programme Review Methodology' and it had six sub-themes viz. 'The Rise of Public Accountability and Academics' Experiences of Autonomy', 'Pros of the HEQC National Programme Review Methodology', 'Cons of the HEQC National Programme Review Methodology', 'Issues of Power', 'Playing the Game and lastly 'Interrogation.'

After doing this thematic classification in this preliminary interpretation for each of the interviews, I then compared the summaries across all the interviews to pick recurring themes. As indicated above the multiple themes were then developed into the following three broad themes: 'The value of the national review process', 'Management vs teaching and learning, as areas of focus within the review' and 'The MEd review methodology' each with subthemes. The sub-themes are discussed in more detail in the findings section of this report.

3.5. Subjectivity or Researcher Bias

Peshkin (1988, p.17) states "When their subjectivity remains unconscious, they insinuate rather than knowingly clarify their personal stakes." Here he warns that it is not enough for social scientists to state that they are subjective, more is required — that is, a consciousness of it. As the researcher, I was aware of the potential effects as researcher as I was a colleague of many of the interviewees. I make this explicit in the research report, especially because I came from the Academic Planning Office, which is the compliance and 'quality office' that often has the difficult task of getting academics to comply with statutory bodies and legislation. However, there are advantages in this researcher; respondent relationship, e.g. the openness and already established rapport which was 'exploited' to the advantage of getting the interviews done.

3.6. Data Validity

The following validity checks were considered, viz. triangulation, re-interviewing and re-analysis. Triangulation was an important concern, and is particularly important in case studies (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p. 238). In the research I used a diverse range of individuals who were involved in the MEd Review from academics to administrators and

managers. This was purposive sampling, wherein specific individuals who were typical or interesting cases were sampled (Blaxter et al., 1996 & Mason, 1996). First, the triangulation was between academics in different social levels. This ensured that the views of academics in management positions and who may be more accommodating of the quality interventions were balanced with that of academics at the chalkface. Secondly, there was triangulation between the views of UX academics with a CHE employee, who was in the process of writing up the sector report. This allowed the perspectives of the case study to be 'tested', so to speak, with the broader sector views. There was also concern about the validity throughout the stages of description and interpretation. The use of the audio recordings allowed notes to be checked and prevented or minimized potential errors. This is descriptive validity. It was more difficult not to impose existing frameworks while trying to understand the interviewee's perspective. The research used member checks, i.e. using the interviewees, to check that there was no misinterpretation. The research also used feedback from a variety of people familiar with the research topic to assist in identifying validity threats. This is also referred to as interpretive validity (Cohen & Manion 1994, p. 94).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Most qualitative research in education has ethical implications attached to it (Cohen & Manion, 1994) and this research project was no exception. Each stage of the research was a potential source of ethical problems. Soltis (1990, p. 247-251) warns that ethics spans the description, evaluation, intervention and critique phases of research. First, an ethics application was submitted to and approved by the Human Ethics Research Committee for Non Medical clearance for research involving human subjects, giving permission to proceed, by the UX School of Education's Ethics Committee, with the research. Second, prior to interviews, the participants were given an explanation to the nature and aims of the research so that they fully understood the research before choosing to participate in it. Third, the consent and co-operation of the interviewees was first sought before proceeding with the interview process. All digitally recorded and transcribed research data will be destroyed on completion of this research.

According to Cohen & Manion (1994, p. 347), there are tensions in the research process that need to be addressed. By example, there was the tension between the pursuit of knowledge and the rights of the interviewees. Here, they advise that the rights of the individuals should always be upheld. This also plays out in the ethical dilemma of the right to privacy versus the right to know. This problem challenged the research and was addressed by using anonymity and confidentiality in the report.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS: VALUE; TEACHING AND LEARNING VS MANAGEMENT AND THE MED REVIEW METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

In broad terms, there are three sub-sections in the overall findings based on the following themes: the value of the national review process; management vs teaching and learning, as areas of focus within the review and the programme review methodology. Most themes have several subthemes that comprise it. The theme exploring the value of the national review process has subthemes that focus on: the value of the framing of the review; the value for management of the programme and developing collegiality in the sector.

The second theme broadly focuses on teaching learning vs. management as areas of focus in the review. And it has subthemes that specifically focus on teaching and learning and the relationship between teaching and learning and management.

I then briefly describe participant's perceptions of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability before discussing the third and final theme.The third section of the findings focuses on the HEQC National Review methodology. It has subthemes that focus on the positive aspects of the review and on the negative aspects of the review. It has further sub themes that focus on the review criteria, on issues of power and 'playing the game'. There is also a fifth subtheme on interrogation.

4.2. The Value of the National MEd Review

The underlying issue in this theme is value, and more specifically, the value of the national MEd review. The national MEd review is a quality intervention. Quality assurance and quality management are instruments used in public accountability that is part of the conceptual framework of this research report. This theme looks at the value of the Med review at a national level, in terms of transforming the sector, providing a framework for improvement, as well as in planning and defining the HE landscape. Moreover, I look at the value of the review at the institutional level to improve the

programme, to allay public perception of the quality of the offering, and to convince stakeholders that certain standards are met. Lastly, this theme examines the notion of quality assurance in higher education. In this I examine Harvey's (2002) distinction between internal and external quality monitors. The internal reviews are collegial and the external reviews are more managerialist. Harvey adds that internal monitoring learning theory focuses on classroom innovations whilst external review focuses on compliance, surveillance and accountability. Thus the value of the review is also about improvement and accountability or, as Vidovich and Slee (2001) put it, about improve or prove.

With this in mind, this section of the findings gives an important context, by exploring what are national reviews and why education was the focus of the national reviews. I then look at the types of reviews and spotlight external reviews which best typify the national review. I then examine the participants' views on the value of the national reviews by focusing on the value of the framing of the review, the value of the review for management of the programme, and for learning and teaching and the value for developing collegiality in the sector.

Badat (2004) argues that higher education under *apartheid* was divided by race, institution type, language and even culture. Hence the legal and policy framework created a very fragmented and poorly coordinated system, which was inequitable and very inefficient. In 1997, the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 set out the establishment of the CHE, which is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. Thus the value of the MEd review at a national level can be seen as in terms of transforming the sector, providing a framework for improvement, as well as in planning and defining the HE landscape.

Before examining the general value of the National MEd Review, it is important to understand what 'national reviews' are and why 'education' was subject to such a review. First, National Reviews are a specialized form of the accreditation exercise focusing on existing learning programmes in a specific subject area, like Business Administration or Education. The National Reviews Directorate was approved by the HEQC Board in 2005,

and the Directorate was constituted in 2006. Prior to the creation of this Directorate, national reviews were part of the responsibility of the Programme Accreditation Directorate known as the Programme Accreditation and Coordination Directorate (Council for Higher Education 2005c). Secondly, South African Higher Education has been characterised by years of fragmented and uneven provision. Hence, it became necessary for HE to transform in line with social and economic justice within the context of a democratic South African society. According to a participant, "the HEQC was in a difficult position because with the transition from the old system to the new system post '94, they had to level the playing fields — to use that expression. So they had to unify a system and then during that unification bad stuff got in. We had fly-by-night institutions, etcetera. So yes, somehow they had to find a mechanism to raise the bar" (MGMT 2 2007, p.6). Hence, the HEQC Board took a decision to focus on Education because of the following factors:

1. The quality of school leavers qualifying for higher education is dependent on the quality of teacher education, amongst other factors.
2. The ability to implement school reforms depends on the quality of teachers amongst other factors.
3. Concerns have been expressed by the Department of Education and other stakeholders about the quality of teacher education provision in South Africa
4. There is a need on the part of the HEQC for evaluation criteria to enable judgements on new applications to offer teacher and other education programmes, especially from institutions that have not offered these before.
5. The Department of Education's request in its National Plan for Higher Education that the HEQC should prioritise the review of the quality of postgraduate programmes. The development of the next generation of researchers in education depends to a large extent on the quality of such programmes.
6. The fact that a considerable number of institutions are presently involved in mergers could have implications for the quality of teacher and other education programmes.
7. The recent incorporation of former teacher education colleges into universities could have quality implications for these programmes. (Council for Higher Education 2005c, p. 1.)

In line with these factors above, the first findings show that there is value from the review process for the various levels of the system. There is value at the national level, and then there is value at the institutional level, there is also value for the school, the programme and for the students. So there is resonance with the literature review in that the value of the MEd review at a national level can be seen as in terms of transforming the sector, providing a framework for improvement, as well as in planning and defining the HE landscape. For the purposes of this research and in line with the research aims, I focus on the value of the framing of the review, the value of the review for management and the value of promoting collegiality within the sector.

4.2.1. The Value of the Programme Framing of the Review

Harvey (2002) distinguishes between internal and external quality reviews. The internal reviews are characterized as being collegial, focusing on learning theory and classroom innovations and emphasizes improvement, whilst the external reviews are more managerialist, with a focus on compliance, surveillance and accountability. Thus the value of the review is also about improvement or accountability or, as Vidovich and Slee (2001) put it, about improve or prove. With that in mind the value of the review at the institutional level is to improve the programme, to allay public perception of the quality of the offering and to convince stakeholders that certain standards are met.

Programme reviews, including national reviews are part of the programme accreditation process. Programme accreditation is a type of quality assurance practiced globally with accountability and programme improvement in mind. But can accountability and improvement be achieved in one process or do we need two separate processes?

> And that's why I separate the sort-of philosophical approach around minimum standards with a very different philosophical approach with the quinquennial review[3] which is

[3] UX has a well established practice of quinquennially reviewing academic and research entities. Quinquennial / periodic reviews are no more than every five years. Areas of review include: Academic schools and the majors/fields that they offer, Research establishments attached to schools or faculties, Centres attached to schools or faculties, Special activities within schools or faculties and lastly any other entities with an academic focus and mandate

> rather not – which is not whether you're achieving the minimum standards but rather what are the opportunities for doing better than you're currently doing, it doesn't matter where you are. And I think for me those are philosophically two very different ways of approaching quality assurance and that's why I argue for the need for both. The external review does one thing that the quinquennial review doesn't – or rather that quinquennial review does more of and in a different way with a very different philosophical approach. (MGMT 1, 2007, p.2.)

This view emphasises two distinct philosophical approaches to reviews. The distinction is based on the approach and use of minimum standards. The participant goes on to highlight that a minimum standards approach, as adopted by the HEQC, professional boards, and as evidenced in the national MEd review is about putting your best foot forward. Moreover the review talks to outsiders who come with an external sense of what is important. The emphasis in this type of review is accountability. In contrast, the University's quinquennial review is about exposing what has gone wrong, and how things can be improved. Here the reviewers arrive with a shared sense of the institution's values system. The emphasis here is about improvement. These types of reviews are sometimes referred to as external and internal reviews and have different aims, objectives and criteria.

The objectives of the HEQC's programme accreditation model, according to the HEQC (Council for Higher Education. 2004a, p. 9), are fourfold. First, "the acid test for me is whether the review threw up programmes that are just so bad that they shouldn't be foisted on the public. You know, people going in and doing them are being more damaged than benefited" (ACAD 4 2007, p.13). This suggests that the programme accreditation and re-accreditation/review is meant to protect students from weak or poor quality programmes. Secondly the accreditation model encourages self-managed evaluation by institutions: "Where we are as a school now, is that I've tabled a proposal for … regular, periodic … every four years … that we do a review of a program internally and bring in external people to kind-of moderate that" (MGMT 4 2007, p.7). Thirdly, this model wants to increase the public's confidence in higher education providers, their programmes and qualifications by "the weeding out of poor programmes" (MGMT 4 2007, p.3). Lastly, this model espouses articulation between programmes: "the

HEQC brought in a spotlight on the notion of programme. What is the difference between qualification and programme? Well, as far as qualification was concerned the real issue is at the exit level of an M. Ed, for example, are the academic standards of dissertation writing comparable to the practices of peer institutions" (ACAD 4 2007, p.13).

During the time of the National Review, UX did not have an official programme accreditation system, and had only subsequently started developing one in order to get self-accrediting status. This is a status given by the HEQC to specific institutions for a fixed period of time during which HEIs can re-accredit their existing programmes.

> I think if there is a weakness in our system of the review, it probably would be in the lack of, let's call it programme review, where you look holistically at a whole programme instead of more isolated elements. This is asking in a way what the degree delivers; not separate courses this, that and the other or separate disciplines but the whole thing. And I think that's in some way the hardest thing to assess because it pulls together so many different strands. (MGMT 3 2007, p.1)

This participant highlights a gap in UX's quality assurance system: that of programme reviews. "Up to then the focus of evaluation, I think right through the university, tended to be at the level of qualification, and on the other hand, course" (ACAD 4 2007, p.7). So there were course reviews at UX, and there were qualification reviews within the quinquennial review system, but at that point in time, there was no formalised programme review system, except for programmes being reviewed by professional boards.

The National MEd Review was a minimum standards approach and the reviewers were from the outside. "I suppose it was worthwhile … it was worthwhile reviewing the way the programme is coordinated and run and what the individual components – by which I mean what the packages themselves, have to offer. So it was useful in seeing the programme, I suppose, from an outside perspective and having to give explanations for why – for design decisions or practical decisions" (ACAD 1 2007, p.11). There is value in looking at programme design (criteria 1 and 2) in this way, and having to unpack things for an external audience. And the value a programme focus brings, is an examination of intellectual credibility, coherence and articulation in this criterion.

The intellectual credibility is examined by looking at the outcomes; the degree of choice within a curriculum; teaching and learning methods; modes of delivery; and learning materials, as well as

> …the structure of the programme, the design of the programme, the programme as more an integrated unit than simply a collection of courses, came to the fore. In other words, what was happening – and this is not a criticism, it was a natural outcome of where the focus was – there was very little knowledge between courses. I suppose the knowledge between courses was a much more informal thing than was required for an evaluation of the programme. Courses went along narrowly, side-by-side, in parallel but very seldom did everybody stop to ask 'is this what an M. Ed programme as a whole needs to be' and 'how does this programme fit with its own purpose? Does it have a clear purpose? Is it very clear about what its clientele is what the career paths of that clientele are' and so on and so forth. (ACAD 4 2007, p. 6-7)

The second thing the review gave is "a sense of the differences in expectations across the different components of the qualification, that in some components of the delivery of the qualification we were having very different expectations from others, and that there was obviously not a sufficient internal conversation" (MGMT 1 2007, p.8). UX chose to register a single generic MEd qualification with the DoE. Within this qualification there are 'programmes'/ packages. So the programme focus of the review highlighted incommensurability within a qualification between its various offerings and incommensurability between courses within the same package:

> I think these were things that hit us as individual teachers, that we didn't collaborate enough within a team as well as across the package, and that I didn't have an idea of the standard used by the curriculum package as opposed to our package. But even the criteria that we have within the policy and management package, we realised that we don't talk enough about what we do, and to what extent we send different messages to the students. It was very clear to me that we need more time on that, within a team as well as across packages. (ACAD 6 2007, p.6)

Thus the value of the framing of the review is important because it is about the improvement of the programme, it allays public perception of the quality of the offering

and it convinces stakeholders that certain standards are met. It also had value for the institution, because UX had predominantly focused on course reviews and quinquennial reviews which focus on Schools within a faculty. The MEd review forced the School of Education to look at the programme level during this review. This meant that the School looked at, among others, programme design and the connection between courses within a programme. The review gave the School an opportunity to look at their processes, practice and fundamentals in a way they would otherwise not have done.

4.2.2. The Value of the Review for Management

Berdahl (1990) separates autonomy into substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy where substantive autonomy is the power of an institution to pursue its goals and programmes and procedural autonomy is the power of the institution to determine the means by which it pursues its goals and programmes. Government actions that affect the substantive autonomy of HEIs are of greater concern than actions affecting the procedural autonomy of HEIs. This is important because the substantive autonomy is the 'what', or the goals and programme, whilst the procedural autonomy is the 'how', or the means by which the institution pursues its goals.

With this in mind there are three values of the review for management viz. student data, staffing and management of the programme. I deal with these below.

There is another dimension of value of this review: that of the value for management of the programme.

> The process of the review itself – the panel visit here – made me aware of how difficult it is to get – even when you know that you've got a good programme – to statistically show it, was really, really difficult at that time with the information that we had available... So that's something that I learned, was even though you have an intuitive sense of your own practice that it's good, if you don't have the statistics to back it up people aren't going to give it much credibility. (ACAD 1 2007, p. 5)

The first issue, highlighted here is that of student information and statistical data was problematic and did not support instinctive perceptions. Consequently, this posed the

question: how can UX manage the students and the programme effectively if the management information systems are problematic? “Well, I think that the review was very helpful in recognising the real limitations of our administrative systems. The fact that we had struggled to get proper information about our throughput is a real issue” (ACAD 2 2007, p. 2).

The second issue was around staffing and management of the programme. Previously there was one person, who was responsible for Masters and PhD coordination. That person also chaired the Higher Degrees and Ethics Committees. “What's happened is that the management of the M.Ed. programme has been divided up differently and that is a direct outcome of the HEQC review. There's now a much more defined coordinator role. And the higher degrees are separated from that, and chairing the Ethics Committee is separate from that, and PhD coordination is separate” (ACAD 1 2007, p.10). This division of labour along tasks meant a fairer sharing of the work load. It also created a capacity to look more deeply into, for example, throughput. Linked to this broader staffing and management is the need for better management of the application process, the liaison with students and the Faculty Office. Consequently, after the HEQC review “we got an administrator, who is responsible for overseeing the admissions process. So she's not an academic, she's an administrator but a senior administrator” (ACAD 2 2007, p.4).

Lastly, the review brought up concerns about the management of the programme specifically with regards to supervision, proposal writing and throughput.

> It also made us think about who's supervising the research reports to make sure that we have people who are qualified to do the supervision. It also made us think of our throughput trends. I think – but I don't know if it's directly linked to that but I think we've got a better research design course which essentially has pushed up the deadlines; and many of the students are now meeting much more strict deadlines for submission of research proposals. And that's a very important part of improving the overall throughput for the qualification. (ACAD 2 2007, p.5)

The School developed a common research design course after rigorous debates. The separate packages initially argued that the research methodology courses should remain separate because of the specialised knowledge fields in which they are in. But they soon realised that this was costly from a management point of view. These courses were not breaking even as each course had only a handful of students. But there was also an academic disincentive; by keeping the students separate, it deprived them of the richness of being in a MEd group. Following these debates, the School continues to have separate research design courses with a reduction in one research design course. This awareness, together with the new staffing arrangements, meant that student deadlines could be better managed, essentially to improve the throughput rates within the programmes.

Hence the programme review may be perceived to have spin-offs for the management of the programme. Summarising the participants' views, it highlighted the weakness in UX's management information systems. Moreover, it emphasised the need to change and catalysed changes in management roles and responsibilities of the programme by separating postgraduate programme management into masters and doctoral programmes; and by separating the responsibility for chairing both the Higher Degrees Committee and the Ethics Committee as a result of the review. The process further underlined the need for an administrator, and consequently this was done. Thus the review made recommendations around procedural autonomy.

4.2.3. Developing Collegiality in the Sector

Bundy (2006) argues that the 'new public management' that was seen in the British universities encouraged decentralization, performance targets and a rhetoric on quality and customer service. He adds that this results in the intensification of managerial forms of governance at the institutional level. As a consequence, he argues that the profession has become proletarianized and are seen defending their core principles of 'collegiality, collective professionalism and academic autonomy' (Bundy 2006, p. 6). In contrast, the South African quality interventions, in the form of national reviews, are perceived to be developing collegiality in the sector:

> Ja. I think – I considered it to be a useful exercise. It was useful in the sense that it did take the form of a peer review. It was a group of people who were able to engage with us as our peers. They were external and I do think that there's a moment for external review assessment as part of our quality assurance process. (MGMT 1 2007, p.1)

The fact that there are peers, even though they are external, means that there are some shared values. Hence, according to the participant, the review process was valuable because it consisted of peers with whom the School could engage. And the added value is that there is an external view of quality being brought into the process, in a collegial way.

> I think the second point about the value of that process is its external benchmarking – its sense of external benchmarking. I think it's always valuable to have a sense of where you are in relation to the rest. So bothersome as it may be, I think it's worth doing because it gives you that sort-of level of sense and comfort of what is happening around you and what are the people doing. Not in a competitive way but really has a sense of where you are in relation to the rest. (MGMT 1 2007, p.4)

So besides the external view, there is also a benchmarking element which is not competitive, so it is in keeping with developing collegiality in the sector. This cooperative and collaborative culture is aptly captured by a participant who wants to use the process to better understand how other institutions are dealing with underprepared students:

> It was more a question of trying to say [that]- try to make sure that you offer quality, given that you have more and more students and more and more, I think, under-prepared students. And I saw it as an opportunity really to understand how other universities do it. … And so when I went to the training course, for me to have an opportunity to check with the other people that were there, what they were doing more than the training per se. (ACAD 6 2007)

"I think that the value of the external review is that it does bring in the sectoral, collegial oversight. It's that spirit of collegiality within the sector as a whole, what I think is the value of the process" (MGMT 4 2007, p.1.) So the participant claims that the HEQC's programme review brings with it sectoral collegiality but it's a process that also develops

that collegiality. It is important because the peer reviewers come with an external view of quality. The process also allows for benchmarking and knowledge sharing.

It is important at this point to reflect on these findings, because in a way they are very positive and encouraging. My expectation was that academic staff would have real issue with the national review and they would be citing examples of how it infringes on their academic freedom or managers concerned about institutional autonomy being compromised by this quality intervention due to increased public accountability. Yet this is not the case. In fact it's the opposite. The programme focus of the review has forced the School of Education to look at the viability and validity of their practices and engage and grapple with it. Moreover, there have been tangible benefits for the management of the programme with changes already being implemented. Lastly, the process has brought and encourages the development of collegiality within the sector. This surprising view on the value of the review process is best captured: "The strength of having to put it all down in one document for an external audience, definitely gives you something. The question that my colleagues ask, is whether it gives you enough to justify the time spent on it. And my answer to that is kind-of yes" (ACAD 7 2007, p.18). Thus the participants claim that there is value of the MEd review at a national level, in terms of transforming the sector and providing a framework for improvement, as well as in planning and defining the HE landscape. The participants also claim that there is also value of the review at the institutional level, which is to improve the programme, to allay public perception of the quality of the offering and to convince stakeholders that certain standards are met. Lastly, even though the review is of an external nature with emphasis on accountability, the participants felt that it did lead to some improvement as well.

4.3. Tension between Management and Teaching and Learning as Areas of Focus in the Review

Three areas of the literature review are important to this question. First are the concepts of academic freedom and public accountability. And it is specifically the negative right of academics to teach and research without any interference in their activities or, as Altbach

(2001, p.1) describes it, "the freedom of the professor to teach, do research and publish without fetter in his field of expertise." Was the MEd review perceived to be eroding academic freedom?

The second concept important to this research question is public accountability. Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.1) refer to 'peer', 'professional' or 'scholarly accountability'. Within these forms of accountability it is the peer alone that has the command for "both the expertise and the commitment to intellectual activity to qualify them to hold the academy accountable in appropriate ways" (Friedman & Edigheji, 2006, p.9). What kind of accountability do national reviews, like the MEd review have?

The third important emphasis coming from the literature review is Harvey's (2002) distinction between internal quality monitoring which highlights learning theory and a focus on classroom innovations with external dimensions that focus on the method or what he calls superficial or 'dramaturgical' compliance. So is the review perceived to have focused on management practices at the expense of teaching and learning?

With this in mind, I examine the perspectives on teaching and learning and management as areas of focus in the review. There are several views on this. There are those who believe that the National Review was not interested in teaching and learning. There are others who believe that teaching and learning issues were embedded in other programme review criteria. And lastly, there is a perspective which welcomes the review of teaching and learning through direct classroom observations. Likewise, there are differing views on the relationship between teaching and learning and management. There is a view that states they are competing activities. There is a second view that proposes teaching and learning is more important, and lastly, there is a view that posits they are equally important.

4.3.1. Teaching and Learning

Harvey (2002) makes an important distinction between internal quality monitoring which highlights learning theory and a focus on classroom innovations and external dimensions

that focus on the method or what he calls superficial or 'dramaturgical' compliance. Thus, it is important to ascertain participants' perceptions on the focus of the review. Was the review perceived to have focused on management practices at the expense of teaching and learning?

There are several perspectives on whether teaching and learning was assessed in the MEd programme review. These views are explored below. First, a participant expressed the view that the National Review was not interested in teaching and learning. "Ja. I think the focus was very much on coordination and management of the programme; … and teaching and learning didn't really seem to interest the HEQC very much" (ACAD 1 2007, p.5). And this is supported by an examination of the National MEd Review Criteria, which only has a single criterion on teaching and learning strategy.

Secondly, and building on the fact that there is only one criterion on teaching and learning strategy, there is the view that teaching and learning is embedded in other criteria.

> I think a number of things can come out from it. Firstly, the design of the programme itself; the relationship between the programme and its purpose. Secondly, a good deal can come from the other side in terms of the evidence presented on the way in which the teaching and learning is assessed; and also how the teaching and learning process is evaluated. Whether there is course evaluation, peer evaluations, student evaluation and so on, given the fact that that kind of evaluation can always be skewed by advantageous circumstances and so on and so forth. In terms of the teaching and learning, the qualification and experience profile of the staff of course tells a lot. In certain instances, lecturer-student ratios would tell a good deal. One can tell a lot from the various modes of tuition that are offered in a programme – large class tuition, tutorial seminar provision, individual consultation, and so on and so forth. In certain instances one can look at learning materials, reading packs. So there is a reasonable amount of evidence available about the modes, about the student access to materials, to lecturers, to support mechanisms and so on. (ACAD 4 2007, p. 4)

The participant argues that elements of programme design can come out of such a review. Moreover, he argues that we can get a sense of student assessment by looking at the evidence of how teaching and learning is assessed and the process of evaluation. He also

argues we can glean insights about staffing by looking at their qualifications and experience. He further argues that there is valuable information about staff-to-student ratios and modes of learning, as well as learning materials. So there are elements of teaching and learning that can be alluded to in the other criteria, e.g. the criterion on programme design and coordination; the criterion on research; the criterion on student assessment, even in the criteria on staffing and programme reviews (see Appendix B). This view is supported by another participant that said, "The review process could only infer teaching. Other than that it would be direct observation of teaching. And again ….to work out the parameters of what that might be is not that easy" (MGMT 4 2007, p. 4).

Thirdly, there is a view which states that teaching and learning can only be explored through direct classroom observation, is a very unique statement.

> So it's not clear how much of teaching and learning you can capture in this kind-of a review. Even in research, I mean I do research into teaching and even in that research there are big issues about what you can capture and what you can't capture; and that's with video cameras in classrooms. And how you can know what the quality, how you can describe the quality of the teaching and learning in a particular classroom, even if you videotape it over weeks. The HEQC specifically excluded classroom observations, so that limits what they can say. They can only make plans based on self-reports. (ACAD 7 2007, p. 7)

The participant above questions whether teaching and learning can be captured in the process followed in the national MEd review. She further problematises the difficulty of capturing teaching and learning using direct observation. And, since the HEQC excluded direct observation in the national MEd review, this further limited what could be deduced about teaching and learning.

The same participant goes on to say that she does not have a problem with opening up her classroom to external observation.

> I would, I would, yes. I have no problem opening my class room to external observations. I don't think it's any kind of …it's not a detraction from academic freedom. You see we need to talk about how we understand academic freedom. To have someone come and observe my lessons, if they are doing it with the serious intention to learn themselves and

> to help me learn, I have no problem with that. I do it all the time with teachers. I do research into teaching. So to me that's not an invasion of academic freedom, not at all. They're not coming to tell me what to teach and what not to teach; that's just quite a different separate issue. (ACAD 7 2007, p.12)

She indicates that she would not have any problem with direct classroom observations as long as it helps the HEQC and she herself learns from the process. She does not see this as an intrusion on her academic freedom as long as the HEQC does not come to tell her what she can/not teach.

In contrast to the view above, another participant believes that it is not the HEQC, but instead the institution's responsibility to look at teaching and learning.

> It's getting to the heart of whether an external entity should be looking at the systems the way the UX HEQC quality audit just looked at systems, or whether it can actually get to the heart of evaluating actual teaching and learning… I don't know whether the national review process actually got to the heart of aspects of teaching and learning. And I'm thinking of both the education review and for example the MBA review. Certainly in terms of the things that they looked at, a lot of the things were indirect to do with teaching and learning. So it is quality of the facilities, qualifications of the staff. I don't recall if there was a specific focus on staff/student ratio but we certainly did submit figures to do with student numbers and staff numbers. And my guess is any reviewer would've kind-of made that connection, ja. And in a way I actually prefer it. I think it's more appropriate that an external entity should realise that responsibility at that level is an institution's responsibility which then begs the question of whether we are doing it properly. And to me that is what the audits were trying to ascertain - the institutional audit - because it was trying to ascertain whether we had the right systems in place that produced an environment that promoted quality. (MGMT 2 2007, p.4)

This participant raises several important questions about the MEd review. Can the MEd review get to the core of teaching and learning or does it explore teaching and learning indirectly only? Should external entities be examining teaching and learning or is it the responsibility of the institution?

Thus there are various perspectives of teaching and learning within the MEd review. There are those who argue that teaching and learning was not an important part of the

review, whilst others argue that it is embedded in other criteria and can only be inferred. Lastly there are those who argue that you can only get to teaching and learning issues from direct classroom observations.

4.3.2. The Relationship between Teaching and Learning and Management

The national MEd review focused on many criteria. Broadly speaking, these criteria can be separated into teaching and learning issues and management issues. There is only one criterion on teaching and learning, but teaching and learning issues can be inferred from other criteria. There are differing views on the relationship of teaching and learning and management. The first sees them as competing activities based on their division of labour.

> I think as they're competing demands. And that may be related to the fact that those of us who take teaching and learning quite seriously, may be dismissive of the managerial demands; and those who have to look after the managerial aspects of the programme are dismissive of the teaching and learning. And that may be in part related to the fact that the managerial stuff is not necessarily done by academics you know; so there's that tension between the two. (ACAD 5 2007, PG2)

The participant above sees teaching and learning and management demands being competing demands because the groups practicing them are dismissive of the other. This, she argues, results in tension.

The second view prioritises teaching and learning as being more important than management for running a successful quality programme.

> Well, look I think later on there emerged a more explicit acknowledgement that teaching and learning is at the centre of everything. One can associate teaching and learning with programme design. One can and must associate it with assessment, for example. But in terms of the relationship with management – ja, institutional management is very essential for the viability of a programme in terms of allocating resources, in terms of providing staff, in terms of providing ancillary facilities, library facilities, computer facilities and so on and so forth, that I would say that that's not the heart – that's not the absolute core of a programme. It is possible to provide a quality programme under quite constrained circumstances. To answer the question, management can make or break a

> programme. But at the same time, if management is not breaking a programme, for example, by whole scale retrenchments or radical reduction of budget allocations, the damage they can do is, I think, relatively minor in comparison with the damage that would be done to a programme if teaching and learning was of poor quality. (ACAD 4 2007, p. 4)

The participant above emphasises that teaching and learning is at the heart of everything. Teaching and learning is associated with programme design and with assessment. But at the same time, management is also important for allocating staff, library and computer facilities and other resources. But this is not the core of the programme. He believes you can have a good programme with constrained circumstances, but if you have weak teaching and learning it causes more damage in comparison. So the emphasis here is on teaching and learning.

The third view argues that both teaching and learning and management are important for running a good quality programme.

> They're both absolutely crucial, both 100 percent necessary and crucial and you cannot have one at the expense of the other. Firstly, I don't think you can get teaching and learning right, in the absence of appropriate managerial systems. It's about whether students have the requisite prior knowledge to come in. It's about how their package moves along to their research and how that research is managed. So, all of those are managerial issues, you need to have marks on record; you need to have people talking to each other in course programme meetings. Of course you can have all the managerial stuff in place and have bad teaching and learning and then people won't learn. I mean that's kind-of obvious. As academics, that's what we should be spending our time doing. We need the administrative processes in the universities, to support that. They're both crucial. I would never ever agree with a colleague who says "the managerial stuff isn't important". It has to be. (ACAD 5 2007, p. 3-4)

This participant disagrees with the previous participant by arguing that both teaching and learning and management are crucial for running a successful programme. She argues that you must have all the management in place like student records, as well as teaching and learning elements like academics sharing their experiences. Teaching and learning is important, but management must support the academic enterprise.

In summary, the participants had a diversity of views on teaching and learning within the review. There was the view that teaching and learning was not an important part of the review. In contrast, others argue that teaching and learning was inferred from the other criteria. Lastly, there are participants with the view that teaching and learning can only be reviewed through direct classroom observations. These differing perspectives on the degree of teaching and learning within the review criteria are important because they relate back to academic freedom issues or non-interference in teaching and research. Moreover, the question as to whether or not this type of review should be examining teaching and learning relates to the concept of public accountability. Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.1) refer to 'peer', 'professional' or 'scholarly accountability'. In this form of accountability, it is the peer alone who has the command for "both the expertise and the commitment to intellectual activity qualify them to hold the academy accountable in appropriate ways" (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p.9).

There are again different views on the relationship between teaching and learning and management. The first sees them as competing activities. The second emphasises teaching and learning over management and the last view sees them as equally important. These perceptions on the relationship between teaching and learning and management practices relate to Harvey's (2002) distinction between internal quality monitoring and external dimensions.

4.4. The HEQC National Review Methodology

The literature that is important here is Kayrooz's statement on academic freedom as a negative right of non-interference in teaching and research. Secondly, is Berdahl's (1990) separation of institutional autonomy into substantive and procedural autonomy. Equally as important is Berdahl's (1990) claim that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are not timeless absolutes but instead are relative and historically specific dependent on the historical conditions. And related to this is the acknowledgment that too heavy procedural controls by governments could potentially impact on substantive goals and, consequently, academic freedom. Thirdly, Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.26) state that the tension between freedom and accountability cannot be resolved because the tension is

in an unending shift. Fourthly, all three claims in the academic freedom debate are also important. Fifthly, Vidovich and Slee (2001) argue that democratic or professional accountability is being transformed. into managerial or market accountability. Consequently, Gosling and D'Andrea (2001) argue that we are not seeing lasting quality improvement.

4.4.1. The Rise of Public Accountability and Academics' Experiences of Autonomy

My perceptions at the time of the MEd review was that academics felt that the rise of public accountability, through increased quality assurance interventions like the national M.Ed review, led to the erosion of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. But these perceptions are challenged. Furthermore, academics find the MEd review methodology in general as being fair. Their concerns are around the nuance of the methodology and the manner in which it was experienced. I briefly explore the participants' views on the three constructs of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability before exploring the methodology in more detail.

My initial perception was that academics' felt that the M.Ed review infringed on their academic freedom. However the findings turn my initial perception on to its head.

> I don't think there's academic freedom – that the concept of academic freedom is also licence to demand no interference in quality terms and no accountability for quality of programme. I think that academic freedom grants the freedom to direct the learning process and to direct the learning path and content in ways that individual academics choose to. But then there is – with that comes the demand for accountability in terms of quality. And I don't think that the two compromise each other. I mean in some ways external review does not – given the context of the way in which we package qualifications for which we accept as an issue - I don't think that external quality assurance processes limit the academic freedom of those who are delivering it – the programme. I think that when external reviews point to a skewness (ph) in resource allocation, I see that as a management issue rather than an academic freedom issue. I didn't see that in this M. Ed review. I certainly didn't see an attempt to impose curriculum structure and content on us. In fact we did defend against that. (MGMT 1 2007, p.11)

The participant sees academic freedom specifically in relation to teaching and learning, and he states that academic freedom is the freedom from interference in the content and curriculum that the academic chooses. He further states that with this freedom comes the responsibility to be accountable. Moreover, he states that academic freedom is not compromised by accountability. Lastly, he sees resource allocation as a management and not academic freedom issue.

Again, I expected a huge outcry on the erosion of institutional autonomy as a consequence of the national review. Surprisingly, like academic freedom, there is a perception that institutional autonomy has not been compromised. "Ja. I have a very strong view on this issue and that I don't think that the review process touches institutional autonomy or academic freedom. I think those are not in any way hindered or jeopardised by the review process" (ACAD 2 2007, p. 7).

So not so unexpected then, are academics perceptions about public accountability.

> I agree that universities these days with a degree of public funding, that they do need to be accountable and I think that investigating, in assuring the quality, managing the quality, trying to review the quality of these institutions as in the HEQC at the M Ed level, has done a really good job in identifying institutions which should not be offering M Ed degrees. In 2005 I really thought that the institution should have the autonomy and the government should step out … and business as well. But … and I still more or less take that view but I'm slightly more sympathetic to … Not regulation exactly but to the institution being more accountable. Not necessarily being regulated but at least publicly expressing what it is doing, what it's trying to do, where it's going to move, the steps it's going to take, and acknowledging its sources of funding and a responsibility towards that. (ACAD 1 2007, p. 16)

The quotation above refers to the perception that public higher education institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community but also to the broader society, because of the state funding which comes from the taxpayers. The participant also commends the HEQC for a job

well done through the weeding out of bad academic programmes. This is interesting because there is a shift in her thinking over time.

In the findings section 4.2.1. I have introduced the notion of two different philosophical approaches. The first highlights a minimum standards approach, as evidenced in the national MEd review, and includes putting your best foot forward. This form of review talks to outsiders and talks to minimum standards. The emphasis is on accountability. In contrast, the University's quinquennial review, is about exposing what has gone wrong, and how can things be done better. Here the reviewers arrive with a shared sense of the institutions values system. The emphasis here is about improvement. These types of reviews are sometimes referred to as external and internal reviews and have different aims, objectives and criteria. Surprisingly yet again there is support for the external form of review with an emphasis on accountability.

> I think that there's good reasons to have external accountability. We went through an internal quinquennial review and I was part of that process, and we didn't pick up all kinds of weaknesses. So having an external process which essentially gives you a slightly different structure – there's a lot more emphasis on administrative systems than we would normally put emphasis on - has revealed weaknesses in our system. And so I think that there is good reason periodically to have an external body reviewing the process, as long as it doesn't impinge on academic freedom or institutional autonomy; and in this case it didn't. (ACAD 2 2007, p. 7)

The participant above, states that there is a need for external accountability in light of the fact that the School had an internal quinquennial review which did not pick up on certain weaknesses that the external review managed to identify.

There are two important theoretical constructs relevant to this theme on the HEQC National Review Methodology and they are public accountability, academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The analysis of the first research question (Value of the review) established that the review methodology was fair, well consulted and inclusive and hence a sense of support by participants for public accountability. However, when focusing on some aspects of the HEQC methodology, it exposes the fact that the detailed processes may be eroding academic freedom.

The HEQC's definition of programme evaluation[4] is "the external quality assurance processes which are undertaken in order to make an independent assessment of a programme's development, management and outcomes, through the validation of the findings of an internal programme self- evaluation" (Council for Higher Education 2004a, p. 36). The model is built on principles that advocate that programme quality rests with HEIs themselves. The HEQC's responsibility is to establish a value adding external system that validates HEI's quality management systems. This is meant to be done via the institutional audits which evaluate policies, systems, strategies and for

[4] The HEQC's programme accreditation criteria for the MEd review included 11 criteria. Each criterion is encapsulated in a criterion statement and has sub criteria or minimum standards linked to it. These minimum standards take into account policies, regulatory frameworks, the HE quality landscape, international trends and stakeholder feedback before they were finalized (Council for Higher Education 2004a, p. 9-10). The 11 criteria are stated in Appendix B. These criteria were derived at, though the consultation with various stakeholders in teacher education. There was a task team set up to look at the MEd criteria specifically. The draft criteria were taken to the Dean's Forum and then to the HEQC Board for approval.

The HEQC's minimum standards approach emphasises the benchmark needed to measure quality, and address the decades of inequality in programmes. This methodology does not limit attaining quality beyond the benchmark, and includes an improvement element.

The HEQC National Review methodology consists of preparatory, evaluation, decision making and improvement phases. There are seven stages, which comprise the phased processes. First, there is the writing of the self-evaluation portfolio by the institution. On receipt of the portfolio, the HEQC issues a confirmation of receipt to the institution, and they assess the portfolio for completeness. The HEQC then prepares a biographical profile on the institution (Council on Higher Education (2004d). Within the second stage of the process the HEQC appointments evaluators, based on their HE management or subject specific experience. HEIs are sent the names of these evaluators for acceptance (Council on Higher Education (2004d). The third stage of the process is the site visit, by a peer review panel and it includes the generation of the evaluation report. But prior to this, the institution's self evaluation is analyzed and a report is prepared for the evaluators. The institution has 7 days within which to raise any objections about the site visit (Council on Higher Education (2004d).

In the fourth step the reports are summarized, in preparation for the HEQC Accreditation Committee, which consists of peers and experts who must apply consistency and fairness in arriving at their recommendations. The Committee looks at the portfolio, and the evaluation and the summary reports when making their recommendation (Council on Higher Education (2004d). In the fifth step the institution has an opportunity for rebuttals. When the institution is sent the recommendation, and if there is dissatisfaction then the HEIs can send their rebuttals within 21 days (Council on Higher Education (2004d).

In the sixth step the institutions rebuttals are summarized in preparation for the HEQC's Board for consideration together with portfolio, evaluation report, summary of review panel's report, original rebuttals, summary of institutions rebuttals, SAQA/DoE conditions, Legal Framework governing reviews and the HEQC's decisions with respect to accreditation. The outcome is the HEQC Boards final decision (Council on Higher Education (2004d). Lastly, the HEQC communicates its final accreditation decision to the institution, to SAQA and the DoE and to the public (Council on Higher Education (2004d).

quality management (Council for Higher Education 2004a, p. 9). This model is also built on the concepts of self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

I now describe and discuss the participants' perceptions about the review methodology by separating them into pros and cons or commendations and criticism of the process.

4.4.2. Pros of the HEQC National Review Methodology

> The methodology seemed to be a fairly classical external review process which was, read the self-evaluation report and then come and test the assumptions. And the visit was meant to test the claims that were made in the self-evaluation report; as well as to test the issues that have not been covered in the self-evaluation report. I think from a methodological point of view that makes sense and it worked reasonably well. (MGMT 1 2007 p.10)

The participant above describes the HEQC Review methodology as being fair. Moreover, he describes it as being a typical external review methodology wherein the self-evaluation report makes certain claims which are then tested during the site visit. Thus, the perception here is that the methodology, in itself, did not threaten academic freedom or institutional autonomy.

Another participant also describes the methodology as being 'fair' this time because the "criteria were established with consultation with the institutions; institutions were given a reasonable amount of time in which to produce a portfolio/ provide self-evaluation, and even the visit itself" (ACAD 4 2007 p. 5). This participant believes the process was fair because the HEQC consulted HEIs when deriving the criteria, and also because the HEIs were given adequate time to prepare the self-evaluation report.

> I mean I think that there was a lot that the HEQC did that was incredibly careful. You had the opportunity to for example, object to any of the assessments etcetera. And, as I saw it, it was a very careful basis of saying "on what grounds can you now reject the outcome"? You've been consulted in terms of the criteria, you've been consulted in terms of the process, you've been consulted around the site visit and you've been consulted about who is on the panel. You know on what basis can you? (MGMT 4 2007, p. 5)

The above participant further comments on the issues of consultation. She states that the HEQC consulted on the criteria, on the process, on the visit and on the panel, making it very difficult for institutions to then raise objections. Another participant describes the methodology as being "inclusive, consultative, peer driven all of that, I think that they did a reasonably good job, they definitely did." Yet again the perception in general is that the review methodology, albeit a public accountability intervention, cannot be faulted for compromising academic freedom, specifically on grounds of consultation and inclusivity.

A further participant comments on the self -evaluation step:

> The primary value probably is in the exercise of self-reflection and self-assessment of the course. I think it does force people to think about what they do and how they justify what they do, how they can improve what they do, etcetera. (MGMT 3 2007 p.1)

This participant states that the self evaluation is very valuable because of the opportunity for reflection and the checking of the validity of that reflection. There is also the added element of writing for an external or outside audience which requires taking the process more seriously and being more explicit about the explanations, motivations and justifications of specific decisions. This can also be connected to the section 4.2.1. on the value of the programme framing of the review and specifically the two philosophical approaches to reviews.

The participant below welcomes the HEQC approach to the criteria.

> I think it was a good idea to promote a self-evaluation and to give the criteria. To set them out in advance, the questions which they wanted answers to and so on and that was a good step. (ACAD 1 2007, p.4)

She commends the HEQC for distributing the criteria in advance of the self evaluation.

In summary there are some commendations about the HEQC Review methodology. These commendations can be summed up as being fair, using standard programme review methodologies. Moreover, the participants feel that the sector was well consulted and the process was inclusive and peer driven. This meant that institutions could critique the outcomes but they could never disown it. This further meant that whilst the review

methodology, is a quality intervention, and hence an instrument of public accountability, that these academics' perceptions were that it did not compromise academic freedom or institutional autonomy.

4.4.3. Cons of the HEQC National Review Methodology

Participants identify several problems with the review methodology. First, a participant describes the process as being an onerous archival activity. Another participant criticises the process of the selection of the review panel. A third participant expresses her concerns with the poor quality of the review report. Lastly, a participant refers to the process as being a technical tick box approach and not being about excellence. (For more detail on the various steps in the review process see footnote in section 4.4)

The participant below criticises the self- evaluation step.

> I was left with the feeling that that is quite burdensome and time consuming. Perhaps that was the negative, that people felt that they - that there was so much required in terms of documentation, that that became in a way the focus, you know, just to get all of that on the table; instead of the more intellectual aspect of engaging with the assessment core of the exercise. (MGMT 3 2007, p.1)

This participant alludes to the fact that the process was a largely archival activity, requiring institutions to gather large amounts of documents. This was very time-consuming, onerous and a less useful process. She also alludes to the desire to have had a more intellectual discussion for improving, but it was missing (also see sub-theme 4.4.5. on interrogation). The process itself does not interfere with academic freedom, but it may impact on the institutions core activities of teaching, learning and research.

Another participant criticises the second step which has to do with the appointment of the evaluators. She states:

> Those people who came – and here I think this goes back to the methodology – I think that those people were not well selected, either from the HEQC side or from us. There were some people who really had an axe to grind or, you know, or (chuckling) – had

> resentments towards the institution as a whole, let alone to individuals in the institution. And I think that part was poorly managed. (ACAD 1 2007, p.4)

The above participant expresses her unhappiness with the selection process of the panel members, because she believes that some of them were resentful. This infers interference in her academic freedom.

Moreover a participant criticises the review report. The participant states:

> Their review was weak, their evaluation was weak. It was disenchanting to get a review from peers that had taken so little account of what we actually presented. That's not to say that – I mean I think we were open to challenges and criticisms. Certainly in the PGCE we were open to those and we got some of them. We had much more of a sense of a thorough job done and a proper reading of what we presented. Whereas in the M. Ed you know – I mean there were points – I remember the one point was that our work wasn't externally examined well enough or something about external examiner, where we had a list of top people in other countries, who externally examined course work. (ACAD 7 2007, p.2)

In the quote above the participant expresses her unhappiness with the review, describing it as being weak, because the panel had not engaged with the self evaluation and consequently came up with inappropriate conclusions about UX' external examiners. The participant highlights that the School uses the top academics for externalling the examinations. This is problematic because it is interference in the institutions procedural autonomy. Linked to this is a further critique of the report.

> The report that we got also felt very misaligned. I mean, you had some sections that were good others that were appallingly written, misrepresenting what we had said. The report was so badly written and sometimes inaccurate, and sometimes difficult to understand, that we felt now what has gone wrong there. Has there been any attempt by the chair to make sure that the report was intelligible and accurate; or was it left to the people [who] had to write a section and then it was put together. (ACAD 6 2007, p.12)

This participant expresses his dissatisfaction with the report because it was patchy, misrepresented what was said, it was inaccurate and poorly put together by the chair. This raises concerns about the review panel's thoroughness with the reading of the self evaluations report, and consequently their report to the HEQC Accreditation Committee. This is problematic, as one of the recommendations could be de-accreditation of the

programme. This directly affects academic freedom and the institutions substantive autonomy. This participant's comments also question the integrity of the HEQC's methodology and the quality of the process.

Further dissatisfaction is expressed by a participant who comments on the commensurability of various institutional reports.

> Anyway so for the M. Ed - what I thought was poor, or a weak part of the methodology, which they didn't change subsequently, is that you had different teams evaluating different universities. So there was no check on consistency across say the team that evaluated us, the team that evaluated other HEIs whatever. So maybe they had found a way of dealing with that. But what we thought would've been a far better methodology – would probably have cost less or as much, is to get a group of five or six people, overseas experts and get them to travel the country and do every single one. … You'd get consistency across, you see across – I don't think that they had consistency across. (ACAD 7 2007, p.6)

The participant above describes a weakness in the HEQC methodology because there was a lack of consistency as different panels review different institutions. She further suggests that a group of five people should possible evaluate all institutions and in that way mitigate for consistency. Her comments also suggest mistrust in the process.

A participant described the criteria as "basic checklist stuff" (MGMT 3 2007 p.4). This was supported by another participant who said "I don't think in and of itself. I don't think they're suitable in and of themselves. They're very useful as a starting point but I don't think institutions must be … guided purely by those criteria" (ACAD 5 2007, p6). These participants are criticising the criteria as being of minimum standards. The second participant goes further and is alluding to the fact that if institutions want excellence they must go beyond the criteria.

In summary there are several negative criticisms of the HEQC's review methodology. This includes criticism that the process was archival. This does not directly interfere with academic freedom or institutional autonomy but it does distract the academics and institution from its core business of the research, teaching and learning. There is further

disapproval over the panel selection. One participant expresses her unhappiness with the selection process of the panel members, because she believes that some of them were resentful. This is suggestive of potential interference in her academic freedom. There is also dissatisfaction at the panel's report. The participant's unhappiness and contestation is around the external examiner issue. This does interfere with the institutions procedural autonomy. A participant also raised concerns of mistrust, consistency and quality and integrity of the review process or methodology. A flawed process could mean a negative outcome for the institution and this directly affects academic freedom and the institutions substantive autonomy.

4.4.4. Issues of Power

The participant below alludes to unequal power relations between the institution and the review panel.

> Our site visit started quite aggressively. When I visited the panel the night before they came here – I had to, just to give them the evidence and so on and so forth – I was told in no uncertain terms "you do realise that your entire M. Ed has got its head on the chopping block". Which is something that we knew before but didn't anticipate that that would sort-of be held like the sword of Damocles over our head. (ACAD 4 2007, p.10)

The participant, by referring to the 'sword of Damocles,' epitomizes the imminent and ever-present peril faced by UX because of the positions of power held by the HEQC review panel. Another participant tries to mitigate against this power and recommends that "perhaps by allowing the institutional team, if you like, to choose and chair certain sections of the review in which they're allowed to highlight the things that they do, as opposed to having all the power with the panel. It's really a question of power relations and process of how the panel manages its meeting (ACAD 1 2007, p.4). The fact that the participants were told that 'your entire M.Ed has got its head on the chopping block' threatens the institution's academic freedom because it is interference in the UX's teaching and learning.

4.4.5. Playing the Game

Participants allude to playing the game.

> I mean obviously if you think you're under threat of closure, you're going to be inclined to put your best foot forward and not necessarily reflect on weaknesses. I mean that's clear. And what the external audience gives you, is that distance. Because you do have to say "I'm showing what I do, what I do well and what I don't do well". And when you're doing that internally, you can take more for granted, more shared – I think it would be a less thorough process. (ACAD 7 2007, p.11)

The participant above refers to high stakes reviews where there is a possibility of closure of the programme, or when the institution's academic freedom is threatened. It is within that context that institutions put their best foot forward, compromising sincere improvement.

> I think when you write self-evaluation reports for external reviews, you write them with a certain mindset. And you write them with a view to attending, as you say, to putting your best foot forward without being dishonest or trying to hide things that are clearly – warts on the programme and that need to be highlighted. (MGMT 1 2007, p.3)

This is buttressed by the second participant who refers to writing self evaluation reports for an external audience with a certain approach.

This mindset is not only limited to the self evaluation report it extends to the actual panel members themselves.

> To put it crudely – you're at my institution today, I'm at your institution tomorrow and the next day we're both at someone else's institution who had been evaluating us beforehand. And it took a little time for that realisation that education is actually a very small pool and also, I think, realisation [that] there's certain challenges in any programme that all institutions are facing and they're not unique to a single one. (ACAD 4 2007, p.3)

The participant above illustrates how playing the game affects the panel members who come to a realization that education is constituted by a small group of individuals, and alluded to in that is a cautionary note of the recommendation one makes at another institution may have impact on recommendations made at one's own institution.

But there is a danger in playing the game. "One of the interesting lessons for the institution is the extent to which the self-evaluation process throws up serious issues which you chose to conceal and whether in fact, in concealing them, you also then left

with concealing from yourselves (MGMT 4 2007, p. 2-3). This participant highlights the problems associated with playing the game and the danger of concealing issues. The real danger being that institutions conceal things from themselves and in the process marginalizes true improvement.

In summary, participants argue there is a threat to this type of review methodology that focuses on accountability. This leads to institutions playing the game, particularly under conditions where their academic freedom is being threatened or if there is a likelihood of their programmes being de-accredited. This consequently erodes the possibility of true programme improvement.

4.4.6. Interrogation

There are various views on the interrogative nature of the review. These range from a participant feeling that the interrogative nature infringed on their academic freedom, to another perspective, that is tolerant of the interrogative nature of this particular type of review, to a participant indicating that there was no interrogation and hence no imposition on their academic freedom. The participant below raises her concerns around interrogation.

> It wasn't a two-way process; it wasn't a collegial process of us giving information and then asking us for explanations or more clarity or detail, or something like that. It was an interrogation process in my view and a very manipulated process insofar as they try to place staff off against one another; or invite certain people in at certain times to answer certain questions; and then use that information to invite the next person in. It's an un-collegial process. Those people are supposed to be our peers. They are not in a position of superiority in any way, and a collegial process would have invited some exchange of views and would not have held so much power on the side of the HEQC. So the opportunity to really find out – how does what we do relate to other universities or what is best practice in their eyes – was lost. It really was an audit, an interrogation rather than a collegial review process in my view. I think it only infringed on our academic freedom by, in a sense, putting us on the defensive and therefore giving a less good account of ourselves than we otherwise might have. So by making it an inquisition rather than a

> collegial review, that is broaching an aspect of academic freedom. That's not the way that academics are supposed to behave with one another. (ACAD 1 2007, p.2)

She states that the panel review or site visit was not collegial in that it did not allow for dialogue or conversation instead it was a very manipulated one-sided process. Moreover the peers held greater power and the process excluded an opportunity to share best practice. In fact she argues that the process infringed on the institution's academic freedom, because of its inquest like nature which put the School's staff on the defensive. This participant's views are supported by another participant who states "I think I agree with you that it was – or I agree with other comments that it is more of an interrogation rather than a dialogue" (MGMT 1 200, p.3).

On the other hand this form of interrogation is contextualised by the nature of the type of review that the national review was.

> And yes it was about interrogation and I must say, every time that I engage with an external review committee it is about an interrogation. It's to explain a process or to say what we do and how the quality assurance processes operate and that sort of thing. And they would usually ask things like resource allocations and things. So it is much of an interrogation rather than a dialogue but I have no qualms with that. I think it's fine, that's what that process is meant to be doing. (MGMT 1 2007, p.3-4)

This participant is accepting of the interrogative nature of the review because it is an external review and by their very nature is interrogative instead of dialogical.

Then there is a participant who does not even see any interrogation in the process.

> No, I never got a sense that it was a kind-of – that they were coming to check up on us. I felt they were really interested in finding out how we were working. I think that there's this kind-of sense that any kind of a process like this is an imposition on our academic freedom; I don't share that view. I'm much more – I mean, partly because I'm a managerial person and I understand that we need to have overall monitoring of the quality of programmes. And I also think that in general these exercises, if they're taken with open eyes and with recognition that there could be read value added, can be incredibly important additions to improving our quality over time. (ACAD 2 2007, p.7)

This participant did not feel that this was an imposition on the institution's academic freedom, because he felt the panel were there to genuinely find out about the programme. He contextualises that his perception may be due to his monitoring and evaluation background and his managerial perspective. He goes on to state that these processes can be valuable to quality improvement.

In summary there are pros and cons to the national M.Ed review methodology. The commendations can be summed up as being fair, using standard programme review methodologies. Moreover, the sector was well consulted and the processes were inclusive and peer driven. This meant that institutions could critique the outcomes but they could never disown them. The criticisms of the methodology includes criticism of the process as being archival, concern over the panel selection, dissatisfaction at the panel's report and criticism that the criteria are checklist and that institutions need to go beyond them in order to achieve excellence. There are further concerns that the process was interrogative in nature, with disproportionate power, and because of the playing of the game by institutions the loss in genuine quality improvement.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this section, I answer the three research questions that focus on the value of the review, on the relationship between teaching and learning and managerial practices and lastly on the relationship between academic freedom and public accountability. I do so by reflecting on the literature and findings whilst using "academic freedom", "institutional autonomy" and "public accountability", the three main theoretical constructs of this research to mediate the discussion.

5.1. What are Participants' Perceptions about the General Value of the M.Ed. Programme Review at UX?

The participants perceived the National M.Ed review to be a valuable process. This is supported by findings that buttress that the M.Ed review had a national value, and institutional value, value for the programme and value for the management of the programme. First, there is the national (including public and collegial) value. This aligns with the literature wherein Badat (2004) argues that higher education under *apartheid* was divided by race, institution type, language and even culture. Thus, the legal and policy framework, under *apartheid* created a very fragmented and poorly coordinated system, which was inequitable and very inefficient. Participants referred to the need to unify the system in order to transform the historical legacy of a fragmented system with uneven provision, in line with the social and economic justice within the context of a democratic South Africa society.

Linked to this national value is a public value. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 sets out the establishment of the CHE that is responsible for quality assurance in higher education. It is with this public value in mind, that the HEQC Board decided to focus on Education because of concerns 'expressed by the Department of Education and other stakeholders about the quality of teacher education provision in South Africa' (Council of Higher Education 2005c, p. 1). This resonates with the participants' perceived function of the HEQC programme reviews to protect the students and the public from weak or poor programmes.

In addition, there is a collegial value linked to the national value. Participants perceived that the review was collegial in aspects because it allowed for benchmarking and consisted of a peer review element.

Secondly, there is institutional value and this is linked to the value of the framing of the review, which has encouraged self-managed evaluations within UX. It has also boosted public and student confidence in the institution's programmes through the process of withdrawing accreditation of poor programmes. A participant said that it has further led to the School of Education examining its processes, practices and fundamentals in a way that it otherwise would not have done, and in so doing the School has looked at the intellectual credibility of the M.Ed programme, as well as the commensurability of the various programmes within the M.Ed qualification.

The focus on institutional value highlights aspects of the concept of institutional autonomy. In the literature review, Berdahl (1990) separates institutional autonomy into substantive autonomy and procedural autonomy. Government actions that affect the substantive autonomy are of greater concern than actions affecting the procedural autonomy. With that in mind, the value of the review at the institutional level as emerges from the participants' experiences is to improve the programme, to allay public perception of the quality of the offering and to convince stakeholders that certain standards are met. Thus, it is procedural autonomy and not the substantive autonomy that is being affected by the review.

Thirdly, there is value for the management of the programme. Participants highlighted the weakness in UX' management information systems, as well as the need to change management roles and responsibilities of the programme by separating postgraduate programme management into masters and doctoral programmes; and by separating the responsibility for chairing both the Higher Degrees Committee and the Ethics Committee as a result of the review.

Underpinning this discussion on value, is Harvey's (2002) separation into internal and external types of quality evaluations and the different value each type brings (see Table 1 below for a comparison of internal and external types of reviews). The internal reviews are collegial and the external reviews are more managerialist. Thus the value of the review is also about improvement or accountability or as Vidovich and Slee (2001) put it about improve or prove. A participant refers to two separate philosophical approaches to quality assurance, supports this separation into two types of reviews. The M.Ed review was an external review, with emphasis on managerialism and accountability.

Table 1. Comparing internal and external types of reviews based on literature and participants.

	Internal Reviews	**External Reviews**
How do they evaluate?	The emphasis is on excellence, hence they go beyond the minimum standards approach.	The focus is on a minimum standards approach.
Examples of the types of reviews	Quinquennial Review.	Professional Boards and National Reviews.
What is the focus of the evaluation? Harvey (1998)	Improvement.	Accountability, surveillance and compliance
Phrases used by participants in referring to this type of review.	'Exposing our dirty laundry.'	'Putting our best foot forward.'
Who are the quality monitors?	The quality monitors are from within the institution and hence they come with a shared sense of institutional values.	The quality monitors are normally from outside the institution and hence have an external sense of what is important.
Why evaluate? Vidovich and Slee (2001)	To improve.	To prove
What kind of accountability is this? Vidovich and Slee (2001)	Professional or democratic accountability, peer or scholarly accountability.	Managerial or market accountability, state or public accountability.

Harvey (2002) further argues that internal quality monitoring focuses on "learning theory, the nature and styles of learning, and classroom innovations," whilst the external

dimensions focus on method (Harvey 2002, p. 245). Barrow (1999, p. 27) refers to the latter as superficial compliance or 'dramaturgical' compliance. He argues that the quality interventions are often seen as an instrument of governmentality, with the specific purpose of surveillance. It is this surveillance that has led to dramaturgical compliance to the system and not the improvement in quality. Since this review was external, there was a greater emphasis on management instead of teaching and learning. This is further explored in the discussion on the next research question. It can be inferred that internal reviews are perceived as less threatening to academic's freedom to teach and research. But with the rise of managerialism there is no guarantee of protection against incursions of academic freedom from within the institution. This is supported by research done by Bentley, Habib and Morrow (2006, p.1) who list several cases where academic freedom was being violated by institutional managers.

Critics of the South African HE argue that QA has moved from self- regulation to state regulation of qualification credibility (Moja et al 2002). In doing so, there has been a shift from quality improvement to accountability. Harvey (2002) states that this shift to accountability ignores the nature of learning and classroom innovation in favour of compliance of the method and conformity, and "this is because the evaluators appear to be preoccupied with the method of evaluation, rather than the substance" (Harvey 2002, p. 245). External reviews by their very nature, focus on accountability. There is still space in the quality system to have internal reviews that focus on teaching and learning and hence improvement.

5.2. How do Staff Members understand the Relation between Teaching and Learning and Managerial Practices that are required for running a Quality Programme?

The next question attempts to understand the discursive context that informs the different perspectives and experiences wherein the discursive context refers to the diverse ideas that inform current policy in higher education; among them is "academic freedom" and

"institutional autonomy" on the one hand and emphasis on quality management system, in lieu of the public accountability debate and the state's requirement to bring HEIs to account, on the other. Critics among the academic staff of UX often respond to these ideas by pointing out the contradictions in the policy, claiming that the emphasis on accountability resulted in the National Review of the M.Ed programme actually focusing on managerial practices at the expense of a very thin focus on the teaching and learning aspects of the programme.

Two areas from the literature review that are important to this question are the concepts of academic freedom and public accountability. It is specifically academic freedom as a negative right of academics to teach and research without any interference in their activities or as Altbach (2001, p.1) describes it, "the freedom of the professor to teach, do research and publish without fetter in his field of expertise." An analysis of the findings indicates that participants have different perspectives on the degree or extent at which teaching and learning was examined within the M.Ed review. A participant expressed: “teaching and learning didn't really seem to interest the HEQC very much" (ACAD 1 2007, p.5). A superficial analysis of the criteria does support this perception, but a deeper analysis shows that there are teaching and learning issues embedded in the other criteria. Hence a second participant's view that the review process could only infer teaching and learning. A third participant indicates that she has no problem opening her class room to external observations. This is in contrast with the final participant's perspective that

> I actually prefer it. I think it's more appropriate that an external entity should realise that responsibility at that level is an institution's responsibility which then begs the question of whether we are doing it properly. And to me that is what the audits were trying to ascertain - the institutional audit - because it was trying to ascertain whether we had the right systems in place that produced an environment that promoted quality. (MGMT 2 2007, p. 4)

The second concept, important to this research question, is accountability. Friedman and Edigheji (2006, p.1) refer to 'peer', 'professional' or 'scholarly accountability.' Within these forms of accountability it is the peer alone that has the command of "both the expertise and the commitment to intellectual activity to qualify them to hold the academy

accountable in appropriate ways" (Friedman & Edigheji 2006, p.9). This is important when looking at the last participant's comments above. The participant is referring to peer or professional accountability when evaluating teaching and learning, and to public accountability for the evaluation of the institution's processes and systems.

In order to directly answer the question 'how do staff members understand the relation between teaching and learning and managerial practices that are required for running a quality programme'? There are differing views on the relationship between teaching and learning and management. The first sees them as competing demands. The second view is that teaching and learning is at the centre of everything. The third perspective disagrees with the previous participant, by arguing that both teaching and learning and management are absolutely crucial, one cannot be at the expense of the other. The third perspective states that an institution should have all the management in place like student records, as well as, teaching and learning elements like academics sharing their experiences. Teaching and learning is important, but management must support the academic enterprise.

This also begins to respond to the question: "Are programme reviews truly 'programme reviews' even if they only superficially look at teaching and learning?" We have already determined there are two types of reviews internal and external types. Moreover reviews could focus on improvement or accountability. Internal reviews which can include teaching and learning are about the improvement in the quality of the programme and may be better examined during the quinquennial review or other similar review which allows for direct classroom observation, whilst the external reviews like the national review emphasise management, accountability and a minimum standards approach.

Gosling and D' Andrea (2001) raise an important question: Why has the huge growth in quality assurance not led to lasting quality improvement. This is also related to the previous question and specifically the discussion on the various types of reviews. The M.Ed review is an external review and as such emphasizes accountability. Sustainable quality improvement can only come from internal reviews that focus on teaching and

learning. This also speaks to Harvey's (2002) distinction between internal quality monitoring which highlights learning theory and a focus on classroom innovations and external dimensions that focus on the method or what he calls superficial or 'dramaturgical' compliance. So this review is perceived to have focused on management practices but not at the expense of teaching and learning, because this review did not attempt to focus on teaching and learning.

5.3. How do staff members understand the relation between academic freedom and the managerial and administrative practices required for monitoring public accountability?

The MEd review in UX used a range of tools to evaluate the programme and included a self-evaluation portfolio, peer evaluation, a site visit, a panel report, and statistical data. The HEQC methodology required the HEIs to write up a self-evaluation portfolio responding to specific criteria. This qualitative report was supported by statistical data. This was evaluated by the HEQC panel of peers, who scrutinized the information, completed a site visit and conducted interviews whilst examining additional evidence on-site. This process did not examine direct observation of actual teaching and learning in the classroom but did indirectly examine it in the criteria on teaching and learning, research, assessment etc.

Some participants describe the review methodology as being fair, well consulted, peer driven and using standard programme review methodologies. This seems to be consistent with what Harvey (1998) emphasises that reviews have great value if conducted under the correct climate. He also argues that reviews are stronger and have huge value if the evaluation is followed by a dialogue during the peer review section. This can be positively used towards improvement. It is important to note that this is not shared by all participants at UX. Participants had varied views on the interrogative nature of the site visit. A participant felt that 'it wasn't a two-way process; it wasn't a collegial process of us giving information and then asking us for explanations or more clarity or detail, or something like that. It was an interrogation process in my view and a very manipulated

process' (ACAD 1 2007, p. 2). Another participant states ‘so it is much of an interrogation rather than a dialogue but I have no qualms with that. I think its fine, that's what that process is meant to be doing’ (MGMT 1 2007 p. 3-4).

There are further criticisms about the HEQC’s review methodology. This includes criticism that the process was archival. This distracts the academics and institution from its core business of the research, teaching and learning. Moreover there is criticism about the panel selection, dissatisfaction at the panel’s report, which raises concerns of mistrust, consistency and quality and integrity of the review process or methodology.
Harvey (1998) argues that self-evaluations are problematic in situations where the staff sees the evaluation as being related to rakings or funding, as they overstate their strengths, they are defensive and this does not allow for a frank conversation. He posits that despite the claims that external monitoring erodes academic freedom and intrudes on institutional autonomy, it is still considered safe. Safe, because the self- assessment and peer review mechanism allow for 'playing the game'. Participants allude to playing the game. 'I mean obviously if you think you're under threat of closure, you're going to be inclined to put your best foot forward and not necessarily reflect on weaknesses' (ACAD 7 2007, p. 11). Hence the findings support Harvey's argument that when institutions feel they are being judged for the purposes of accreditation or other high stakes, then there is a disincentive towards being genuinely frank, and they respond defensively. This in turn results in compliance instead of a quality culture. But there is a danger in playing the game. One of the interesting lessons for the institution is the extent to which the self-evaluation process throws up serious issues which institutions chose to conceal and whether in fact, in concealing them, institutions are also then left with concealing the issues from itself. The compliance versus quality culture debate alludes to the fact that external reviews with an emphasis on accountability creates a compliance couture, whilst internal reviews are more likely not to threaten academic freedom and hence result in quality culture.

Surprisingly the participants are supportive of the principle of public accountability. A participant view is that because of the degree of public funding, public higher education

institutions need to be publically accountable. Furthermore participants do not see the MEd review as interfering with their academic freedom or threatening the institution's autonomy. Kayrooz's statement on academic freedom as a negative right of non-interference in teaching and research is important here. The HEQC's definition of programme evaluation is consistent with Kayrooz 's principle of non-interference in teaching, as the programme review methodology does not examine teaching and learning in the classroom. This could possibly explain why participants felt that the review did not interfere with their academic freedom.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Globalization has undoubtedly had an impact on higher education in South Africa. Higher education, during *apartheid*, was very fragmented and inefficient and in need of improved coordination. These are the local imperatives driving the systemic restructuring of the sector. There were several policies with competing yet interconnected priorities that have shaped the HE legislation. My examination of the literature together with my findings indicate that the concepts of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability are complex, multi-layered and nuanced.

Academic freedom and institutional autonomy have different meanings depending on the historical context. Whilst some participants have a clearer understanding of the terms, others have a tendency of associating the terms together and hence use them interchangeably. This supports Kayrooz's (2003, p. 1) claim that 'the current debate about academic freedom has been marked by a lack of clarity and consistency as to what academic freedom actually means.'

Likewise not all participants have a nuanced understanding of institutional autonomy. Berdahl's (1990, p. 172) separation of institutional autonomy into substantive and procedural autonomy is very useful for separating participants' comments on institutional autonomy. This is important because participants often refer to institutional autonomy being threatened but it is the procedural elements of the autonomy that is being infringed upon.

The MEd review is a form of quality assurance, that is part of a bigger quality management system and is an instrument of public accountability. Surprisingly, most participants did not express concerns with the notion of public accountability. This may be due to public higher education institutions in South Africa being funded through subsidies which are essentially tax payers' money. Equally surprising, most participants did not think that the MEd review interfered with their academic freedom or infringed on the institution's autonomy. In fact, most participants found the MEd review to be

valuable forcing them to look at the viability and validity of their programs and practices, that would otherwise have been overlooked.

The national quality management system has matured since the MEd review in 2005. Many institutions were feeling fatigued after the sheer number of quality interventions they needed to respond to. We are seeing the maturation of the quality management system in terms of a shift from a compliance culture to a quality culture. This is evident in UX developing its own *'Guidelines for Internal MEd package development'*. My findings highlight a distinction between internal and external reviews. This is an opportune moment for UX to go beyond a technical exercise and genuinely explore and improve their teaching and learning, by putting greater emphasis on it, by having more dialogues about it, and possibly even exploring new innovative review methodologies that allow for a greater and more engaged exploration and conversation on teaching and learning issues.

This research utilized a case study methodology. This has its limitations in that I only explored academics' and managers' perceptions of the MEd review at UX. I recommend further comparative studies. Future studies could explore similar perceptions but from a cluster of institutions whose programmes were given full accreditation vs institutions that had their programme accreditation withdrawn or were requested to teach out their programmes. Moreover, future studies could also explore the maturation of the higher education quality management system - to examine if it has indeed moved from a compliance culture to a quality culture. Furthermore, future studies can also explore the unending shift between intellectual freedom and public accountability and undoubtedly will do so.

Quality, quality assurance, quality management and quality systems are further avenues that future research could explore. This is important when juxtapositioning academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This potential research could explore the extent of autonomy and accountability beyond just being mutually exclusive. This prospective research could also examine the advantages and disadvantages of combining different

kinds of accountability e.g. professional and public forms of accountability. Lastly, further opportunities in research could discuss the potential and form of an accountability 'for' and 'as' improvement.

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CHAPTER 8: APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions
1. What are your perceptions about the general value of the M.Ed. programme review at UX? 2. How do you understand the relation between teaching and learning and the managerial practices that are required for running a quality programme? 3. What aspect of teaching can be investigated and monitored through an audit and which of them was discussed in the HEQC Review process? 4. Do you think that the methodology which was used by the HEQC panel in reviewing teaching and learning processes was useful? Please explain. 5. What did you learn about your teaching practices going through this review? 6. Did the process create a discussion on learning matters within the M.Ed. team? 7. Do you think the HEQC's set of criteria means suitable and sufficiently enabling to create "quality" ends in the M.Ed. programme review? 8. In your opinion how advantageous has the self -evaluation process been? 9. Do you think the self-evaluation led to an improvement of the quality of the programme (in terms of learning and teaching and in terms of its management practices)? 10. Is the evaluation methodology conducive to compliance or creating a quality culture? 11. How do you understand the relation between academic freedom and the practices that are required for monitoring public accountability? 12. Are you aware of the academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability debate? If yes, what are the ramifications of the M.Ed. programme review on the academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability debate? 13. Can educational quality be improved without a causal way (de-accreditation)?

Appendix B: The M.Ed. National Review Criteria

1. Criterion 1: The National, Institutional and Unit Context
   The programme is an integral part of the offerings of the higher education institution at which it is located and it complies with all the national policies and regulations regarding the provision of higher education qualifications in South Africa. The unit offering the M.Ed has goals, objectives and forms of internal organisation to support the programme.

2. Criterion 2: Programme Design and Co-ordination
   The learning programme has a clear structure leading to the M.Ed or to the designated areas of specialisation at M.Ed level. As a postgraduate degree, the M.Ed must correspond to the generally accepted minimum standards of an NQF level 8 masters degree. The programme is effectively coordinated in a way that facilitates attainment of its intended purpose and outcomes.

3. Criterion 3: Student Recruitment, Admission and Selection
   Recruitment documentation informs potential students of the programme accurately and sufficiently, and admission adheres to current legislation. Admission and selection of students are commensurate with the programme's academic requirements, within a framework of widened access and equity. The number of students selected takes into account the programme's intended learning outcomes, its capacity to offer good quality education, and the needs of the particular profession (in the case of professional programmes).

4. Criterion 4: Staffing
   Academic staff responsible for the programme are suitably qualified, have sufficient relevant experience and teaching competence, and their assessment competence and research profiles are adequate for the nature and level of the programme. The institution and/or other recognised agencies contracted by the institution provide opportunities for academic staff to enhance their competences and to support their professional growth and development.

5. Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

   The institution gives recognition to the importance of the promotion of student learning. The teaching and learning strategy is appropriate for the institutional type (as reflected in its mission), mode(s) of delivery and student composition, contains mechanisms to ensure the appropriateness of teaching and learning methods, and makes provision for staff to improve their teaching. Effective teaching and learning methods and suitable learning materials and learning opportunities facilitate the achievement of the purposes and outcomes of the programme. The programme ensures that each student displays an understanding of the areas of knowledge which are fundamental for an M.Ed and acquires skills and competencies which are relevant to the academic and professional world of education.

6. Criterion 6: Research

   The programme is directed towards developing student capacity to engage research issues and to produce research. Both staff and students contribute to the knowledge base through their research production.

7. Criterion 7: Supervision of Research Dissertation

   Suitably qualified staff supports students' independent work by offering guidance on all aspects of the research process and on keeping to an achievable time schedule for their projects. Supervisors are accessible within reason; keep records of decisions agreed upon; offer timeous feedback on student work; and support and encourage the student through to completion.

8. Criterion 8: Student Assessment

   The different modes of delivery of the programme have appropriate policies and procedures for internal assessment; internal and external moderation; monitoring of student progress; explicitness, validity and reliability of assessment practices; recording of assessment results; settling of disputes; the rigour and security of the assessment system; RPL; and for the development of staff competence in assessment. The programme has effective assessment practices that include

internal (or external) assessment, as well as internal and external moderation. The programme has taken measures to ensure the reliability, rigour and security of the assessment system.

9. Criterion 9: Infrastructure and Library Resources
   Suitable and sufficient venues, IT infrastructure and library resources are available for students and staff in the programme. Policies ensure the proper management and maintenance of library resources, including support and access for students and staff. Staff development of library staff takes place on a regular basis.

10. Criterion 10: Student Retention and Throughput Rates
    Student retention and throughput rates in the programme are monitored, especially in terms of race and gender equity, and remedial measures are taken, where necessary.

11. Criterion 11: Programme Reviews
    User surveys, reviews and impact studies on the effectiveness of the programme are undertaken at regular intervals. Results are used to improve the programme's design, delivery and resourcing, and for staff development and student support, where necessary." (Council on Higher Education 2005d,

GLOSSARY

CHE Council on Higher Education
DoE Department of Education
ETQA Education and Training Quality Assurer
HEQC Higher Education Quality Committee
NPHE National Plan for Higher Education
NQF National Qualifications Framework
PQM Programme and Qualifications Mix
SAQA South African Qualifications Authority
SETA Sector Education and Training Authority